
ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Tamar seeks to allocate its properties in a fair and transparent way. To do this, Tamar allocates properties via Choice Based Lettings (CBL) systems, developed with its local authority partners and other social landlords.

2. Policy Objectives

Tamar aims to:

- Ensure that new residents are selected fairly
- Provide prospective residents with as much choice in their housing as is practical
- Make the allocation of housing transparent
- Meet the obligations Tamar has to our local authority partners
- Ensure the establishment of sustainable communities

3. Policy

Tamar has jointly developed CBL systems with our local authority partners and other social landlords in both Devon and Cornwall. For each county there is a Common Housing Register and Common Assessment Criteria for allocations. Vacancies are advertised either in the newspaper, via a website or by some other means depending on the scheme.

Tamar is only obliged to give the local authority a certain percentage of the vacancies that arise, for nominations from their Housing Register. This is usually 50%, but may be up to 100%. However, Tamar will let all empty properties via the appropriate CBL system. In some cases, where there is a planning restriction on the property, applicants may have to fulfil certain criteria specific to a scheme, such as a local connection or age restrictions.

Tamar does not restrict the allocation of housing to any specific group or groups of applicants. Applications, via the appropriate CBL system, will be accepted except where they meet one or more of the Reasons for Refusing Applicants, published on the website.

However, where there are issues of sustainability within a particular area or estate, Tamar may develop a local lettings plan with the assistance of the local authority. This could restrict the applicants for a particular scheme by, for example, allowing the under occupation of some properties.

Size Criteria

Tamar will only allocate properties to a family of the correct size for the property. In deciding whether property is suitable for a family the following criteria will be used.

- The tenant (or joint tenants) will have the largest bedroom
- Each adult or adult couple will have their own room (anyone aged over 16 is counted as an adult)
- Two children of the same sex may share a bedroom, whatever their age
- Two children of opposite sexes may share a bedroom until the oldest is 10
- Only one child or adult may occupy a single room (under 9.5m² in area). Rooms over 9.5m² may be occupied by one or two people
- Allowance is made for applicants who need separate rooms for medical reasons or where there is a need for an overnight carer. Evidence of the need will have to be provided
- Spare bedrooms are not permitted except where a property is hard to let, as part of a local lettings plan or for medical reasons
- Where the property will be under-occupied and the tenant will be in receipt of Housing Benefit, Tamar will carry out a financial assessment to ensure that the tenant is able to afford to pay the rent.

Transfers

Tamar does not operate a transfer waiting list. Instead, Tamar residents who wish to move need to apply directly to the local authority for inclusion on the Housing Register. They may then apply for a Tamar property, along with anyone else on the Register.

Mutual Exchanges

Tamar will encourage residents who wish to move to do so via a Mutual Exchange. Tamar will either hold a register of people who are looking to do a Mutual Exchange or provide access to a web based service that matches people who want to exchange.

Lettings

All applicants will be visited by housing staff before any offer of accommodation is made, to check the application and any support needs that the applicant may have. In addition all applicants will be able to view the property before making a decision on whether to accept the tenancy.

All offers of accommodation will be made in writing to the applicant, except where this is not practical due to time constraints. Any applicant may, if they wish add the name of their spouse or long term partner to the tenancy at the commencement of the tenancy.

4. Risk Management

Potential risk	Mitigating action
That a tenancy is allocated to someone who is not entitled to it.	All offers of accommodation are recorded and the paperwork retained for future reference.
That a new tenant has support needs that Tamar is unable to meet.	All applicants are visited before being allocated a property, and the allocation will be refused if the applicant requires support, which is not being provided.
That Tamar does not meet its obligations to its partner local authorities.	100% of vacancies are let through the Choice Based lettings systems.
A tenancy is allocated to someone who cannot sustain the tenancy appropriately.	Tamar has published criteria for refusal of accommodation that allow staff to exercise judgement in the granting of tenancies to applicants who appear suitable following a home visit.

5. Relevant Legislation & Guidance

The Housing Act 1985
The Housing Act 1996
The Housing Act 2004

6. Equality and Diversity

All applicants for housing should be treated fairly according to their needs.

7. Value for Money

Generally, the number of applicants bidding for Tamar's properties means that the allocations policy will not result in any loss of income. However, the criteria for refusal of applicants and the size criteria may result in a property being void for longer than is necessary. However, Tamar has judged that using the property to house the right family is more important than the minimal loss of rent income.

7. Monitoring

The Operations Director will monitor the implementation of this policy. Details of who Tamar is housing will be reported to the Board on a six monthly basis as part of the Housing Management Report.

8. Author

Operations Director, Tamar
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