



**DRAFT COMMON ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

**LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS OF PRESTON, SOUTH  
RIBBLE AND CHORLEY TOGETHER WITH  
PARTNER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS**

**DRAFT**

## **Partners To The Scheme**

This policy represents the allocations policy for social housing in the Preston, South Ribble and Chorley local authority areas.

The following housing associations (registered providers) have also adopted the allocations policy as a means of allocating 100% of their properties within the local authority areas of Preston, South Ribble and Chorley:

- Community Gateway Association
- Great Places
- New Progress Housing Association
- Manchester and District Housing Association
- Places For People - Homes
- Adactus Housing Association
- Chorley Community Housing
- Accent Foundation
- Contour Homes

The local authorities and housing associations are regarded as partner organisations to the Select Move scheme.

Any housing association with stock within the local authority areas of Preston, South Ribble and Chorley who are not a partner of Select Move will be subject to local nomination agreements in order to allocate accommodation. Nominations will be assessed in accordance with this policy. Any existing partner of the scheme that subsequently leaves the scheme will be required to follow local nominations agreements and nominations will be assessed in accordance with this policy.

## **Management Of The Select Move Scheme**

The Select Move scheme is subject to a 'Partnership Agreement'.

### **Steering Group – JM to move to memo**

The steering group is made of senior representatives from all partners to the Select Move scheme and meets at least six times a year. The steering group is responsible for:

- Monitoring the operation of the allocations policy;
- Reviewing the allocations policy to meet national good practice, local priorities and legislative and statutory guidance requirements;
- Recommending amendments to the allocation policy for approval by the relevant Boards, Committees or management teams of each partner;
- Ensuring compliance with any promises or commitments made locally;
- Quality assurance and consistency of the scheme across all partners;
- Make decisions relating to new members to be admitted to the scheme;

- Recommending future funding requirements of the scheme for approval by each partner;
- Agreeing amendments to Select Move IT systems to enhance or improve service delivery.

### **Operational Group – JM to move to memo**

The operational group is made up of operational managers and staff from each partner of the Select Move scheme.

The operational group is responsible for:

- Recommending changes to processes or procedures to the steering group;
- Recommending amendments or enhancements to the Select Move IT system to the Steering Group;
- Recommending amendments to standard scheme wide letter templates and forms;
- Ensuring that procedures and processes follow Select Move policy;
- Ensuring consistent interpretation of the allocations policy and of procedures across all partners.
- Refer issues to the steering group that cannot be resolved.

### **Policy Statement**

The aim of this allocations policy is to ensure that homes are allocated to eligible and qualifying people in a fair, consistent and accountable way in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance. Taking account of their housing needs and choices and having regard to the communities in which the homes are located.

The partners are committed to equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice in service provision and seek to promote social inclusion. Applicants who are seeking, accessing or applying will not be discriminated against in accordance with the general equality duty set out in the Equality Act.

Partners will ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to seek, access or apply to the service and is responsive to any special needs of applicants.

An allocation will be defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- A nomination of a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by another housing authority or
- A nomination of a person to be an assured tenant of accommodation held by a registered provider or registered social landlord in England and Wales.

For the purpose of this policy this includes transfers within the partners stock.

## **Policy Aims**

The overall aim of the policy is to offer applicants real housing choice, while ensuring reasonable preference for re-housing those in the most urgent need whilst making best use of the housing stock.

The Policy's key objectives are to:

- Ensure that those in the greatest housing need are prioritised in line with legislation, code of guidance on allocations, using good practice and ensuring statutory obligations are met.
- Foster partnership working with other housing associations, local authorities, other agencies and voluntary organisations working in the Preston, South Ribble and Chorley areas to provide the widest possible choice and options to all applicants.
- Create and stimulate new markets and interest in rented housing in the sub region to tackle problems of empty and unpopular stock as well as sustaining demand for popular areas and supporting sustainable communities.
- Ensure that support is provided for vulnerable people with special needs and that extension of choice to these applicants promotes wider social inclusion.
- Increase customer satisfaction through a one stop approach.
- Ensure applicants are treated fairly and sensitively.
- Support and contribute towards local authorities strategic objectives in particular in relation to homelessness and tenancy strategies
- Comply with all equal opportunities legislations and guidance, including the Equality Act 2010.
- To work towards the development of a common disabled adaptations register and allocation process.

## **Eligibility Criteria**

Persons aged 16 and over are able to join the Select Move choice based lettings scheme provided they meet the qualifying criteria and are not an ineligible person.

