



## **Allocations Policy and Procedure**

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### 1. Policy Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure Lyng Community Association (LCA) allocates and lets properties in such a way as to safeguard rental income and realise the potential for new tenants to become active within their community, therefore contributing to and supporting a strong, balanced and sustainable community.
- 1.2 The objectives of the Association are to:
- Offer affordable, quality housing.
  - Ensure that the Associations Equal Opportunities policy is implemented throughout the allocations process.
  - Ensure the Associations properties are let in a timely and organised method, minimizing any void loss.
  - Ensure new tenants are encouraged to fully engage with and take advantage of the Community initiatives and activities offered by LCA.
  - Ensure that the Association observes Sandwell Homes allocation policy with regards to the 50% nomination rights of the Local Authority.
  - Ensure that the Association allocates 50% of voids available to transfer cases, allowing existing tenants to up / downsize and remain in the local area.

### 2. Equality and Diversity

- 2.1 The Association will ensure that its allocation policy does not discriminate against any applicants on the grounds of race, religion, gender, ethnic origin, age, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.2 The LCA will ensure that its allocation policy abides by all equal opportunities legislation, including all of the legislation incorporated into the Equality Act 2010 and the Race Relations Code of Practice in Rented Housing. The association will observe the Housing Act 1988 with regards to housing staff, members and their close relatives.
- 2.3 Applicants will be invited to describe their ethnic origin, sex, disability and sexual orientation for monitoring purposes only on their application form. This information will be collated on an annual basis to identify any trends regarding the percentage of allocations to minority groups and the surrounding population, any issues identified will be reported and actions identified.
- 2.4 Information regarding making an application can be made available in languages spoken within the local community and in large print. Braille and other forms of digital media will be supplied, as appropriate, to any applicant as requested or necessary.

### **3. Access to Homes**

3.1 Access will not be restricted by requesting deposits or rent in advance.

### **4. Allocations - Sandwell Homes**

4.1 The Association is obligated to allocate 50% of lettings to Sandwell Homes nominees.

4.2 For each property allocated to Sandwell Homes the Association will request 3 nominations from the Local Authority.

4.3 In the instance the Local Authority is unable to make a suitable nomination the Association will allocate the property to tenants on the internal transfer list.

### **5. Assessment of Local Authority Nominations**

5.1 Local Authority nominations will be assessed by Sandwell Homes in accordance with their Allocation Policy.

5.2 Sandwell Homes Allocations Policy is broadly in line with the Associations Allocations policy; therefore nominations made are suitable and meet the LCA eligibility criteria.

### **6 Community Involvement Interview**

6.1 All applicants / nominations will be invited to attend a Community Involvement Interview at the Associations office. The purpose of the interview is to confirm housing need, eligibility and to ascertain the applicant's commitment to the community.

6.2 Applicants who are able to demonstrate evidence of a commitment to their existing or previous community may be given priority over those not able to demonstrate previous community commitment.

### **7. Internal Transfers**

7.1 The LCA will allocate 50% of its void properties and any properties that the Local Authority fails to make a suitable nomination for, to transfer applicants on the waiting list.

7.2 The LCA will send any properties that cannot be filled from the Transfer Waiting List to the Local Authority for a suitable nomination

### 8. The Transfer List

- 8.1 The transfer list consists of existing tenants who wish to apply for a property owned by the Association which better meets their housing need or circumstances. For example: upsizing due to a growing family.
- 8.2 The transfer list incorporates specific housing requirements and incorporates applicants for 1 bed and 2 bed flats, 2 bed houses, 3 bed houses and 4 bed houses.

### 9. Applications

- 9.1 Tenants can apply for a transfer at any time by completing an application form and submitting it to the Housing Officer.
- 9.2 Application forms are available upon request.
- 9.3 Help and advice on completing an application form will be provided as requested.
- 9.4 Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of their application. The acknowledgement will confirm the Housing Priority Bands (Appendix One) and request additional supporting documentation for the transfer. Tenants will be advised there is no time bound priority and it may take considerable time for a property to become available.
- 9.5 A Housing Allocations Panel comprised of the General Manager, Office Manager and Community Development Officer will preside over transfer allocations.

### 10. Appeal

- 10.1 All applicants have the right of appeal against any decision made. Information on the appeals process will be provided as a matter of good practice to all applicants at the time of the decision. All appeals will be heard by the Board whose decision is final.

### 11 Eligibility

- 11.1 The Associations eligibility criteria for all properties, regardless of nomination or transfer applicants, is as follows:

Property Type	Bedrooms	Eligible Family Size
Low-rise Flat	1	Single person or childless couple
Low-rise Flat	2	Childless couple or two adults

## Housing Management

House	2	Families with one or two children as per National Bedroom Standard
House	3 - 4	Families with two or three children as per National Bedroom Standard
House	4	Families with three or more children as per National Bedroom Standard

11.2 Guidelines state children of opposite sex can share a room until the eldest child turns ten. Children of the same sex can share a room until the eldest child turns sixteen.

