

# Housing Landlord Services

## Affordable Housing Lettings Policy

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>1.1</b>	We are committed to providing good quality, affordable homes to people in communities where they want to live. Our homes will be allocated in a fair and non-discriminatory way ensuring that everyone has equal access to housing.
<b>1.2</b>	This Lettings Policy provides a clear and consistent framework for how we let our social and affordable homes from initial advertisement to signing up the successful applicant. It outlines the measures we take to ensure the suitability of applicants to homes and confirms the circumstances in which we may refuse an applicant. It helps ensure that we meet all legal and regulatory requirements.
<b>2</b>	<b>Scope</b>
<b>2.1</b>	The Lettings Policy is relevant to applicants on Hampshire Home Choice, the Council's housing register, ensuring consistency of practice in the allocation and letting of our social and affordable rent homes, supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies and minimising the risk of anti-social behaviour or rent arrears.
<b>2.2</b>	It should be read in conjunction with the Tenancy Policy which sets out our approach to tenancy management and the types of tenancy we offer.

<b>3 Advertising a vacancy</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	We will advertise our new build and re-let homes through Hampshire Home Choice, a choice-based lettings scheme. This is a sub-regional scheme where a common approach for the allocation of social housing has been agreed by Eastleigh Borough Council, East Hampshire District Council, Havant Borough Council, Test Valley Borough Council and Winchester City Council.
<b>3.2</b>	We aim to provide as much detail as possible about a property on the advert and will include a photograph to enable applicants to make an informed choice when bidding. We will try to highlight any specific features, for example potential access concerns, where there is a separate dining room, large garden and so on.
<b>3.3</b>	Some of our homes may be designated for certain groups, for example older persons housing. Any criteria applied, such as age restrictions will be clearly detailed on the property advert.
<b>3.4</b>	In certain circumstances we may request that a property be directly allocated to an applicant with a specific need which is known as a direct match. The advert will clearly state that the property has already been allocated to such an applicant. This could relate to an applicant requiring a specifically adapted property, being subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement or requiring specific accommodation in a specific area.
<b>3.5</b>	In a small number of cases, it may be appropriate to request that a property is let sensitively. This aims to create sustainable and cohesive communities in relation to individual lettings where there may be a need to redress the balance of the community. Details of the sensitive letting will be clearly displayed on the advert.
<b>3.6</b>	Where a property is adapted for the needs of person/s with a disability we will wherever possible attempt to let the property to a person who requires such aids and adaptations. This is to ensure we make best use of existing adaptations in properties and avoid costly removal and re-installation of adaptations. Details of adaptations will be provided in the advert together with a notification that priority for the property will be given to applicants who require the adaptations.
<b>3.7</b>	On occasion we may request that a Local Lettings Plan is implemented for first lets, for example on a new build development scheme. This can be an important tool to create balance and mix of communities. It can allow priority to applicants with a local connection and can protect existing stable communities. Information regarding Local Lettings Plan allocations will be clearly displayed on the property advert.
<b>3.8</b>	On occasion a property which has been advertised may become unavailable for letting. This may be because the current tenant has retracted their notice, the works to the property cannot be completed in a reasonable timescale, or the use of the property has been reconsidered. If we have received a nomination for the property, we will contact the applicant as soon as possible to make them aware the property is no longer available.
<b>4 Nominations</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	On receipt of a nomination, we aim to contact the applicant(s) promptly to discuss the property, arrange a viewing and make an appointment to complete a pre-tenancy assessment. If we do not hear from the applicant(s) within 2 working days

	of our first attempt, we will refuse the nomination. We will try to contact the applicant(s) by phone, email and SMS where these contact details are provided.
<b>5</b>	<b>Pre-tenancy assessments</b>
<b>5.1</b>	Before we offer a tenancy, we will meet with the applicant(s) to assess whether they comply with our lettings criteria. It is important we ensure the property is suitable and affordable for them. The applicant(s) will need to complete an application form and a financial assessment including a benefits check.
<b>5.2</b>	For current Eastleigh Borough Council tenants who are transferring to another of our homes, a pre-termination visit is required in accordance with our termination process.
<b>5.3</b>	We will ask for proof and verify the identity of the applicant(s), preferably photographic ID such as a passport or driving licence although other forms of ID may be accepted depending on the applicant(s) circumstances.
<b>6</b>	<b>Making an offer</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Once we are satisfied that the applicant(s) is/are suitable and can afford the tenancy we will offer them a tenancy. An offer letter will be issued to the applicant(s), and they will be provided with a copy of the tenancy agreement so they can make sure they understand this before signing up for the tenancy.
<b>6.2</b>	We will endeavour to show the applicant(s) around the home they have been successful for or a similar property. Where this is not possible, we will provide as much information as possible, such as photographs and floor plans.
<b>7</b>	<b>Refusals</b>
<b>7.1</b>	We may refuse an applicant for reasons set out in <a href="#">Appendix 1</a> .
<b>7.2</b>	In making our decision we will consider each case on its own merits taking into account all relevant information. Applicants whose nomination is refused can appeal this decision within 5 working days to ensure we are applying our Lettings Policy and its grounds for refusal correctly.
<b>7.3</b>	If any refused applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of this decision they request an appeal. A Manager (not involved in the initial refusal) will carry out the appeal investigation and their decision is final.
<b>7.4</b>	We may allow a move to proceed in exceptional circumstances, even if the applicant(s) falls into one of the categories for refusal. This will be at the discretion of the Tenancy Services Manager or Head of Landlord Services.
<b>7.5</b>	If an applicant is refused a tenancy, we will explain the reasons for refusal and give advice and guidance on how they can seek to improve their housing situation. This will be done verbally and confirmed in writing. If appropriate, information will be provided about services and statutory/voluntary agencies which may be able to offer assistance.
<b>7.6</b>	We may include a timescale after which our refusal decision will be re-assessed. This will not normally be less than 6 months after our original decision date. The applicant will not be considered for any of our properties during this period.