The following persons are ineligible to join the Select Move scheme:

- Persons from abroad who the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has deemed ineligible for allocation of housing under statute;
- Those persons subject to immigration control;
- Persons from abroad other than a person subject to immigration control;

Where there are two or more applicants and one or more is deemed ineligible a tenancy will only be granted to the applicant(s) who is/are eligible.

Under the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, local authorities have a legal duty to make enquiries into an applicants eligibility and

whether any duties are owed under the Act to secure accommodation for applicants who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

## **Qualifying Criteria**

### **Applicants will qualify if they:**

- Are an eligible person(s) and;
- Persons aged 16 and 17 can qualify to join the Select Move scheme but will not be made an offer of accommodation without evidence of an appropriate support package being in place that is agreed with the local authority and housing association.
- Can demonstrate that they have a local connection to the local authority areas of Preston, South Ribble or Chorley subject to the conditions set out below or;
- Are UK armed forces personnel or their spouse or civil partner subject to the conditions set out below.

In determining local connection the following criteria will be applied:

- The applicant(s) can demonstrate that they have lived 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years in the Preston, South Ribble or Chorley areas;
- The applicants have close relatives or immediate family who permanently reside in the Preston, South Ribble or Chorley areas. Immediate family includes mother, father, sister, brother, son or daughter;
- The applicants have permanent employment in the Preston, South Ribble or Chorley areas. Permanent employment is employment that is not temporary or seasonal and is for at least 16 hours per week
- The applicants have made a positive community contribution or undertaken voluntary work within the Preston, South Ribble or Chorley areas for at least 10 hours per month over the last 12 months;
- The applicant provides long term care to a person who permanently resides within Preston, South Ribble or Chorley who could not manage without the care provided and the need to move into the Preston, South Ribble or Chorley areas is directly related to the need to provide the care and be near the person to whom care is provided. The applicant must be able to demonstrate that they are a long term carer and that they receive the relevant benefits.
- In determining qualification for current and former UK armed forces personnel or their spouse or civil partner the following will apply:
- At the time of application the applicant is serving or has formerly served in the UK regular forces within the last 5 years.
- The applicant applies for housing whilst they are serving, or has served in the last 5 years of making the application, in the UK regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable, wholly or partly, to their service or; The applicant has ceased or will cease to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the UK Government following the death of his or her spouse or civil partner who has served in the UK

regular forces within the last 5 years and whose death was attributable, wholly or partly, to that service.

- Make and maintain a payment plan for any housing related debts below £999.99. The plan must be maintained for a minimum of 3 months of debts up to £500, and 6 months for debts from £501 to £999.99. Such as rent arrears or sundry debts that can be proved by a landlord. In the case of a private tenancy a County Court Judgement needs to be provided or proven court action.

### **Applicants will not qualify if:**

- The applicant(s) are home owners (whether or not the property is located in the UK) – consideration will be given where there is a statutory duty to assist by the local authority or where the applicant’s housing needs can only be met by social housing;
- The applicant(s) have a gross annual income of £60,000 or more or have savings or assets of £30,000 or more;
- In certain circumstances applicant(s) or anyone included on the application form will not qualify if they have engaged in anti social behaviour such that action has been taken, or could have been taken, against the person – such as an injunction, ASBO, demotion order or possession order.
- The applicant(s) or anyone on the application form has been convicted of a serious offence that has not been spent and is likely to pose a threat or risk to any partner of the scheme, tenants, local community or staff;
- The applicant(s) has a housing related debt or debt’s that is/are £1,000 or more – such as rent arrears or sundry debts that can be proved by a landlord. In the case of a private tenancy a County Court Judgement needs to be provided or proven court action.
- Applicants who have a housing related debt up to £999.99 who have not made a payment plan to repay the debt or made a repayment plan and not maintained the payments in accordance with the plan.
- Anyone who passes the habitual residency test and does not have access to public funding and has insufficient income or savings to sustain a tenancy.

Officers will consider the circumstances of individual cases and applicants are entitled to present any mitigating circumstances for consideration.

Consideration will be given to those applicant(s) with housing related debts where there is a statutory duty to assist by the local authority but even in these cases the applicant(s) will be required to demonstrate a commitment to the reduction of the debt which will be determined on a case by case basis.

### **Applicants Who Don’t Qualify**

Applicants who don’t qualify but are eligible after verification checks have been carried out can apply directly to the partner Landlord of their choice to be placed on the Open Market Register (OMR) for hard to let properties that can’t be let via this

policy due to lack of demand by suitable households due to the size or age restrictions. OMR properties will not be subject to this policy, and only be used as a last resort. For further information please see the Open Market Register policy.

