

ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS POLICY

Consultation (Who/How)	Date

ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS POLICY

Why do we need this policy?

Home Group aims to provide a fair and transparent lettings process to meet the needs of new and existing customers whilst contributing to building and maintaining sustainable communities.

We support our customers' right, where possible, to choose where they live, and for those communities to be sustainable. Matching the right person to the right property first time is integral in achieving this. Allocation of properties is generally made according to need and urgency, and governed by time on the waiting list. As we operate in many different locations across the country, demand for properties can vary, and other local issues can have an impact on lettings. In such circumstances we use Local Lettings Plans to address these specific issues, which in turn may affect who properties are offered to.

We participate in choice based lettings schemes and common housing registers with local authority partners, and work closely with them on nominations.

Applications for housing are made through nominations from local authorities, direct applicants and through our referral agreement with Stonham. In some areas we reserve the right to close waiting lists and only accept nominations (these decisions are managed locally). We also offer transfers, and mutual exchanges nationwide maximising choice and mobility for our customers.

What this policy achieves

We aim to provide an efficient lettings service that meets the needs of our customers, the organisation, and the communities we serve.

We aim to do this by enabling customers to:

- Have choice in where they live across our area of operation where practicable;
- Understand what they can expect from the lettings service;
- Understand our criteria for letting properties;
- Have an understanding of their position on waiting lists and have realistic expectations of being successfully re-housed.

And enabling staff to:

- Be aware of their responsibilities, and options when dealing with all aspects of allocations and lettings;
- Be clear about the processes for applications, transfers, and mutual exchanges;
- Work consistently across the organisation;
- Develop and support sustainable communities.

customer focus | innovative | integrity | motivated | respect | reliability | openness

Our lettings policy supports our homelessness strategy and action plan.

ASSESSING THE APPLICATION

Our aim is to provide a fair and transparent lettings process that meets the needs of new and existing customers whilst contributing to building and maintaining sustainable communities.

This means that we give reasonable preference to households in housing need but may also consider the needs of the wider community. The decision to allocate a specific property will include an overall assessment of the potential sustainability of the tenancy and its contribution to maintaining a stable and balanced community.

Applications and transfers are assessed in terms of housing need. In order to do this, applicants are put into one of three bands:

- Urgent Need to Move
- Need to Move
- Community and Employment

Each band offers a comprehensive list of prescribed criteria, which the applicant must meet.

Assessment of housing need includes the following factors:

- Homelessness
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Medical need to move
- Harassment, domestic violence or other anti-social behaviour
- Condition of property including sharing facilities
- Overcrowding
- Under-occupation

The Community and Employment band offers those looking to re-locate for work reasons or to give or receive care, an opportunity to be re-housed. This band is also used to promote sustainable and mixed communities.

Where Local Lettings Plans are in place and agreed with all associated partners, these will override the lettings policy for that particular area or estate concerned. [See Local Lettings Plan Fact Sheet for further information.](#)

Sheltered Accommodation applicants are also assessed on their support needs. This is to ensure that all the needs of the customer can be met, and they are able to sustain their tenancy. Assessments are in line with Supporting People guidelines. [See Sheltered Accommodation fact sheet for further information.](#)

Shared Ownership applicants are assessed against need, as well as a financial assessment being carried out. The assessment looks at proof of earnings and overall affordability of mortgage and rent payments. [See Shared Ownership Fact Sheet for further information.](#)



Nominations, direct applicants, transfer applicants, mutual exchange applicants, and shared ownership applicants may also be subject to references (where applicable) from previous landlords, police or other agencies, and/or employers.

Assessment of each application will be authorised by the Line Manager or equivalent to ensure a fair assessment has been made.

REFERRAL AGREEMENT WITH STONHAM

We operate a referral agreement with our sister organisation, Stonham. This means that a proportion of our empty homes are offered to Stonham clients who are ready to leave their current supported accommodation.

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

We advocate that where a choice based lettings schemes exists, and providing that it works effectively and is cost efficient, that we put 100% of properties in the area into the scheme.

ELIGIBILITY AND EXCLUSIONS

We operate eligibility and exclusions criteria within our policy, in order to ensure a fair and transparent system of assessing applications and nominations. It further ensures that where applicants are refused, there are accountable grounds for doing so that are robust and in line with regulatory guidelines.

[See the Exclusion and Eligibility Fact Sheet for further information.](#)

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

Where an applicant, nomination, or existing customer disagrees with an allocations decision made by Home Group, they have the right to appeal. If after the appeal is heard, the complainant is still not satisfied they can follow our complaints policy.

Appeals can only be made against a policy decision, and not against the policy itself.

DEPOSITS

Deposits are not taken, whether as a bond for future behaviour or as a refundable administrative fee. The exception is deposits for furniture where applicable.

LETTINGS TO EMPLOYEES/BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR RELATIVES (SCHEDULE 1)

Home Group takes measures to ensure it maintains the highest standards of integrity in all dealings. We follow the guidance set out in the Housing Corporation’s Good Practice Note 3 ‘Maintaining Standards of Probity’.

Broadly speaking this states that Home Group cannot grant any non-contractual benefit to staff, board members and their families. Granting a tenancy is considered to be a benefit.

In certain circumstances, accommodation can be offered to employees, board members and their families. All such offers are carefully considered in line with the Housing Corporation guidance and are approved by the appointed Director(s) and reported to the Board. [See the Schedule 1 Guidance – Maintaining Standards of Probity Fact sheet for further information.](#)

Statements of compliance

It is important that you read this policy in conjunction with Home’s [Data Protection policy](#) and [Equality & Diversity policy](#) to ensure that all the information supplied to you is dealt with in the correct manner, and a fair and equal service is provided to all your customers. Any policy and best practice queries you may have in relation to this and other Home policies, can be directed to the Business Improvement Team.

 businessimprovement@homegroup.org.uk

 **0788 907 9075**

Responsibility for Compliance	Group Director, Housing Operations, Home Group
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