

## BELGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION ALLOCATIONS POLICY

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### ***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 service provider to operate its allocations policy and authorises the service provider 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 of the Allocations Team
  - Maintain a joint waiting list for housing co-ops in Leicester
  - Assess the housing need of potential applicants
  - Liaise with applicants, arrange interviews and notify them of results of applications.
- 2 The Management Committee agrees the membership of an Allocations Team made up of Management Committee members or other persons agreed by the Management Committee.
- 3 The Allocations Team and the service provider is delegated authority to make decisions about allocations to the co-op

where the co-op is in a position to make choices about those allocated to homes.

- 4 As Management Committee members, members of the Allocations Team signing of the co-op's Code of Conduct requires them to keep information regarding applicants' personal data confidential and only to be used in relation to potential allocation of homes. Members of the Allocations Team will not retain personal data once it has been used in relation to an allocation.

## Management and other transfers

- 5 When a property becomes vacant, the Chair of the Allocations Team, following discussions with the service provider, 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; or for some other reason related to safeguarding adults and children.
- 6 The Chair of the Allocations Team may also exercise discretion regarding carrying out a management transfer to a co-op home for a member of other co-ops it provides services to 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 In considering allocating an empty home, the service provider will also consider if there are applicants on the co-op's transfer list who would be eligible to be housed in the vacant property 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. The service provider will periodically discuss with Leicester City Council how nominations are made.
- 11 On behalf of the co-op, the service provider 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 service provider 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 and other co-ops buying services from the service provider. Any person 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. Priority will be given to those who:
  - are living in Leicester city or have a significant connection with the City of Leicester
  - are working in the city or have received a firm offer of employment within the city.
- 14 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.
- 15 The service provider will provide general information and an application form to any potential applicants who request information. Where requested to do so, the service provider will assist applicants to complete the application form.
- 16 On receipt of an application form, the service provider will:
  - check references provided by the applicant
  - check documentary evidence required to support information given in the application
  - carry out Right to Rent Checks.
- 17 The service provider will allocate priority points to applicants as follows:

Points category	Points
<b>Medical cases<sup>1</sup></b>	
High priority	25
Medium priority	15
Low priority	10
<b>Present housing situation</b>	
Potentially homeless <sup>2</sup>	25
Hostel resident <sup>3</sup>	15
Lodger <sup>4</sup>	10
<b>Overcrowding</b> (points per bedroom) <sup>5</sup>	10
<b>Lacking amenities</b> (per facility) <sup>6</sup>	2
<b>Sharing standard amenities</b> (per facility) <sup>7</sup>	2
<b>Unfit accommodation</b>	
Statutorily unfit <sup>8</sup>	25
Repair notice <sup>9</sup>	10
<b>Families living apart<sup>10</sup></b>	
Partners living apart	5
Children living apart	10
<b>Children living in flats</b> (points for each child aged 15 or under) <sup>11</sup>	2

<sup>1</sup> points awarded to applicants whose ill health is caused or worsened by their housing conditions and where a move to more suitable accommodation will be of positive benefit to them. Points are subject to medical verification – see note below

<sup>2</sup> awarded to applicants who are subject to a valid court order for re-possession and are likely to lose their accommodation

<sup>3</sup> awarded to a resident of a hostel provided by a recognised voluntary or statutory body eg. single person or mother and baby hostel

<sup>4</sup> awarded to applicants lodging in accommodation with friends or relatives who are not part of the housing application

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> points will be awarded 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

<sup>7</sup> points will be awarded for each of the following amenities that are shared – (a) WC (b) sink (c) wash hand basin (d) kitchen (e) bath or shower

<sup>8</sup> subject to notice from Environmental Health Officer

<sup>9</sup> subject to repair notice from the Local Authority

<sup>10</sup> 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

<sup>11</sup> 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

Points category	Points
<b>Age points</b> (points per aged person)	
60+	1
65+	2
70+	3
<b>Waiting points</b> (points per each 3 months, maximum 4 points)	1

## Waiting list review

- 18 The service provider will review the waiting list 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.
- 19 Applicants will not be limited to one offer of housing provided there is deemed to be a good reason for the rejection of any offer made. The co-op may stop making offers if, in the opinion of the service provider, applicants have acted unreasonably in refusing an offer of housing or if the co-op is unlikely to be able to make any suitable offers.

## Interviews

- 20 Apart from where a management or other transfer is taking place, when a home is becoming vacant, the top three applicants on the waiting list for the property size and type that is vacant will be interviewed by at least two members of the Allocations Team (or one member of the Allocations Team and a member of service provider staff).
- 21 Members of the Allocations Team involved in interviewing shall behave with impartiality and integrity. Where a member of the Allocations Team is related to or has a close personal, business or other connection to an applicant, they will declare their interest and not participate in any discussion or decision about an allocation. Where decisions relate to applicants known widely in the co-op, a member of the service provider staff will participate in interviews.

- 22 Those interviewing applicants may add up to 10 additional points for discretionary circumstances and up to 10 additional points in relation to “co-operability” – determined in relation to a co-operability test that seeks to consider the extent to which an applicant will play an active role within the co-op.

### Eligibility of accommodation

- 23 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

- 24 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 Allocations Officer 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

- 25 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

- 26 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.