## **Verification**

At the time of application the applicant(s) will be required to provide proof of eligibility for all persons named on the application (and also provide proof for any applicants subsequently added to the application). The following will be required to prove identity:

- Current passport or;
- Current national identity card or;
- Photo driving licence or;
- Birth certificate or;
- Written confirmation of identity from a professional person or support agency

Until the verification checks have been completed and accepted by a partner to the Select Move scheme as satisfactory then an applicant will not be able to express and interest on any property advertised on the Select Move scheme.

As part of the registration process verification checks will be carried out by the partners to the scheme. It will be the applicant(s) responsibility to provide evidence that is requested. This process can involve:

- Evidence from the applicant(s) that they have a local connection to the Preston, South Ribble or Chorley local authority areas;
- References from the current landlord;
- Requesting information about current or former housing related debts;
- Requesting information about current or previous anti social behaviour;
- Undertaking inspections of the current property to ensure conditions of tenancy are being complied with and/or details given on the application form are correct.
- Evidence of successful completion of pre tenancy training.

## **False Or Withheld Information**

It is a criminal offence for applicants to knowingly give false information or to withhold information relevant to their application. An offence may be committed if an applicant knowingly gives false information or knowingly withholds information which has reasonably been requested on the housing application form, in response to correspondence at the renewal of an application, or relating to any other review of the application. An offence is also committed if the applicant allows a third party to provide false information on his or her behalf, or at his or her instigation. In these circumstances action may be taken with regard to the tenancy awarded and/or their application.

## **Planning Restrictions**

Planning requirements may restrict which applicants can be considered for a particular property. These restrictions will be clearly set out in the advertisement by the partner and eligibility and short listing decisions will be made by the partner in accordance with the requirements of the planning consent.

## **Local Lettings Policies**

Partners to the Select Move scheme may draw up local lettings policy that are aimed at creating and maintaining sustainable communities which are:

- Time limited ;
- Consulted with the Local Authority and stakeholders and;
- Agreed with the Steering group

Applicants may, as part of a local lettings plan be required to attend training to demonstrate their ability to sustain a tenancy. Where training is identified as being necessary, applicants will need to successfully complete this training before an offer of accommodation is confirmed.

Local lettings policies must be formally publicised by the partner implementing the policy who must also carry out an equality impact assessment.

An annual audit of all local lettings policies will be carried out by the Steering Group of Select Move.

## **High Risk Ex-Offenders**

Applicants who are considered by relevant agencies as high risk ex-offenders will be subject to appropriate risk assessments with partner agencies before an offer of accommodation is made. The aim will be to ensure that appropriate support and/or supervision is in place to allow for a planned and managed offer of accommodation in terms of property type and location based on the risk assessment carried out. This may mean that restrictions will be placed on the property type and/or location offered.

## **Vulnerable Applicants**

Each partner is committed to equality of access to the Select Move choice based lettings scheme. Applicants with special or specific needs or who are vulnerable will be provided with appropriate assistance. They will be signposted to appropriate support agencies and advocacy services. Assistance may also include, but is not restricted to auto bidding, bidding by telephone, staff assisted bidding, newsletter of available properties being sent by post.

Where a proxy is needed or requested to make bids on behalf of vulnerable applicants suitable arrangements will be put into place to facilitate this following



written agreement by the applicant or other persons who can give legal written agreement on their behalf.

## Priority

Priority will be allocated by:

- Banding – Select Move operates with five bands – Band A to E with band A being the highest priority and band E being the lowest and;
- Those with a Local Connection to the Local Authority area of the advertised property will be given preference within the band.
- The use of an 'effective date' which will determine an applicant's position within the awarded priority band after local connection to the Local Authority area has been taken into account.
- All the above criteria will apply first to households whose minimum bedroom need matches the bedroom size of the property

In determining the 'effective date' the following criteria will be used:

- For new applicants the effective date will be the date the application is accepted onto the Select Move scheme;
- If an application is subsequently awarded a higher band priority the effective date will be the date the higher band priority was awarded;
- If an application is subsequently awarded a lower band priority then the effective date will be the date the application was accepted onto the Select Move scheme – i.e. the original effective date;
- Applicants given priority because they are 'moving on' from supported housing will have an effective date of the date they moved into the supported housing scheme from which they are moving on;
- For qualifying and eligible current or former UK service personnel or their spouse or civil partner in urgent housing need, the effective date will be backdated to equal their total period of service in the UK armed forces (or the service of spouse or civil partner);
- Where applicants become homeless unintentionally within 2 years of accepting a homeless duty private sector tenancy the effective date will be the date of the new application.

