



Havebury Housing Partnership

Allocations & Lettings Policy

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Policy Lead Officer	Assistant Director of Customer and Housing Services
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JNC Review	N/A
Tenants' Forum Review	June 2022
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Definitions

Affordable Rent	A type of affordable housing. It is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). Rent increases are regulated by the social housing regulator but rent can be rebased and reassessed on new lettings.
Allocation	The term used when a property is offered to a prospective tenant shortlisted from the CBL scheme.
Choice-Based Lettings (CBL)	A method of allocating social and affordable homes which have become available for letting by openly advertising them and allowing applicants to bid for these.
Gateway to Homechoice, Keyselect and Broadland & South Norfolk Home Options	Other CBL partnership schemes.
Hard to let properties	A property which has not been accepted by any applicant for at least three concurrent cycles on the appropriate CBL scheme.
Homelink	The CBL partnership scheme that covers our operating area.
Independent living	A name given to our over 55 customers, formerly known as sheltered accommodation, with no additional support provided.
Intermediate Rent	Aimed at people who have difficulty affording market rents on the open market and for those who lack a mortgage deposit and therefore cannot buy a home just yet. Intermediate Rents are generally set around 80% of the market rate, including service charges and are normally offered on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy with an initial commitment of six months. The target group for Intermediate Rents is different from those looking for Social/Affordable Rented housing. Generally these are targeted at working households, such as those identified as 'keyworkers', such as nurses, teachers, etc.
Letting	A property is accepted by the tenant, and they sign a tenancy agreement to move into the property.
Sensitive let	A request for additional screening of any applicant to ensure they have not caused previous tenancy related issues and/or we are aware of current neighbourhood issues where it is likely that the previous tenant caused distress/nuisance to the wider tenants.
Social Rent	Another type of affordable housing - rent is calculated using a set formula that takes into account the value of the property, the average earnings in the area and the number of bedrooms. Social rented homes are typically around 60% of an open market rent. Rent increases are regulated by the social housing regulator.

A Glossary of Terms can also be accessed [here](#).

1. Introduction

1.1 We aim to provide affordable, well managed rented accommodation to those in housing need within our operating areas.

1.2 We will:

- Let our homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way.
- Consider the housing needs and aspirations of our tenants and potential tenants.

1.3 We will also demonstrate how:

- We make the best use of available housing
- Ensure lettings are compatible with the requirements of any plans or section 106 agreement.
- Contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities
- Implement a clear application, decision making and appeals processes when outside of the choice-based lettings scheme.

1.4 This policy sets out how we will allocate and let our properties.

1.5 We will strive to ensure equal, fair and open access to housing for all eligible applicants or tenants in need of housing, within our operating areas.

1.6 This policy applies to all our rented homes available for letting, including general needs (Affordable Rent and social rent), independent living accommodation (sheltered), supported and intermediate rent. It does not apply to housing for sale, shared ownership or Tayfen House.

1.7 This policy does not apply to mutual exchanges, which are covered in the Tenancy policy.

2. Responsibility

2.1 Operations Committee is responsible for approval and oversight of this policy.

2.2 The voids and allocations manager and delegated staff are responsible for delivery.

3. Aims and Outcomes

3.1 We want to ensure that our tenants and applicants can access suitable housing based on need and availability in a fair, accessible and transparent way.

3.2 We will advertise and allocate all of our properties via the relevant local authority choice based letting scheme, where appropriate, subject to paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 below. Where there is a need for a local lettings plan, or sensitive let, we may let homes outside of the local authority's policy. Due to our operating area it might not be possible to meet all the requirements of the individual local authority.

3.3 Housing need is assessed by the sub regional common allocations policy, for each CBL scheme. This comprises of a banding system that considers housing need and length of time the applicant has been waiting for a property.

