

Allocations Policy

Policy reference number: FV-POL-ALLOC1

Version number: 3

Date applies from: 22.04.2022

UNCONTROLLED IF PRINTED

Aim of policy

This policy sets out the aims and principles through which ForHousing allocate properties. ForHousing provides a range of quality, affordable property for people in housing need for a wide range of reasons.

The overarching aim of this Policy is to make the best use of stock available, meet housing need where possible and create sustainable communities.

The policy does not include a transfer of property through means of a management move or decant of a tenancy, instances such as these are covered in their respective procedures.

Policy

Housing need will be addressed by providing good quality, affordable housing across a broad range of tenures.

Offers will take into consideration how the housing stock can best be used in terms of occupancy level, facilities and preventing tenancy fraud, such as unlawful subletting or obtaining a tenancy through false statement.

ForHousing seeks to make the allocation of our properties sustainable by matching the properties available to the needs of the individual household as identified in their housing application and other information provided by the tenant. The allocation of properties will comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

Applicants and prospective tenants will be fully supported in navigating the allocation and lettings process, in line with procedures linked to this policy. This includes, applicants and prospective tenants being provided with a key point of contact throughout the process, along with an in-depth pre tenancy interview. Properties will be re-let as quickly as possible to meet housing need and to minimise rent loss.

Nominations

Allocations will take place in accordance with the nominations agreements between ForHousing members and the Local Authorities where ForHousing manage stock.

Lettings Schemes

ForHousing will support Local Authorities to discharge their statutory duties, including those under the homeless legislation and the allocation of properties through lettings schemes. This will also ensure fair and transparent access to rehousing whilst maximising tenant choice and mobility. Properties advertised in this way will be allocated according to the agreed allocations policy set by the respective Local Authority, although ForHousing will retain the final decision whether to grant a tenancy. ForHousing will sometimes use discretion to allocate properties outside of these lettings schemes, in instances including but not exclusive of::

- meeting emergency re-housing needs,

- providing a property for a decant or temporary move
- supporting tenants who are under-occupying or overcrowded

Other Lettings

ForHousing will advertise some properties for example 'hard to let' properties via national letting schemes including HomeHunt and RightMove.

Should the need arise, ForHousing will also develop and maintain its own waiting list.

Local Lettings Agreements

Local lettings agreements may be agreed to facilitate balanced and sustainable neighbourhoods. These agreements will be evidence based and will be established following consultation with residents, partner agencies and other relevant stakeholders.

Exclusions and Suspensions

Some applicants will not be eligible for the ForHousing accommodation, this includes:

- Households excluded by law from holding a tenancy
- Households that do not meet the 'Right to Rent' requirements under s.22 of the immigration Act 2014;
- Applicants who, either as a tenant of ForHousing or another landlord have acted in a manner which would have seriously breached the terms of our tenancy, for example, they have been the perpetrator of serious anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Sometimes applicants will be ineligible for a limited period for example until they:

- Have maintained payments of arrears for an agreed period
- Have provided evidence that their behaviour has changed.

References will be requested before offering accommodation. ForHousing will consider failure to provide references as equal to providing poor references, for the purpose of deciding whether to grant a tenancy. If applicants cannot provide a reference for example because they have had no previous tenancy, a reference from a professional body will be considered.

The provision of false information on application forms will be considered to be obtaining the tenancy by false statement and ForHousing may seek to recover possession of the property through the County Court.

Successful tenancy plans

Where it is considered, as part of the pre-tenancy assessments, that a household will not be able to sustainably afford the tenancy (either due to the level of household income, or due to the financial capability of the tenants), ForHousing will work with the household to improve their situation, but ultimately reserve the right not to allocate the property to them.

Under 18s

ForHousing does not normally re-house under 18s other than as a necessity; however persons leaving care may be offered accommodation by prior arrangement with the local authority.

Supported Accommodation

ForHousing provides specialist accommodation for older people with support needs through supported housing. Applicants applying for supported accommodation will require a separate assessment to establish eligibility. ForHousing reserves the right to not allocate should the eligibility criteria not be met.

Extra Care Accommodation

Extra care accommodation has its own selection process. Eligibility for extra care accommodation is assessed via a social work assessment in order to determine the applicants care and support needs along with suitability for extra care accommodation.