Banding priority will be allocated using the following criteria:

<b>BAND A: Urgent Need Band</b>	
Medical/Welfare Grounds  GLOBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An immediate life threatening or progressive condition which is seriously affected by the current housing and where re-housing would solve or alleviate that medical condition or make it significantly easier to manage.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member of the household seeking accommodation cannot be discharged from hospital or rehabilitation accommodation until suitable housing is provided and: The household had settled accommodation in a Partners' area prior to hospital admission.</li> <li>• A member of the household is elderly, disabled or has a progressive illness and is likely to require admission to hospital or residential/nursing care in the immediate future and re-housing would enable that person to remain living at home.</li> <li>• The household seeking accommodation has welfare needs so severe that the protection of <b>vulnerable adults or children</b> is only possible if the household were to move to a new home and where the present circumstances could deteriorate to such an extent as to place household members at risk, or in need of residential care unless re-housing is offered.</li> </ul>
<p>Care Leavers</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<p>Care leavers who are threatened with homelessness and who will continue to be supported by their local Leaving Care Team assessed through the agreed protocol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants are awarded this category in accordance with protocols between the Council's Housing and County Council Children Services Department. Applicants must be a former relevant child as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2002. They must have vulnerability and urgent housing need that is best met by the provision of long term settled housing</li> </ul>
<p>Release Adapted properties</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a Partner tenant does not require a specially adapted property for disabled use, and there is demand for its use.</li> </ul>
<p>Exceptional need to move, determined by partners with agreed procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed in exceptional circumstances due to significant problems associated with the tenants' occupation of a dwelling in the social or private rented sector and there is high risk</li> </ul>

<p>Domestic Violence/MARAC, Racial, Homophobic or Transgender Harassment, witness or child protection, management transfers</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<p>to the tenant or their family's safety if they remain in the dwelling/areas. For social housing tenants transfers will be to properties of the same size and type where required, but locations or areas are likely to change. A list of cases that could qualify is detailed in the policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency need to move due to exceptional circumstances where there is high risk to the tenant or family's safety if they remain in the dwelling/area. Urgent management transfer cases accepted by a participating landlord or waiting list cases accepted by a participating Local Authority.</li> </ul>
<p>Statutory overcrowded</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those that are statutory overcrowded as defined by the Housing Act 2004</li> </ul>
<p>Private Sector properties unsanitary or unfit.</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A private sector property either owned or rented where a statutory notice has been issued by the environmental health department that an unfit property is to be demolished under the Housing Act 2004</li> <li>• They are a private sector tenant and the Council's Public Health Team has decided that the property poses a category 1 hazard under the Health and Safety Fitness Rating and the Council are satisfied that the problem cannot be resolved by the landlord within 6 months and as a result continuing to occupy the accommodation will pose a risk to the applicants health. This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of roof, or have living conditions which are a statutory nuisance, and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a 6 month time period</li> </ul>
<p>Supported Accommodation</p> <p>GLOBAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants' leaving supported accommodation and have been assessed by the support provider as ready for independent living by the approved route in each local authority and the resulting vacancy can be used by someone else who needs the support.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Band B:</b></p>	
<p>Homeless Households owed a full homeless duty</p>	<p>Statutory Homeless Cases accepted by Local Authorities within the Scheme</p>

under section 193(2) or 195(2)  LOCAL	
Under Occupying  GLOBAL	Tenants of the partner Housing Associations under occupying family accommodation by two or more bedrooms in comparison with the bedroom standard Or Tenants of a partner organisation seeking a move to non family housing that will free up a house to enable use by a family.
Over Crowded by the bedroom standard for overcrowding  (Refer to 5.3, if accepted) GLOBAL	Applicants who need to move due to severe over crowding – short by 2 or more bedrooms.
Medical Mobility Cases / Medical grounds  GLOBAL	Applicants who have an urgent need to move on medical grounds because their current home is having a severe adverse effect on the health of a member of the household but who do not qualify for Band A urgent medical priority. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The household includes a child or young person with a disability or learning difficulty, who needs to access specialist education or training facilities and cannot do so from their present home. Supporting evidence must be provided.</li> </ul>
Essential Care  LOCAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The household includes a person who provides essential care to someone in another part of the region and they cannot deliver that care effectively from their current location</li> <li>• Prospective foster carers and adopters who require larger accommodation on the recommendation of children’s services.</li> <li>• The applicant is elderly or disabled and needs to move to a specific area to receive essential care or support from a close relative who lives there. Supporting evidence must be provided.</li> </ul>
Homeless Prevention option being chosen LOCAL  Priority will be awarded by LA after a 3 month period.	An applicant has children or is pregnant, or is a single person who would likely to be found to be in priority need and the Council consider they will be physically homeless within 28 days and they accept a prevention option from the Council’s Housing Options Team.