- 3.4 We will advertise our new build properties within the relevant CBL scheme and in accordance with any relevant section 106 agreement. We normally also do this for the majority of our relets of existing stock, but we can and will, retain 25% of our properties to offer to our own tenants by way of management moves and direct lets should we need to do so
- 3.5 To make the best use of our properties and in exceptional cases, we may choose not to advertise a property through the CBL scheme, and a direct let may be made - for example:
- If a property is needed urgently to deal with an emergency e.g. fire or flood
 - To enable a management move
 - To facilitate a move while a property is being repaired
 - When a tenant's existing property needs to be demolished
 - To meet the requirements of those with specific housing needs
 - If it is specifically adapted and meets a particular need of an applicant
 - If it is needed to provide temporary accommodation or to fulfil a statutory duty for a succession case
- 3.6 In these cases, we will notify the relevant CBL scheme and local authority. Direct lets and the determination of urgency will be considered on a case by case basis. This list is not exhaustive.
- 3.7 Our lettings procedures contain full details on how we allocate our properties and the possible reasons we may refuse an applicant.
- 3.8 Homes particularly designed for, or accessible to, people with disabilities will be advertised as such, to help applicants with those needs to identify them. An applicant who is eligible for an adapted property may bid on properties without adaptations in line with the normal bidding procedure. Any aid or adaptation request will be completed in line with our aids and adaptations policy.
- 3.9 We will work with partners, the local authority and agencies to promote strong and sustainable communities and may decide to let our properties via a local lettings plan. This may be to tackle anti-social behaviour or to improve areas that are difficult to let.
- 3.10 Each week, we will advertise any vacant properties via the relevant CBL route (including to those on assisted bidding schemes), subject to paragraphs 3.4-3.8 above. To ensure the best use of properties, we may arrange multiple viewings with applicants where the CBL scheme supports this option. Viewings may be done in person or virtually. Each advert will contain details of the specific property.
- 3.11 We reserve the right to withdraw an offer to an applicant if there are grounds to do so, and if we consider that the allocation would be detrimental to the local community, in line with our allocations and tenancy management procedures.
- 3.12 We will issue any tenancy in line with our Tenancy policy.
- 3.13 Where a disability is disclosed during the shortlisting or allocations process, which may have an impact on evacuation and health and safety, we will complete a person-centred risk assessment to advise of the suitability of the property. Where appropriate we may implement a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP).

4. Eligibility

- 4.1 Applicants are entitled to bid for properties we advertise, and we will offer accommodation in accordance with the allocation process of the particular CBL, the applicant's eligibility for the specific property and in line with our procedures.
- 4.2 The same eligibility rules for all applicants apply, including an assessment around verification, and any help or support required to maximise income. This is to ensure that the offer of accommodation is right first time, and that the applicant will be able to sustain their tenancy. Where there is debt or former tenant arrears, or other tenancy breaches in a previous or current tenancy, we may refuse to accept the bid or work with the applicant to resolve the issue.
- 4.3 We will only refuse bids in exceptional circumstances. A refusal can be appealed to the voids and allocations manager with the reasons why. Any appeal will be considered on a case by case basis and used in conjunction with our Allocation process.
- 4.4 We reserve the right to let to applicants who ordinarily would not be eligible for social housing but who fulfil the aims of our charitable status. This could be in the following circumstances, and this list is not exhaustive:
- Where we have had to let properties and are unable to let via the local authorities CBL system.
 - This is a requirement of the S106 or local lettings plan.
 - A varied tenure mix is required to create a balanced or sustainable community.
- 4.5 'Hard to let' properties will be let on this basis and advertised via our website, the local press or property websites such as Rightmove. Our usual pre tenancy checks and our Tenancy policy will apply.
- 4.6 Intermediate rent properties will be offered in accordance with the requirements of the scheme, eligibility conditions and in line with our tenancy policy and our allocations procedure.
- 4.7 We will conduct right to rent checks for all new applicants where the allocation does not originate from a local authority. All applicants will be requested to sign a declaration confirming all information is true, accurate and relevant to their housing application.
- 4.8 We will manage any suspected cases of fraud or deception in line with our Tenancy policy and procedures.

5. Legislation and Regulation

The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013

The Housing Act 1985 (as amended) and any associated Regulations

The Housing Act 1988 (as amended) and any associated Regulations

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and any associated Regulations

The Homelessness Act 2020 and any associated Regulations

The Data Protection Act 2018 and any associated Regulations

The UK General Data Protection Regulation and any associated Regulations

Tenancy Standard, Regulator of Social Housing

Rent Standard and Policy Statement, Regulator of Social Housing

6. Related documents

Tenancy Policy and procedure
Lettings Procedure
Abandonment Procedure
Succession Procedure
Mutual Exchange Policy and Procedure
Income Management Policy and Procedure
Recharges and Sundry Debts Procedure
Data Protection Policy and Procedure
Management Move / Direct Let Procedure
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
Aids and adaptations policy and procedures