

Allocations Policy

Policy reference	FV-POL-ALLOC1
Version number	4.1
Date applies from	26/10/23
Policy owner	Director Of Neighbourhoods
Next review Date	Oct 2025

Annual Checks

Policy owners should ensure that an annual check of hyperlinks, roles, and names is undertaken. These checks are in addition to formal review process. Please see Policy and Procedure framework guidance for further details.

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 accommodation for people in housing need.

The overarching aim of this policy is to make the best use of housing available, meet housing need and contribute to local authorities strategic housing function whilst creating 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.

Related Legislation and Regulation

- Housing Act 1996
- Immigration Act 2014
- Localism Act 2011

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 being provided with a key point of contact throughout the process, along with an in-depth pre tenancy interview. This will be tailored accordingly to the applicants' needs, including but not limited to, those with support needs, those whereby English is not the first language and those who have difficulties with written English.

Properties will be re-let as quickly as possible to meet housing need, considering the circumstances of the applicant who has been offered the property.

Nominations

Allocations will take place in accordance with the nomination's agreements between ForHousing 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 may advertise some properties via national letting schemes including HomeHunt and RightMove, but not to the detriment of meeting the obligations in the nomination's agreements with the respective Local Authority.

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

Local Lettings Policies

Local lettings policies 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 or accrued large rent arrears.

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 applicants), 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. Exclusions and suspensions within this policy apply to Supported accommodation.

Extra Care Accommodation

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. Exclusions and suspensions within this policy apply to 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. 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 can 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).

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. Appeals are to be made in writing to the Head of Customer Connect Hub within 14 days of the decision. The Head of Customer Connect Hub will investigate, review the decision, and advise the applicant of the outcome, in writing within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.

Equity and reasonable adjustment statement

We value diversity and work to create an inclusive environment for our customers and colleagues, where everyone has access to the same opportunities. We welcome our responsibility to comply with equalities legislation and regulatory requirements that relate to equity, diversity and inclusion and aim to do more. Through our activities we aim to remove systemic barriers to equal opportunities and eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within our organisation.

We are committed to providing excellent customer services, which are fair, equitable and inclusive. As such, we will endeavour to understand and make any reasonable adjustments required for customers in line with ForHousing's Reasonable Adjustment Statement and the Equality Act 2010. Any reasonable adjustment provided will be recorded and kept under active review.

How the policy will be delivered

This Policy sets out ForHousing's 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.

The Head of Customer Connect Hub 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

Inclusive Decision Making Framework (IDMF) analysis

Date of approved IDMF analysis	26.10.23
Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impact	n/a

Data Protection Impact Assessment

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

Under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, you are required to carry out a DPIA when developing or reviewing a Policy or Procedure that will have a widespread or serious impact on data held on individuals. Careful consideration should be given as to whether the policy or process will have an impact on any processing of personal information that is large scale, involves profiling or monitoring, decides on access to services or opportunities, or involves sensitive data or vulnerable individuals. Information and support regarding this can be obtained from the Data Protection Officer (DPO).

Has a DPIA been completed?	Yes
If a DPIA has been completed, was the DPO consulted?	Yes
If a DPIA has been completed, were any risks identified?	Yes, low.
If risks were identified as part of the DPIA process, have mitigation actions been identified?	Yes

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

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

The overarching aim of this policy is to make the best use of housing available, meet housing need and contribute to local authorities strategic housing function whilst creating 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.

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

Control data and approval history

Action	Approved by	Date
Approval	Relevant lead or director	14.11.23

Approval	Executive Management Team representative(s)	14.11.23
Approval	Relevant board / committee	N/A
Inclusive Decision Making Framework review and advise	Relevant director	26.10.23
Health and Safety review and advise	Health and Safety	13.11.23
Data protection impact assessment	Data Protection Officer	26.10.23
Legal review and advise	Legal Services Executive	13.11.23
Human Resources review and advise	Human Resources (Trade Union and staff consulted when required)	N/A

Annual check history

Date annual check completed	Version number	Non substantive changes (Where non-substantive changes have been made the policy/procedure will have a minor version number, for example V1.1)

Document revision history

Date approved	Version number	Version history
21.03.2019	V1	Previously ForViva Allocations Policy V1. 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
30.04.2022	V3	Added reference to under occupying and overcrowding. Added information in relation to how applicants are assisted in navigating lettings process
26.10.2023	V4	Full review completed. Expanded detail on process for appeals. Made explicit reference to this policy applying to Extra Care Accommodation and Supported Accommodation. Removed Homelessness Reduction Act 2021 reference, as this duty is on the Local Authority
29.07.2024	V4.1	Inclusion of paragraph related to reasonable adjustment statement of intent