<b>Band C</b>	
Applicants who are entitled to reasonable preference as being non-priority homeless, intentionally homeless or homeless within the meaning of part 7.  - LOCAL	Applicants who are entitled to reasonable preference as being non priority homeless, intentionally homeless or homeless within part 7 of the Act. This will be assessed by the Local Authority.
Hardship  LOCAL	Applicants' who need to move to a particular locality where failure to meet that need would cause significant hardship to themselves or to others where a financial assessment has been undertaken.
Applicants living in Housing with children that lacks level access  GLOBAL	Applicants without ground level access or in upper floor accommodation with children under the age of 10.
Applicants living in unsatisfactory Housing that lack basic facilities  GLOBAL	Applicants without access to any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bath or Shower</li> <li>2. A toilet</li> <li>3. Cooking facilities</li> <li>4. Running hot water supplies</li> <li>5. Electric/gas needed for essential activities</li> </ol> <p>Subject to verification by the Local Authority.</p>
Homeless Prevention option being chosen  LOCAL Priority will be awarded for a 3 month period.	An applicant has children or is pregnant, or is a single person who would likely to be found to be in priority need and the Council consider they will be physically homeless within 28 days and they accept a prevention option from the Council's Housing Options Team.

<b>Band D</b>	
Applicants not assessed as being owed reasonable preference but who meet the partnership positive community criteria  GLOBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants employed or undertaking training within the borough to which they are applying</li> <li>• Applicants that can demonstrate a contribution to the local community such as voluntary work. This could be specific to the area where the work</li> </ul>

	<p>takes place or could be tenants on an estate with positive work on that estate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants with a family connection to the specific area required due to caring or specific support purposes</li> <li>• Applicants who are key workers</li> </ul>
Under-Occupancy and affected by benefit changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner tenants who are under-occupying and likely to face hardship due to benefit changes.</li> </ul>
GLOBAL	
Households Over-Occupying by 1 bedroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households over-occupying by 1 bedroom according to the bedroom standard regardless of household type or landlord.</li> </ul>

<b>E Band</b>	
No Housing Need or non qualifying applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants that do not qualify for additional preference but would like to move to alternative accommodation.</li> </ul>
GLOBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

Applicants becoming homeless unintentionally within 2 years of accepting a private sector tenancy will retain their priority need status and banding priority.

### Global & Local Banding Categories

Every application is awarded a local and global band, these may differ. The local band will reflect the priority awarded for housing within the applicant's local authority area only. The global band reflects the priority awarded across the partnership.

### Quota System

When advertising properties on the Select Move scheme, partners will use the following quota system:

BAND A	40%
BAND B	30%
BAND C	20%
BAND D	10%
BAND E	0%

## **Direct Matches**

A direct match will occur where a property has been identified for a particular applicant and have been approved by a Senior Manager in the partner organisation.

Direct matches are used in exceptional circumstances for emergency re-housing such as fire, flood, major incident, urgent major repairs, witness protection, child protection, serious domestic abuse or other exceptional housing management reason. Instances of direct matching will be monitored via the operational group for compliance with the shortlisting and offers procedure.

## **Numbers Of Expressions Of Interest, Numbers Of Offers And Other Restrictions**

Applicants can express an interest in a maximum of 5 properties within each advertising cycle.

Applicants who have been accepted as statutory homeless by a local authority will receive one suitable offer of accommodation which can be from the social rented or private rented sectors or as determined by the local authority. If a homeless applicant refuses one suitable offer of accommodation then the applicant will lose their reasonable preference priority banding and will be placed in a lower band to reflect their housing needs. The local authority will have no further legal duty to re-house. If an applicant wishes to request a review in relation to the suitability of an offer or their status as a homeless applicant they must make an application to the relevant local authority.

Applicants awarded band A or band B priority may lose their priority status if they refuse an offer of accommodation for which they, or their proxy, bid and the property is considered suitable taking into account:

- The size of the property;
- The physical access to the property and the internal layout;
- Facilities;
- Location;
- Accurate description on the Select Move advert.

