

ALLOCATIONS POLICY



MONITORING INFORMATION:

POLICY/PROCEDURE/STRATEGY:

DATE APPROVED:

EXPIRY DATE:

OWNER:

APPROVAL ROUTE:

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

DECEMBER 2022

DECEMBER 2025

INCOME & LETTINGS MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Allocations Policy

Introduction:

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that Teign Housing staff members, current tenants, applicants and stakeholders are aware, and have a clear understanding, of how we will allocate our void properties. It should be read in conjunction with our Allocations Procedure. We do not have a blanket exclusion policy, each allocation is reviewed on its own merit, and we pride ourselves on taking an inclusive approach, ensuring our properties are allocated to those most in need. This includes an assessment of an individual's wellbeing and financial capability as a means to attach appropriate support to achieve sustainable tenancies.

Policy:

It is our specific intention to allocate our homes fairly, transparently, and effectively whilst taking into account the housing needs and aspirations of our tenants. This policy sets out how we will:

- Offer choice to tenants;
- Make best use of our available housing;
- Ensure allocations are appropriate;
- Contribute to the local authorities' strategic housing function;
- Build sustainable communities;
- Make decisions regarding allocations and deal with appeals;
- Minimise the time homes are empty (re-let times) whilst considering the needs of tenants;
- Provide a tenant focused allocation service.

The Policy and Procedure has been written to ensure that it satisfies the requirements of the regulatory standard i.e. The Regulator for Social Housing's Tenancy Standard and importantly the required outcomes therein:

Policy Statement:

1. To offer choice to tenant's and applicants we will:

- 1.1. Allocate our homes via the local choice based lettings (CBL) scheme which offers people the ability to move within Devon. Under this scheme there is a common housing register and common allocations policy which details how housing need is assessed and prioritised. Unless this policy or the related procedures state otherwise, we will operate within the policy and procedures of the CBL scheme;
- 1.2. We will provide tenants with clear and relevant advice about their housing options and will assist them in making on-line applications to Devon Home Choice where required.
- 1.3. If a need is identified, we will advertise homes with a preference to social housing transfer tenants or downsizing tenants as appropriate.

2. To make best use of our available homes we will:

- 2.1. Actively promote downsizing to smaller homes.
- 2.2. Aim to allocate properties with level access or adaptations to applicants who have a need for those adaptations.
- 2.3. Aim to allocate homes in a way which maximises the use of available bedrooms whilst having regard to overcrowding hazards and sustainable communities;
- 2.4. Consider direct match allocations to severely overcrowded tenants;
- 2.5. Consider allowing those with a 4 bedroom need to occupy larger 3 bedroom properties where this is deemed appropriate, due to the lack of 4 bedroom properties available;
- 2.6. We are able to provide some financial assistance to those tenants under occupying their homes if this is a barrier to them moving to a smaller property.
- 2.7. Work with the local authority to aid downsizing where there are specific circumstances that would otherwise prevent a move.

3. To ensure allocations are appropriate to the purpose of the housing we will:

- 3.1. Adhere to planning restrictions such as Section 106 agreements, covenants and agreed lettings plans;
- 3.2. Allocate housing for older people to applicants aged 55 years or over unless planning restrictions state otherwise;
- 3.3. Ensure that properties allocated, are suitable for applicants with restricted mobility.

4. To contribute to the local authorities' strategic housing function we will:

- 4.1. Allocate at least 75% of our available homes via the local CBL scheme;
- 4.2. Assist in discharging their housing duties by offering properties we have been unable to allocate via the CBL;
- 4.3. Offer properties to the local authority for use as PSL (private sector lease) properties.
- 4.4. When required by the local authority advertise our properties with preference to those with homeless duty.

5. To build sustainable communities we will:

- 5.1. Consult with residents, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies around local lettings plans in areas where housing management concerns have been evidenced, where rural housing demand is not being met or where required for new developments;
- 5.2. Complete a tenancy sustainment assessment with all applicants, which confirms the property is affordable for them and that any identified support needs have been addressed;
- 5.3. Give local communities preference for homes where they assisted us in identifying and tackling tenancy fraud.

6. When making decisions regarding allocations we will;

- 6.1. Expect any existing tenants to pay all outstanding monies owed to us unless they have demonstrated a clear intention to pay or where there are exceptional circumstances;
- 6.2. Expect existing tenants to have maintained their property to a satisfactory standard prior to being offered an alternative home, unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- 6.3. Complete a detailed verification of applications prior to offer to ensure customers are eligible and to prevent tenancy fraud. This will include obtaining references from current or former landlords; and habitual residency checks if needed;
- 6.4. Not normally offer a property where the applicant or family member has been proven guilty of anti-social behaviour within the last 2 years, or longer if the anti-social behaviour is considered serious enough;
- 6.5. Not normally offer a property where Teign Housing deems it to be unaffordable, it is expected that this would only be a decision made if the customer is impacted by Welfare Reform changes; however, there may be other exceptional circumstances whereby affordability is an issue.

- 6.6 Consider applicants aged 16 years of age or over. Those aged less than 18 years will be required to nominate a suitable agency prepared to hold their tenancy in trust and to be guarantor for the rent until they turn 18;
 - 6.7 Not exclude any applicants from housing without giving full consideration to their individual circumstances.
 - 6.8 Give applicants the right to request a review of any decision we make regarding their application for housing.
 - 6.9 Ensure that allocations to current and former employees and Board members comply with our Code of Conduct;
 - 6.10 Allocate no more than 25% of homes outside of the local CBL as “direct matches” (Management Moves) which are defined further in the Allocations Procedure.
- 7. To minimise re-let times whilst considering the needs of customers we will:**
- 7.1. Begin the allocation process as soon as possible when notice is received;
 - 7.2. Complete property inspections with outgoing tenants;
 - 7.3. Explore all options available to us where we have identified properties, schemes or areas that are deemed to be “difficult to let”.
- 8. To provide a customer focused allocation service we will:**
- 8.1. Take a flexible approach to appointments and viewings with applicants;
 - 8.2. Keep applicants informed throughout the allocations process;
 - 8.3. Ensure applicants are aware of the tenancy terms they will be signing up to;
 - 8.4. Ensure that employees involved in the lettings process are fully trained and have a good understanding of this policy and relevant procedures.

Links to

- The Regulator for Social Housing’s Tenancy Standard
- Housing Services Strategy
- Tenancy Strategy
- Localism Act
- Equality Act
- Disabled Adaptations Policy
- Downsizing Policy

Monitoring and Performance Standards:

- We will set targets for customer satisfaction of the lettings process.
- We will set annual targets for average re-let times and void loss.
- Our progress against all targets will be monitored on a monthly basis and we will promote continuous improvements of the service.
- We will record all lettings in the Continuous Recording of Lettings system (CORE).

Related Documents:

- Allocations Procedure
- Choice Based Lettings Policy & Procedures
- Housing Services Strategy
- Tenancy Strategy
- Code of Conduct
- Recharge procedure