11.3 The Association will allow under-occupation of properties by one bedroom.

### 12. Offering Properties

12.1 Successful applicants will be offered a property and the Housing Officer will instigate the Sign-Up Procedure including:

- Issuing of the appropriate Tenancy Agreement.
- Confirmation of Rent / SCs payable and payment dates.
- An introduction to the LCA's policies and procedures via a tenant's handbook.
- An information booklet on the local area, including doctors, dentists, schools, crèches etc.
- Detail of current Community Initiatives / Activities
- Date for Welcome Visit.

### 13. Refusal of Allocation

13.1 A person who refuses 2 offers of accommodation, without good reason, will be removed from the Allocation process.

### 14. Reporting and Monitoring

14.1 The Association retains records of all nomination and transfer allocation decisions in order to analyse applications and lettings, and to monitor that they reflect the diversity of the community.

### 15. Refusal of Transfer Application

15.1 Any Tenant/Occupant with a financial or dwelling interest in another property will be refused entry to the Transfer List.

## APPENDIX

### **Guide to housing priority bands**

This is how housing priority bands for households are decided. The band you are given depends on your circumstances.

#### **Band One**

1. People with a care plan who need to be discharged from hospital, a rehabilitation unit or residential care who do not have access to suitable accommodation.
2. People whose situation is such that admission to hospital or similar would be inevitable if not re-housed quickly.
3. People subject to harassment or abuse or violence (or where the threat exists) and where the safety and well being of the victim(s) is at serious risk of harm and there is an urgent need for alternative accommodation.
4. Witness/es giving evidence where the police have recommended that the person is urgently re-housed.
5. A household unable to occupy their property due to enforced closure (confirmed by a Sandwell Council officer).
6. Households who are over-crowded and require two or more further bedrooms as per the Department for Work and Pensions bedroom standard.
7. Council or housing association tenants currently under-occupying a property by at least two bedrooms.
8. Council or housing association tenants currently under-occupying a house and who wish to transfer to a council or housing association property with fewer bedrooms.
9. Households living in public or private sector properties directly affected by clearance and CPO clearance program who need urgent re-housing, particularly where the household is vulnerable (e.g. a household isolated and surrounded by void units).
10. Children and their families/carers where the children are the subject of care proceedings and where the local authority has requested assistance with the provision of appropriate housing in the exercise of their functions under Section (27) Children Act and the council's corporate parenting responsibilities.

## Housing Management

11. Members of the Armed Forces and their families who qualify under The Allocation of Accommodation (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces Personnel) (England) Regulations 2012.

### **Band Two**

1. Council or housing association tenants directly affected by the Welfare Reform Act, currently under-occupying a property by one bedroom that was let prior to 17 April 2013, and who will transfer to a property to which they are eligible with fewer bedrooms.
2. Households living in public or private sector properties directly affected by clearance and CPO clearance program.
3. Non-successor households and joint tenancy termination households moving under the guidance outlined in Sandwell MBC Housing Allocations Policy section F/3.
4. Council or housing association tenants who currently occupy an adapted property where the adaptations are no longer in use by any of the household members.
5. Council or housing association tenants who currently occupy an Intermediate or Advanced Level Sanctuary Scheme property who wish to vacate the property.
6. Children leaving care under Section 23 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.
7. People awarded a medical priority (where current housing conditions are having a major adverse affect on the medical condition of either the applicant or a member of their household). This includes people with a physical disability who have been assessed by an occupational therapist as needing an adapted property to meet their housing need.
8. Homeless people who are eligible and unintentionally homeless including those not in priority need.
9. People in supported housing seeking a move to settled accommodation under the 'move-on' protocol.

### **Band Three**

1. Households in a service tenancy with Sandwell Council which is due to terminate within six months.
2. Council and housing association tenants who fall outside band one/7 and 8 and band two/1) currently under-occupying by one bedroom, who wish to transfer to a property for which they are eligible with fewer bedrooms.

## Housing Management

3. People who need to move on welfare grounds.
4. Households who are over-crowded and require a further bedroom as per the DWP standard.
5. Households identified by the Housing Options Team that need urgent re-housing to prevent homelessness and where there is a strong likelihood of full homelessness duty being accepted in the near future.
6. Households who have dependent children (where at least one of the children is aged 16 or below and are in receipt of Child Benefit) and whose main and principle home is a flat or maisonette.

### **Band Four**

1. Council or housing association tenants who wish to release a ground floor flat and transfer to a property to which they are eligible with the same number or fewer bedrooms.
2. Homeless people who are eligible and intentionally homeless.
3. Homeless people who are eligible and unintentionally homeless who have refused one offer of accommodation.

### **Band Five**

1. All other households who do not fall into any of the types of housing need referred to in bands one, two, three or four.