Applicants in band A and band B will have their application reviewed every 10 weeks to ensure that the applicant is expressing an interest on suitable vacancies and using the maximum 5 expressions of interest each advertising cycle. Where the applicant is not expressing an interest or not using the 5 expressions of interest in each advertising cycle then the priority banding will be reviewed formally and if appropriate bidding will take place on the applicants behalf.

## **Offers Of Accommodation**

Offers of accommodation may be made:

- In writing
- By telephone
- By email

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their contact details are kept up to date or if they are going away on holiday that their contact details are updated.

If an applicant does not reply to an offer within 48 hours, or 24 hours if the property is ready to let, the offer is deemed to be withdrawn and a further attempt will be made to contact them within 10 working days to ask if they want to remain on the list. If there is still no response, the application will be deemed to be closed.

If an applicant who fails to reply is in banded A to C the relevant Local Authority should be informed so further efforts can be made to contact the applicant.

## **Change Of Circumstances**

Applicants are required to notify a partner of any change in circumstances – for example:

- A change of address for themselves or any person on the application;
- Any additions to the application;
- Any member of family or any other person on the application has left;
- Any other change that might affect eligibility, qualification, banding or effective date.

Where the applicant has not notified a partner of a change of circumstances and this would have affected eligibility, qualification, banding or effective date any other partner will be entitled to:

- Withdraw an offer of accommodation;
- Skip the application as part of short listing for offer.

## **Deliberately Worsening Or Changing Circumstances**

Where an applicant has deliberately worsened or changed their circumstances to gain additional priority, gain a more favourable effective date, gain eligibility or qualification, they will be assessed on their circumstances before their situation changed.

Examples of this are:



- An applicant has moved from suitable accommodation which was reasonable for them to continue to reside in to accommodation that is less suitable;
- Homeowners who have transferred their property to another person within the last five years from the date of their application;
- An applicant who has dispersed, transferred or deprived themselves of assets or money which could have been used to secure suitable accommodation within the last five years from the date of their application;
- An applicant who has moved family members or other people into their property that is unsuitable for their needs when suitable accommodation was being occupied elsewhere.

## **Sheltered Housing**

Applicants for sheltered housing must normally be aged 55 or over or have a need for sheltered accommodation due to vulnerability or disability. An assessment of the applicants needs will be undertaken. It is a condition of all tenancies in sheltered housing schemes that tenants agree to take the Support Service. Separate charges are made for these services on top of the rent.

## **Supported Accommodation**

There is a range of supported accommodation provided in each district for people with housing related support needs, and apart from older people's accommodation this is not available through Select Move. Applicants wishing to access supported accommodation should contact their district council's Housing Options team for more information.

## **Care and Support Needs**

If an application indicates high care or support needs, a Needs Assessment carried out under section 47 NHS and Community Care Act 1990 would include the housing needs of the household e.g. adaptations, property type, support and location. Select Move can make a referral to social services requesting a needs assessment if there is not already one place. Select Move will work with social services to allocate accommodation in accordance with an assessments care and support plan, but there may be cases where there will be no prospect of Select Move partners being able to offer accommodation.

## **Child Access**

Applicants with children who have access arrangements in place for children will not be allocated bedrooms for children unless evidence of claiming the child benefit can be provided.

## **Tenant Management Organisations (TMO's)**

The allocation of housing accommodation by the TMO must be in accordance with Select Move Allocations Scheme Policy under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

The TMO will agree to operate an allocations policy in line with this Policy. Should a TMO at any time decide to alter this or introduce a Local Lettings Policy then agreement to do so must first be obtained from Select Move Allocations Scheme Steering Group. Any scheme proposed must be mutually agreed.

Under these arrangements, the TMO should ensure that, overall, additional and reasonable preference is given to applicants in the categories listed and that the TMO has arrangements in place to monitor the allocation procedures and that these have been agreed with Select Move Allocations Scheme Partners' Manager.

### **Closing Or Cancelling Applications**

An application will be closed from the housing register in the following circumstances:

- At the request of the applicant;
- If the applicant becomes ineligible or no longer qualifies under this policy;
- When the applicant has been housed through the scheme;
- When a tenant of social housing completes a mutual exchange;
- Where an applicant does not maintain their application through the re-registration process, or where they move and do not provide a contact address;
- If the applicant fails to respond to a request for further information within 28 days;
- Where an applicant has refused two reasonable offers within the past 12 months, their application may be closed if the applicant persistently refuses offers of accommodation. In these cases the applicant will be required to re-register, thus losing their time on the waiting list. This is in place to prevent offers being made for properties they do not want and to keep the register up to date. By reducing wasted offers, waiting times will also be reduced for those people who do still need and want a home.
- Where an applicant fails to respond to the annual review of their application.

