

Habitare Homes Limited: Allocations and Lettings Policy

Version:	v1.1
Date adopted:	Sep 2022
Date of next review:	Sep 2024

1 | Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to set out how Habitare Homes Limited (**Habitare Homes**) will allocate housing to ensure that it meets its objectives, and that the social housing that we provide is available to those whose needs would not otherwise be met by the commercial housing market.
- 1.2. We are committed to compliance with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements when allocating housing. Our aim is to allocate our housing in a fair and transparent way. We are committed to working with local authority partners and other stakeholders to support their strategic housing objectives.

2 | Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Habitare Homes Affordable Rent properties. All staff, Managing Agents (MAs) and subcontractors are expected to work in line with this policy.
- 2.2. This policy will be jointly implemented with our MAs.
- 2.3. The words “staff, “us” and “we” in this policy refers to the staff of the MAs with regard to all operational matters.

3 | Definitions

- 3.1. Affordable Rent: Properties let at up to 80% of the market rate on the basis of a grant agreement with Homes England as set out in the relevant Funding Guide or as specified in a s106 agreement.

4 | Policy Commitment

- 4.1. Working with partners
- 4.2. We will work with partners to ensure our housing is allocated based on the terms of the s106 where applicable, or in line with a local lettings policy. We will work closely

with local authorities to let our properties through their waiting list (where applicable) (note that many local authorities now use a choice based lettings scheme, but for simplicity we refer to 'waiting list' in this document) or in line with the local lettings policy.

4.3. Affordable Rent properties

4.4. For homes at an Affordable Rent, we will comply with any requirements of s106 agreements and/or Homes England grant conditions that apply to the homes to be let.

4.5. We will work with the relevant local authority to let the properties through their housing waiting list (where applicable) and allocate on the basis of the relevant local authority's nominations, and priority system. Alternatively, a local lettings policy will be developed in conjunction with our HA partners and working with the relevant local authority.

4.6. Exclusions

4.7. We will ensure that properties are let to those whose needs are not adequately met by the commercial housing market, and in a fair and open manner. However, we also need to ensure we remain financially viable and that we build strong and cohesive communities. Therefore, we will not usually let properties to those:

- Who are under 18
- For whom the property would be unaffordable on the basis of their household income (including income from benefits) and/or who have a poor credit history
- On keyworker led schemes, where a single or joint applicants have a household income of more than £80,000. For applications where the household income is over £80,000 and there is an urgent housing need, this will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Whose bedroom need (as defined by housing benefit regulations) does not match the size of the property
- With unpaid rent arrears (due to us or another landlord)
- Who have a recent history of anti-social behaviour or behaviour which we believe could disrupt the cohesiveness of the scheme
- Where the properties would not be suitable for their needs (e.g. a person with accessibility requirements would require a property with suitable accessibility); and,
- Who fail credit reference or fraud checks

4.8. Right to Rent

- 4.9. Right to Rent was introduced in the Immigration Act 2014 and requires landlords to carry out checks on all new adult tenants and residents in a property to make sure they have the right to rent property in the UK. We will carry out Right to Rent checks on all new applicants to our properties.
- 4.10. Mutual exchange
- 4.11. We support our tenants to access opportunities to exchange their tenancy with that of another tenant, to widen their housing options, and enable them to move into alternative accommodation within the social housing sector. Once operational we will sign up to a mutual exchange scheme, and our tenants will be provided with information with their rent statements and/or on our website about their ability to participate in the scheme.
- 4.12. Where a tenant wishes to exchange their home the applicant tenant with whom they wish to swap will be subject to the same exclusion criteria set out above. Tenants with outstanding rent arrears will not be eligible for mutual exchange until the arrears are cleared.

5 | Appeals

- 5.1. We will act transparently in applying this policy. Where applicants do not feel we have complied with our Allocations Policy, they have a right to appeal our decision.
- 5.2. We will follow our MAs' appeals process.

6 | Monitoring and Performance

- 6.1. The board has overall responsibility for this policy, which will be implemented by our staff and/or managing agents and sub-contractors.
- 6.2. The board will receive assurance that the policy is being complied with through compliance checks and internal audit activity.

7 | Background Documents

- 7.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the legal and regulatory documents listed below:

- Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory standards
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008

and the following strategies and policies:

- Complaints Policy

8 | Policy Review

8.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years or more frequently as required.

Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
March 2022	New Policy Implemented	V1.0
Sept 2022	Included new exclusion criteria on household income for key worker led scheme	V1.1