<b>8</b>	<b>Sign up</b>
<b>8.1</b>	During sign up, a clear explanation will be given explaining the rights, responsibilities and obligations on the part of the council and tenant, before asking the applicant(s) to sign the tenancy agreement and associated tenancy documentation.
<b>8.2</b>	We will provide applicants with a CORE privacy notice prior to requesting personal information for the purpose of CORE.
<b>8.3</b>	We will ask all applicants being offered a property to pay one month's rent in advance prior to us signing them up for a tenancy. Any reduction in advanced payment is at the discretion of the Tenancy Services Manager or the Head of Housing Landlord Services.
<b>8.4</b>	A photograph will be taken of the applicant(s) to help us manage the tenancy and reduce the risk of tenancy fraud.
<b>9</b>	<b>Advice and support</b>
<b>9.1</b>	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a person-centred approach.</li> <li>provide current tenants of our homes with advice and guidance on accessing alternative housing, including support with the application process and bidding process when needed.</li> <li>provide information on becoming an Eastleigh Borough Council tenant and holding a tenancy with us, the services we offer and the support available.</li> <li>offer translation services to applicants who do not speak English as their first language and seek to assist others who have difficulties with written English.</li> <li>work closely with applicants and partner agencies to identify any vulnerability or support needs and ensure appropriate support is in place.</li> </ul>
<b>10</b>	<b>Tenure Type</b>
<b>10.1</b>	We offer introductory and secure tenancies in accordance with our Tenancy Policy.
<b>11</b>	<b>Property Size</b>
<b>11.1</b>	We aim to maximise the occupancy of our properties and will apply criteria set out in the Hampshire Home Choice Allocations Framework and Council's Scheme of Allocation with regards to bedroom entitlement.
<b>11.2</b>	Our property adverts will confirm the maximum and minimum number of permitted occupants. We may allow our properties to be over or under occupied in exceptional circumstances. This will be dependent on the household situation, including the ages of children and will be at the discretion of the Head of Landlord Services.
<b>11.3</b>	We classify our properties as having a double bedroom if the room is 10 sq. metres or more. Single bedrooms ideally are over 7 sq. metres. Where a bedroom is smaller than 7 sq. metres we will highlight this in the property advert.
<b>11.4</b>	Where our properties have a separate dining room and these can be used as an additional bedroom, the permitted occupancy for the property advert will reflect this.

<b>11.5</b>	We will make applicants know if they will be impacted by Welfare Reform, particularly with respect to affordability, under occupancy charges and the benefit cap.
<b>12</b>	<b>Tenancy Policy</b>
<b>12.1</b>	Please refer to our Tenancy Policy for information on our approach to tenure types, minors and tenancies, rent setting, tenancy agreements and responsibilities, tenancy reviews and visits, tenancy rights (succession, assignment, mutual exchange), tenancy changes, tenancy sustainment and tenancy fraud.

Author	Department Owner	Effective From	Review Date
Cathy Bullen	Housing Landlord Services	23/10/2025	23/10/2028
<b>Ratification Details</b>		Cabinet 23/10/2025	
<b>Other Related Policy and Procedures</b>		EBC Tenancy Policy EBC Allocations Policy HLS Tenancy Conditions and Tenant Handbook HLS Sign up Procedure HLS Introductory Tenancy Procedure HLS Left in Occupation Procedure	
<b>Version History</b>			
Version No.	Date	Summary of Change	Author and Approver

## **Appendix 1- Grounds for refusal**

We may refuse an applicant/s for housing if any of the following are applicable:

### **Suitability**

- The property is unsuitable because the applicant would be overcrowding or under occupying without agreement or may be impacted by benefit restrictions.
- The property is subject to a local lettings plan and the applicant does not meet the agreed criteria for letting.
- The property is subject to a Town and Country Planning Act Section 106 Agreement and the applicant does not meet the required criteria.
- The applicant has pets that are not permitted at the property.
- The property is subject to a sensitive letting and the applicant is not considered suitable for it or does not meet the criteria as set out in the letting advert.