Where there are reasonable reasons for non-contact from an applicant or repeat refusal, or where there may be new information, an applicant can request to be reinstated on the Register. Upon reinstatement to the register their original banding and effective date will be assessed. Requests to be reinstated on the Register must be made within 3 months of removal.

Should an applicant whose application has been closed wish to re-join the housing register they will receive a new effective date according to the Select Move Allocations Policy. However, if an applicant contacts the Partner within 3 months of the closing of their application, the application can be reinstated without the loss of their waiting time.

## **Requesting A Review**

An applicant has the right to request a review of any decision made on their application if they are not satisfied with the decision.

The applicant, or an advocate, must set out the reasons for the review by making with contact the Select Move Partner dealing with their application within 28 days of the date beginning with the day on which he/she is notified of any decision. The review will be based on the reasons set out by the applicant or their advocate. The relevant local authority will deal with any decisions about homelessness duty or housing options.

The review should be carried out by a member of staff of the partner organisation dealing with the applicant who is senior to the person who made the original decision. The review will exclude any staff that may have had any influence or involvement in the original decision. The applicant will be given the opportunity to submit any further information that they may want the reviewing officer to consider. The applicant will also be informed of the right to make oral representations as well as written representations.

The review is a reconsideration of the case and is not limited to the conduct of the original decision. The review decision will be made on the relevant information available at the time of the review. In addition to any information provided by the applicant, the Partner may ask for further information if this is needed to make a decision. The merits of each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Select Move Allocations Scheme Partners' aim to complete all reviews within 28 days of all information being received by the reviewing officer unless a longer period has been agreed with the applicant. If the reviewing officer decides that there is deficiency or irregularity in the original decision, or the manner in which it was made, but still decides to make a decision which is against the interests of the applicant on one or more issues, the reviewing officer shall notify the applicant (a) that the reviewer is so minded and the reasons why; and (b) that the applicant, or someone acting on his behalf, may make representations to the reviewer orally or in writing or both orally and in writing.

The applicant will be informed of the outcome in writing. If the original decision is upheld, the applicant will be fully informed of the reasons for this decision. If the applicant is still unhappy following the review they will follow the partners' internal complaints procedure.

## **Annual Review Of Applications**

Every application on the Register will be reviewed at least annually, on the anniversary of its entry on the register.

## **Consultation**

Any significant changes to this policy will be approved by the relevant Board, Committee or portfolio holder for each participating local authority. The relevant decision-making bodies of RPs, will also need to consider and endorse any changes that partners agree to make to the policy. Any significant changes will also be subject to consultation with relevant statutory and voluntary sector organisations and tenant representatives and applicants.

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## Appendix A

### Shortlisting Criteria

When short listing those applicants who have expressed an interest in a property advertised on the Select Move scheme the following criteria will be followed:

1. Bedroom Need	<p>The overriding criteria which will be used to shortlist applicants who have expressed an interest on a property whose minimum bedroom need matches the number of bedrooms the property has.</p> <p>Applicants whose minimum need is higher than the number of bedrooms in a property will not be able to bid on the property as they would be over-occupying.</p> <p>Applicants with a lower than minimum bedroom need please see the foot of this table</p>
2. Banding	<p>Properties will be advertised in housing need bands in accordance with the quotas in the Allocations Policy.</p> <p>Applicants who bid will be given priority if they are awarded the band that the property is advertised in (subject to matching bedroom criteria). Applicants not in the band the property it advertised in will be considered in descending order starting with the highest band the property was not advertised in with A being the highest and E being the lowest. For example for a property advertised in band B, applicants with B band would be prioritised followed by A, C, D and E bands.</p>
3. Local Connection to Local Authority	<p>Priority of applicants within each band will be given first to applicants who have a proven and verified 'local connection' to the Local Authority (i.e. Borough or City Council) where the advertised property is located –</p>

	<p>and this applies to all bands and sub-categories. Local connection is defined in the Allocations Policy.</p> <p>Applicants without a local connection to the Local Authority to which the property is advertised, but have a local connection to at least one of the three Select Move Local Authorities with then be short listed.</p> <p>It is possible for an applicant/household to have a local connection to more than one Local Authority.</p>
4. Effective Banding Date	<p>Within bands, and after local connection priority has been taken into account, applicants will be short listed in order of the earliest effective banding date.</p> <p>In certain circumstances the effective banding date may precede the application date.</p>
<p>Each property shortlist follows the above criteria for applicants with a matching bedroom need. The process will then be repeated for applicants who will be under-occupying with the closest bedroom need.</p> <p>Although under-occupying applicants will be short listed under no circumstances is there any obligation on a partner landlord to under-occupy a property as this is not effective use of housing stock. Applicants who would be under occupying a property would only be offered the property if they can demonstrate it is economically viable. Applicants deemed to be under-occupying will be required to sign a disclaimer acknowledging that benefits may not cover the full housing cost of their property.</p>	

