



Application for Housing Policy

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Document Owner	Housing Manager

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the application for housing process. This relates to new applications for housing and does not include nominations for existing properties/void rooms.

This policy details the letting arrangements for Empower Housing Associations (EHA) supported homes. It aims to ensure that EHA meet statutory and regulatory responsibilities and local housing and support needs.

Scope of the Policy

- To provide clear guidance for EHA's Housing Management team and prospective tenants on the way to apply for a home.
- It will ensure consistency of policy and procedure implementation
- It ensures a fair assessment process for those in need of a home
- It allows us to manage our property portfolio and ensure that the most appropriate applicants are selected for our homes.

The Policy

EHA specialises in providing housing for adults with disabilities enabling them to live within their community independently. Supported Housing is provided to people who have been assessed as needing care and support in addition to housing.

We intend to let our supported homes in a fair and transparent way which most effectively meets the housing and support needs of the most vulnerable and creates sustainable tenancies whilst minimising the time that properties remain empty between each letting.

EHA work in partnership with Commissioners, Social Services, Care Providers, and families and advocates to source the right home for our tenants. The homes provided by EHA are all bespoke independent supported living accommodation. With our person-centred approach, we aim to work closely with our tenants to provide and deliver high quality housing and services.

The application process for all new schemes is via a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) which helps us to establish:

- The level of housing support required
- That the potential tenant(s) qualify for Specialist Supported Housing
- To establish the property and specification requirements of the tenant including location, and requirements for sleep-in provision for carers

- The impact, if any, the letting will have on other key tenants and stakeholders
- The level of risk associated with the letting, and how we can adapt our approach to mitigate this risk for both the tenants and us as the Landlord
- How we can best deliver the most suitable housing solution

As a starting point, all applicants must have:

- Passported Benefits to allow them to apply for Housing Benefit to cover the cost of their rent and service charges
- The ability to meet the rental and service charge payments should their income be above the allowance required to qualify for housing benefit
- A demonstratable need for supported accommodation. Where necessary, evidence may be required of an applicant's entitlement to a funded support package.

EHA will not exclude from consideration any application on the grounds of the degree or type of disability, current living situation, age, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Ineligible applicants

On occasion, after a full assessment of a housing application EHA may decide that they are unable to accept a request for rehousing. This may occur for the following reasons:

- An applicant is unable to provide timely, thorough and accurate information about vulnerability, support needs or safeguarding.
- Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information about their circumstances
- An applicant whose assessed support needs or risk profile could not be accommodated in the property under consideration.
- An applicant whom EHA assess to be incapable of successfully conducting a tenancy or who, due to the nature and seriousness of their criminal convictions is a risk to other tenants, the local community and colleagues.
- An applicant who was a former EHA tenant that was in breach of their tenancy agreement due to non-payment of rent, damage to their property or responsible for anti-social behaviour.
- An applicant, where a service or property the applicant is being considered for, is deemed not to have the capacity to meet their needs

- Applicants who cannot provide evidence to confirm they have the means to pay the rent and service charge at the point of letting
- An applicant who is excluded from occupation under the government's right to rent scheme.
- Applications from or on behalf of someone who is deemed not to have sufficient mental capacity to enter a contract can be refused where there is no court approved Guardian or Deputy with authority to sign a tenancy on their behalf and/or there are inadequate arrangements in place to establish guardianship arrangements with the Court of Protection.

Support needs and Housing Needs Assessments

An assessment of supported housing applicants and referrals will be undertaken, and the outcome of the assessment will inform the letting decision.

Where homes have been built or adapted to be accessible to people with disabilities, EHA will allocate these to people with similar needs wherever possible to make best use of our homes.

EHA may consider a 'sensitive let' is required in certain circumstances where there are restrictions on who can move into a property. This may be because of ongoing anti-social behaviour, the vulnerability of the potential tenant, or where the new or current resident could pose a risk to their neighbours.

Responsibilities

The Housing Manager is responsible for implementation and monitoring of this policy.

Related Legislation, Regulation and Codes of Practice

- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1988
- Housing Act 1996
- Social housing Act Regulation 2023
- Equality Act 2010
- Immigration Act 2014 •
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Supported Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Regulator of Social Housing 'Consumer Standards' 2024

Related Policies, Procedures and Documents

- Tenure and Tenancy Management Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy
- Void and Letting Management Policy

Reporting and Monitoring

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) will be reported to Senior Management monthly and to Board on a quarterly basis to monitor performance against target and gain assurance that policies and procedures are effective. As a minimum these KPI measures will include reporting on:

- Void Rent Loss
- Void relet times

Performance information will be published in relation to lettings in the Annual Report and tenant's newsletters.

Consultation and Publicising Policy

Managers and Colleagues in the appropriate teams have been consulted about this Policy

The Policy will be added to our website so all tenants and those working with our tenants can access the Policy

Review

The policy will be reviewed every two years (or sooner if there is a change in regulation, legislation or codes of practice).

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy