

BELGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Aims of the allocations policy

The following are aims of the allocations policy:

- The co-op's homes are successfully let with minimum possible void loss
- Homes in the co-op are allocated to people in housing need, fairly and transparently and in accordance with the Tenancy Standard and nominations agreements made with Leicester City Council
- The co-op's Equality and Diversity Policy is adhered to and that allocation of property does not discriminate against any person(s) on the basis of a protected characteristic
- The co-op's Data Protection Policy is adhered to with respect to applicants' personal data.

Delegated Authority

- 1 The co-op delegates its Senior Housing Lead to operate its allocations policy and authorises them to:
 - Liaise with Leicester City Council regarding nominations in accordance with the co-op's nominations agreement with the Council and in conjunction with the Chair
 - Maintain a waiting list for the co-op
 - Assess the housing need of potential applicants
 - Liaise with applicants, arrange interviews and notify them of results of applications.
- 2 The Chief Executive Officer and the Senior Housing Lead are delegated to review and make final decisions in relation to all allocations.
- 3 Those involved in processing applications and allocations have signed the co-op's Code of Conduct which requires them to keep information regarding applicants' personal data confidential and only to be used in relation to potential allocation of homes. Personal data will not be retained once it has been used in relation to an allocation.

Management and other transfers

- 4 When a property becomes vacant, the Chief Executive Officer, following discussions with the Senior Housing Lead, may exercise discretion to authorise a management transfer for reasons that could include:
 - needing to decant a member whose home is in need of major repair;
 - a member who has been subject to racial harassment;
 - a member who is the victim of domestic violence or whose children have been subjected to violence;
 - for some other reason related to safeguarding adults and children
 - to enable an existing tenant member to downsize to a smaller home.
- 5 With the exception of a downsizing management transfer, those offered a management transfer will usually be offered up to a maximum of two reasonable potential alternative homes.
- 6 The Chief Executive Officer may also exercise discretion regarding carrying out a management transfer to a co-op home for a member of the co-op and, where requested to do so by Leicester City Council or another agency, tenants of the local authority or housing associations, or people in other circumstances.
- 7 Having considered potential management transfers, the Senior Housing Lead may also allocate one in four empty homes to existing co-op members on the transfer list in accordance with the co-op's Transfer and Exchanges Policy.
- 8 The co-op will encourage members who are under occupying their current home and will particularly consider a management transfer for members who are under occupying where a home becomes vacant that meets their needs in order to free up a larger home for allocation.
- 9 Should an existing member be transferred, the property from which they are being transferred will be considered for allocation.

Local authority nominations

- 10 Where Leicester City Council wishes to make nominations, the Co-op will offer vacant homes in accordance with agreements made with the

Council. If Leicester City Council wish to discuss making nominations to the co-op, the service provider will periodically discuss with them how nominations are made.

- 11 On behalf of the co-op, the Senior Housing Lead will seek to ensure that any nominations are done on the following basis:
 - those nominated by the Council will have been given information about the co-op before they are nominated. Prior to nomination, nominees will be informed that they will be required to become co-op members and buy a £1 share, and that they will have a contractual tenancy that does not and will not include a Right to Buy their home.
 - the Council will provide three nominees per vacant home and the co-op will interview the three applicants, choosing between applicants based on housing need and co-operability.
 - where a nominee does not respond to the service provider in relation to a nomination; or where Leicester City Council does not supply a nominee or nominees in the agreed format within 2 working days of being asked for them by The service provider; or where a person nominated by Leicester City Council unreasonably (in the view of the service provider) rejects a property offered them, it will be deemed that the nomination requirement has been fulfilled and the home may be allocated through the co-op's waiting list.
- 12 The Senior Housing Lead will ensure that Leicester City Council are aware and agree that a nomination from Leicester City Council may be rejected if a nominee's circumstances are such that they fall under the reasons for rejection set out below.

The co-op's waiting list

- 13 The co-op will maintain a waiting list in conjunction with the service provider. Any person who fulfils the criteria listed below over the age of 18 may register on the waiting list by completing an application form. Applicants aged 16 and 17 may be considered where they have a guarantor.
- 14 Applications will only normally be accepted from people who:

- currently live in Leicester or have a significant connection with the City of Leicester or who are working in the city or have received a firm offer of employment within the city;
 - own assets of £20,000 or less or who have a household income of £30,000 per annum or less.
- 15 The Loughborough Cottages Sheltered Scheme will usually only be open to:
- applicants who have similar local connections as specified in the clause above
 - applicants where one member of the household is aged 60 or over
 - applicants with assets of less than £16,000
 - applicants with defined support needs.
- 16 Evidence in respect of each of the previous two clauses shall be sought when an application is made. The Chief Executive Officer, working with the Senior Housing Lead, shall have the discretion to permit applications that do not comply with the previous two clauses but shall present their rationale for any such decisions taken to the committee.
- 17 The co-op will publicise the availability of co-op homes as widely as necessary. The co-op will periodically compare the diversity of applicants with the diversity of the local population and will consider advertising the co-op in such a way that may address any imbalances.
- 18 The co-op will provide general information and an application form to any potential applicants who request information. Where requested to do so, the co-op will assist applicants to complete the application form.
- 19 On receipt of an application form, the Senior Housing Lead will ensure that:
- references provided by the applicant are checked
 - documentary evidence required to support information given in the application is checked
 - Right to Rent Checks are carried out.
- 20 The co-op will allocate priority points to applicants as follows:

Points category	Points
Medical cases¹	
Exceptional medical need	25
Urgent medical need	15
Non urgent medical need	10
Present housing situation	
Hostel resident ²	15
Lodger ³	10
Overcrowding (points per bedroom)⁴	10
Lacking amenities (per facility)⁵	2
Sharing standard amenities (per facility)⁶	2
Unfit accommodation	
Statutorily unfit ⁷	25
Repair notice ⁸	10
Families living apart⁹	
Partners living apart	5
Children living apart	10
Children living in flats (points for each child aged 15 or under)¹⁰	2
Age points (points per aged person)	
60+	1
65+	2
70+	3
Waiting points (2 points per year)	2

¹ see Clause below

² awarded to a resident of a hostel provided by a recognised voluntary or statutory body eg. single person or mother and baby hostel

³ awarded to applicants lodging in accommodation with people who are not part of the housing application, but the points will not be awarded to applicants living with their parents

⁴ each adult aged 16 year or over; an adult couple; any two children of the same sex aged under 16; any two children aged under 10; a carer who does not live with the applicant but provides overnight care should have their own bedroom. When someone is pregnant, the child should be treated as being already born for the purpose of calculating overcrowding points. Where a child is expected, a suitable home will only be offered after birth of the child. Points can also be awarded if a GP/consultant recommends that, due to health problems, a separate bedroom is required for a household who would normally be expected to share. Disabled children who are unable to share a bedroom with a sibling because of their severe disabilities are allowed their own room. Approved foster carers will be allowed an additional room if they have fostered a child or become an approved foster carer in the last 12 months.

⁵ points will be awarded to applicants who are not living with family members for each of the following amenities that are lacking – (a) bath or shower (b) wash hand basin (c) sink (d) an inside WC (e) running water (f) hot water

⁶ points will be awarded to applicants who are not living with family members for each of the following amenities that are shared – (a) WC (b) sink (c) wash hand basin (d) kitchen (e) bath or shower

⁷ subject to notice from Environmental Health Officer

⁸ subject to repair notice from the Local Authority

⁹ points will be awarded where partners are forced to live apart and where children are forced to live apart from one parent due to the unsuitability of their current accommodation

¹⁰ points will be awarded for each child aged 15 years or younger where an applicant's family includes children and the family is living in an upstairs flat

21 **Medical cases** – medical case points may be awarded where:

- a) an applicant's medical condition is being caused or made worse by their housing conditions, and
- b) their current property cannot be improved or adapted to meet their needs at a reasonable cost, and
- c) rehousing is likely to significantly improve their condition.

Where the health need or mobility difficulty is expected to be short term, no medical points award will be made. A health need can relate to either a physical or mental health condition.

Exceptional medical need - will be determined where the applicant or a member of the household has a life-threatening condition, which is seriously affected by their current housing. This will be reviewed after 6 months.

Urgent medical need - will be recommended where the current housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or a member of the household. This will be reviewed after 12 months.

Non urgent medical need - will be recommended where the current housing conditions are having a minor effect on the medical condition of the applicant or a member of their household.

- 22 Medical cases points need to be supported by evidence provided by a doctor, an occupational therapist or a similar medical practitioner. The medical practitioner needs themselves to have clear evidence of the applicant's medical need. The points will not be awarded where a medical practitioner simply passes on what the applicant has asked them to say on their behalf.

Waiting list review

- 23 The Senior Housing Lead will ensure that the waiting list is reviewed once every six months to ensure that applicants remain in housing

need. Failure to respond to a review letter by the applicant will result in them being taken off the waiting list.

- 24 Applicants will be limited to two reasonable offers of housing unless the Chief Executive Officer, working with the Senior Housing Lead, considers there to be a good reason for the rejection of any offer made.

Allocations decisions

- 25 Apart from where a management or other transfer is taking place, when a home is becoming vacant, the top eight applicants on the waiting list for the property size and type that is vacant will be considered by the Senior Housing Lead working with the Chief Executive Officer who will review the points awarded and will determine who to let the property to.

Eligibility of accommodation

- 26 Where homes are available, accommodation will be allocated as follows:
- single people will be offered either a bedsit or one bedroomed flat
 - couples without children will be offered a one bedroomed flat
 - two bedroomed flats will be offered to couples with a child or in some cases to couples only
 - applicants (couples or single parents) with dependent children will be offered two bedroomed or large house accommodation dependent on family size.

Reasons for rejecting applications or Council nominees

- 27 Applicants or Leicester City Council nominees may be rejected if they are from applicants:
- who refuse to become a member of the co-op and/or refuses to accept the responsibilities of co-op membership
 - who are existing Leicester City Council or housing association tenants who are already adequately housed or who can approach their own landlords for assistance
 - who can access suitable accommodation through other means, particularly people who can afford to buy or rent a home on the open market

- who are already adequately housed or have no need to move and for whom no or limited points would be awarded
- for whom no suitable accommodation is available
- who have support needs that cannot be met by the co-op
- who have arrears owing to the co-op from a previous tenancy
- who have arrears owing to another landlord from a previous or current tenancy (unless the landlord, at the request of the nominee, provides written proof that such arrears have been reducing for the previous three months through an agreed payment plan, in which case the Senior Housing Lead will exercise discretion as to whether the nominee can be housed)
- for whom there is reasonable proof that they have been responsible for racial harassment, anti-social behaviour or nuisance or caused intimidation or harassment to other residents, members of the public, agents, contractors or committee members of the co-op.

Appeals

- 28 Applicants may appeal against any decision made by the co-op concerning their application. Appeals must be made in writing. The co-op will hear appeals through three members of the management committee who have not been involved in the allocation previously.

Reporting

- 29 The service provider will ensure that a report is presented to each Management Committee meeting regarding numbers of allocations, transfers and exchanges made.

Risks to be avoided:

- Judgments about allocations are not sufficiently objective or documented
- The co-op may not comply with local authority agreements or sufficiently with the Tenancy Standard
- The allocations process may not sufficiently build the co-operative and community nature of the co-op.