Adapted properties

In seeking to make best use of the stock, where a property has been designed or adapted for a person with a disability, ForHousing will seek to allocate it to a household best suited to the design or relevant adaptation.

ForHousing may seek possession of the property via the County court if a property is adapted and there are no longer any occupants that require such adaptations.

Tenancy Mobility

ForHousing recognises that the housing needs of a household may change over time and the accommodation originally provided may no longer be suitable. ForHousing will advise on housing options for tenants wishing to move to more suitable accommodation. All offers will be dependent on the availability of suitable properties and a history of meeting conditions of tenancy. ForHousing reserve the right to commence legal proceedings in appropriate cases where a property is no longer deemed suitable. The decision of ForHousing in this regard will be final.

Tenants are able to access their own housing solution, through mutual exchanges. A Mutual Exchange is the mechanism that allows tenants of social landlords to exercise any statutory or contractual right they have to exchange their tenancies by assignment, with consent and approval of the housing provider(s).

Regular reviews of the volume of transfers will take place to maintain an appropriate balance between social and commercial responsibilities and wider neighbourhood sustainability.

Lettings to employees, former employees, board members and their relatives

In addition to meeting the requirements of this Policy and our Allocations Procedure, all lets to employees, former employees, board members and their relatives or associates must meet the allocation criteria and be approved by the Director of Neighbourhoods.

Appeals

ForHousing operates a process for appeal for applicants to utilise to appeal any restrictions applied by ForHousing to rehousing other than as set out above

How the policy will be delivered

This Policy sets out ForHousings overall approach to allocations, although additional localised arrangements may be adopted to meet the needs of an area as set out by the relevant Local Authority. Any such arrangements will form the subject of a Local Lettings Policy approved by the Local Authority.

This Policy will, on approval, be communicated to employees via the intranet. It will be published on the internet site for tenants and stakeholders.

If employees become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the policy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the responsible officer for the Policy. This feedback will be incorporated into the policy / procedural review process. Neighbourhood Services Manager will authorise any lettings to be made outside the main lettings schemes for example Management Moves and Decants.

Related documents

- Allocations Procedure
- Tenure Policy
- Decant Procedure
- Mutual Exchange Procedure
- Starter Tenancy Procedure
- Local Lettings Policies
- Local Authority Strategy and Allocations schemes

Equality analysis

Date of approved equality analysis	02.06.2021
Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impact	

Consultation and business intelligence

The Policy was reviewed in consultation with colleagues and tenants of ForHousing.

Monitoring arrangements

If staff become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the Policy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the Policy Owner. This feedback will be incorporated into the policy / procedural review process.

ForHousing will monitor and report performance in compliance with this policy in the following ways:

- The Allocations Management Assurance Framework;
- Salford City Council’s CBL partners group
- Knowsley Council’s CBL partners group
- Oldham Councils CBL partners group
- Fylde Councils CBL partners group

Policy summary for the intranet

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Words linked to this policy for intranet searches

Allocation
 Tenancy
 Starter Tenancy
 Mutual Exchange
 Affordable rent
 Social rent

Where this policy should be accessible

ForHousing owned

ForHousing managed

Control data and approval history

Policy owner:	Director of Neighbourhoods
Next review date:	March 2023

Action	Approved by	Date
Approval	Relevant lead or director	22.04.2022
Approval	Group Executive Leadership Team representative(s)	N/A
Approval	Relevant board	N/A
Equality Analysis review and advise	Business Excellence	02.06.21
Health and safety	Health and Safety	N/A

review and advise		
Legal review and advise	Legal Services Executive	14.08.18
Human Resources review and advise	Human Resources (Trade Union and staff consulted when required)	N/A

Document revision history

Date approved	Version number	Version history
21.03.2019	V1	Previously ForViva Allocations Policy V2. Name change from ForViva to ForHousing
Date amended	Version number	Key changes
24/05/2021	V2	Added Fylde CBL partners to the list. Changes to terminology and layout
22/04/2022	V3	Added reference to under occupying and overcrowding. Added information in relation to how applicants are assisted in navigating lettings process