



**Monitoring information**

**Policy/Procedure/Strategy:** Allocations Policy

**Version:** -

**Date Approved:** September 2016

**Expiry Date (the life of the policy from the approval date):** September 2019

**Date amended (if applicable):** N/A

**Owner:** Sam Dunne

**Job Title:** Rent and Arrears Manager

**Approval route: (see policy timetable)** Board



## Allocations Policy

### Introduction:

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that Teign Housing staff members, our customers (tenants and potential tenants) and partners are aware, and have a clear understanding of how we will allocate our empty homes. It should be read in conjunction with our Allocations Procedure.

### Scope of the Policy:

This policy has been developed in accordance with the regulatory standards. It is our specific intention to allocate our homes fairly, transparently and effectively whilst taking into account the housing needs and aspirations of our customers. This policy sets out how we will:

- Offer choice to customers
- Make best use of our available housing;
- Ensure allocations are appropriate to the purpose of the housing;
- 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 customers;
- Provide a customer focused allocation service.

### Policy Statement :

#### 1. To offer choice to tenants and potential tenants 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 where required.
- 1.3. We will monitor our tenants' ability to move and will advertise homes with a preference to social housing transfer tenants as appropriate.
- 2. To make best use of our available homes we will:**
  - 2.1. Actively promote downsizing to smaller homes and advertise a proportion of properties for under-occupiers for which they will receive priority;
  - 2.2. Have regard to our partner Local Authorities Adapted Properties Protocol and aim to allocate homes adapted for people with disabilities to customers with a need for the 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;
- 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 and covenants and agreed lettings plans;
  - 3.2. Allocate housing for older people to customers aged 55 years or over unless planning restrictions state otherwise;
- 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 advertising homes with preference applied should there be a specific urgent need.
- 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 for new development;.
  - 5.2. Complete a tenancy sustainment assessment with all new tenants 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 customer 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;
  - 6.4. Not normally offer a property where the customer has been guilty of anti-social behaviour within the last 2 years;
  - 6.5. Not normally offer a property where Teign Housing deems the property 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 customers 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 guarantor for the rent until they turn 18;
  - 6.7. Not exclude any customer from housing without giving full consideration to their individual circumstances;
  - 6.8. Give customers 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” 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 a notice is received;
  - 7.2. Complete property inspections with outgoing customers;
  - 7.3. Encourage early viewings for customers during the notice period;
  - 7.4. 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 customers;
  - 8.2. Keep customers informed throughout the allocations process;
  - 8.3. Ensure customers 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**

Tenancy Standard, Neighbourhood Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, Localism Act, Equality Act.

## **Monitoring and Performance Standards:**

1. We will set targets for lettings to customers from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, customers with disabilities and customers downsizing to smaller to homes.
2. We will set targets for customer satisfaction of the moving homes process.
3. We will set annual targets for average re-let times and void loss;
4. Our progress against all targets will be monitored on a monthly basis and we will promote continuous improvements of the service.
5. We will record all lettings in the Continuous Recording of Lettings system (CORE).

## **Related Documents:**

Allocations Procedure, CBL Policy & Procedures, Neighbourhood Strategy, Tenancy Strategy. Code of Conduct