### **Eligibility**

- We've been unable to contact the applicant by either phone, email or SMS within 2 working days of our first attempt.
- The applicant is a current Eastleigh Borough Council tenant and has not given access for a pre-termination visit.
- We have no documentary evidence that the applicant has the right to reside in the UK and/or has no access/recourse to public funds.
- The applicant has not provided documentation supporting their application or requested by us as part of the assessment process within set timescale.
- There has been a change in the applicant's circumstances which means they are no longer the successful bidder.
- The applicant has an interest in an alternative property and they are legally and reasonably able to reside in it. This includes properties owned by the applicant where they have let the property. Exceptions will be considered, these include but are not limited to circumstances where someone is applying for extra care accommodation.
- The applicant is under 18 years of age and has failed to provide an appropriate guarantor.
- The applicant (or anyone else in the household) has failed to provide accurate disclosure of their circumstances to Eastleigh Borough Council and therefore has attempted to obtain a tenancy by fraud or deception.
- The property is designated for older people and there are restrictions in place in relation to age of the applicant and/or members of the household.

### **Financial Status**

- The applicant is an existing Eastleigh Borough Council tenant or leaseholder who owes money to us, either for rent, service charges, court costs, rechargeable works orders, garage charge or any other debt - unless agreed as part of an approved management move or a downsizing move.
- New applicants or our former tenants have a housing related debt such as rent arrears, court costs, recharges, either with us or another housing provider, including private landlords.
- The applicant has an interest in an alternative property, either by way of a financial interest, being named on a mortgage agreement or named as a tenant of another property and, can reasonably be expected to raise funds to secure alternative accommodation in the private sector. Exceptions will be considered.

- The applicant's or household's income is more than £55,000 per annum or has savings/assets exceeding £16,000 and there is no overriding medical condition or other exceptional circumstances.
- The applicant cannot produce evidence of access to sufficient funds to show they can afford the property, which includes rent, service charges and associated living expenses.
- The applicant is assessed as not being able to afford the property or there are other concerns regarding the applicant's finances. This could include a history of rent arrears or other debt that hasn't been repaid on a regular basis. Where this has been the case it's expected that they will work with a charity or a support agency until they can demonstrate improved money management.

### **Support Needs**

- A suitable confirmed support package is not in place which would provide the help needed to maintain the tenancy.
- The applicant has failed, or is refusing to engage with relevant support services in relation to an existing or proposed support package.
- The applicant's needs (either physical or mental health) exceed what our service can provide after considering all relevant information from key support providers.
- Where we do not have the ability to reasonably adapt the property to the specific needs and requirements of the applicant.
- The applicant has applied for a property that does not meet their immediate or future need, e.g. an adapted property where the applicant does not need the adaptations provided or needs adaptations which are not deemed to be reasonable and practical to complete at the property.

### **Behaviour**

The applicant(s), or member(s) of the household:

- Have been evicted for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), another breach of tenancy or abandoned a previous tenancy.
- Have been subject to tenancy enforcement action in the last five years for ASB. This could include domestic abuse, harassment or other violent criminal offences.
- Have committed ASB or criminal activity in the last 2 years, or since being released from prison if within the last 2 years. If the behaviour was very serious, we may refuse applicants even if it occurred more than 2 years ago. A previous conviction does not mean that we will automatically refuse an applicant housing.
- Have a history of or have existing substance (including drugs and/or alcohol) misuse which could have resulted in ASB or criminal proceedings.
- Have previously used rented accommodation for illegal or immoral purposes.
- Have behaved unacceptably in their current or previous home/s and we would have considered tenancy enforcement action if they had been our tenants.
- Have been assessed as presenting a considerable risk to neighbours or any member of the wider community including our staff, contractors, councillors and partner agencies.
- Have been assessed as being unsuitable for communal living.
- Have been assessed as requiring more support than would be available at the supported accommodation.
- Are a Scheduled Offender as defined by Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or are a Registered Sex Offender (RSO). This will be

considered on a case by case basis in consultation with MAPPA and other agencies.

- Have been threatening, abusive, or been persistently vexatious towards an employee, contractor or elected member of the Council, or any partner agency.
- Have not maintained their current property and it does not meet our lettable standard.
- Have ever caused significant damage to a property during a tenancy.
- Discretion maybe given in cases where the applicant(s), or member(s) of the household, have shown a commitment to rehabilitation. We will take into consideration engagement with support agencies and any references supporting the application. This will be done on a case-by-case basis.