In determining the minimum bedroom need the following criteria will be taken into account:

Single people and couples	<p>One bedroom accommodation need unless one of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for an additional bedroom for a carer is evidenced as determined by the Welfare Reform Act</li> <li>• Proof of pregnancy is provided by MatB1</li> </ul>
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One bedroom for each applicant over the age</li> </ul>

	<p>of 16. A couple will be allocated one room;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One bedroom for children of the same sex (up to a maximum of 2 children per room) up the age of 16;</li><li>• One bedroom for children of different sexes up to the age of 10 (up to a maximum of 2 children per room).</li></ul>
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## **Appendix B**

### **Data Protection**

The Select Move Allocations Scheme and its Partners will make every effort to keep information provided by applicants safe and confidential. They will comply with Policies on Data Protection. The Data Protection Act 1998 gives applicants the right to request a copy of their records held on the Select Move Allocations System. Applicants wishing to see and receive a copy of their records should make a written request to the Partners responsible for registering their application.

All information received relating to an applicant's housing application will be treated as confidential. The Data Protection Act 1998 prevents the disclosure of information about you to any other person without your consent and prevents disclosure to you without their consent, information disclosed by other people.

Information may be shared about the individual and their history irrespective of whether their consent has been obtained in exceptional circumstances, which will include:-

- in accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (section 115)
- For the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime and fraud
- Where there is a serious threat to the applicant or a third party including staff or contractors
- Where information is relevant to the management or support duties of the proposed landlord or support organisation to ensure the health and safety of the applicant, a member of his or her household, or a member of staff

Any application that has a cancelled, closed or suspended status for 6 years will be archived off the system.



## Appendix C

### Allocations – Maintaining standards of probity

Section 122 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 restricts the making of a gift, and the payment of a dividend and bonus, by a non-profit registered provider to-

- a. A member or former member of the registered provider
- b. A member of the family of a member or former member
- c. A company which has as a director a person within paragraph (a) or (b).

To ensure compliance with the act and best practice in the granting of tenancies all applicants are asked to disclose any relationship that exists between them and a members and employees of the partners to the Select Move scheme.

The granting of a tenancy is a benefit and, therefore, before any family member can be accepted on to the scheme or offered a tenancy, each Partner's procedure in relation to these matters must be followed.

Local Authorities must ensure that all applicants are treated fairly therefore any applications for housing from the following applicants must be disclosed on the application form:

- Members of the Council or their immediate families
- Employees, or their immediate families of any of the participating Councils or Partner Housing Associations or any other Housing Associations operating in the partnership area

These applications will be assessed in the normal way but registration, eligibility, the assessment of housing need and any offer of accommodation will require special approval by a senior manager of the Council.

#### **A 'family member' is not defined in the Act**

The Select Move Partnership considers that someone's husband, wife, partner, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers; sisters would be included and that similar relations by marriage or other partnership would also count as a 'family member'. This should not be confused with the definition of close family members as detailed in the local connection determination.

## Appendix D

### Domestic Abuse

Applicants will be awarded band A priority for domestic abuse where it can be assessed that they are in imminent danger if they remain at the address. Band A priority will also be awarded where the applicant has had to move to temporary accommodation or a Women's Refuge.

Other cases will not automatically be awarded band A priority but may be awarded band A priority depending on the circumstances of the case. Band A for other cases may be awarded band A priority where:

- The local MARAC panel has discussed the case and the applicant has been assessed as needing re-housing urgently;
- The applicant has been assessed as requiring an immediate move;

Additional priority will not be awarded where:

- The perpetrator is included on the application form;
- The applicant is requesting a move to an area which is near to where the alleged perpetrator is living or where the alleged perpetrator has close family networks.

Additional priority awarded will be time limited and reviewed by the partner organisation that awarded the priority on a regular basis. Priority will be removed where:

- The need for an immediate or urgent move is no longer there;
- Suitable vacancies arise and the applicant does not bid;
- A suitable offer has been made and refused.

Where the applicant is a tenant of a partner organisation and the partner organisation has suitable properties in the areas requested by the applicant then band A priority will not be awarded. In these cases the partner organisation will arrange a 'direct match' of the applicant to the property.