



A member of the  
**Together Housing Group**

# LETTINGS POLICY

Rehousing people in housing need remains at the core of what we do. We know that our customers want to feel secure and safe in their homes and in their immediate surroundings. Our policy aims to balance the needs of applicants who require new homes with our existing tenants who want to live in stable and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Head of Chevin

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The aims of this policy aim are to:

- Deliver high customer satisfaction
- Let vacant homes quickly
- Be clear to applicants about who is eligible for housing and who is not
- Remove direct and/or indirect discrimination against applicants
- To create a demand for our housing stock
- To maximise the sustainability of all tenancies.
- To reduce anti-social, disruptive & criminal behaviour within our neighbourhoods
- To meet the **challenges of the government's localism and welfare** agenda
- Be honest, open and transparent in our decisions

1.2 This policy will be used in conjunction with other policies such as the Suspensions & Exclusions Policy, Housing for Under 18 year olds and the Asset Management Strategy

1.3 Outcomes - as a result of operating this policy we expect to see:

- A reduction in the number of empty properties
- A reduction in the number of refusals of offers of property
- An improvement in the average time taken to let empty properties
- A much improved match of applicants to their chosen area and property type/bedsize
- A reduction in the level of complaints about anti-social behaviour
- An increase in overall levels of satisfaction that tenants have with us.
- A reduction in rent arrears

## 2.0 Policy Principles

2.1 The lettings policy will apply to the letting of all property types and to all geographic areas **in which Chevin operates**. However, at times there will be **local** lettings policies which will operate to modify the main policy in some way. This may be a minimum age limit or some other factor as a response to local circumstances. Applicants with disabilities

under the age restriction may be considered. Local policies need management approval before they can be implemented and will be subject to a periodic review which will involve residents.

**2.2** We will continue to operate an exclusion policy for applicants **who have recently been** engaged in antisocial, disruptive or criminal behaviour. The exclusions policy is not a blanket exclusion policy, but relies on an appraisal of each case. **Working within our Exclusions Policy, any excluded or suspended applicants will have the right to appeal the decision.**

**2.3** We will operate a banding system as an overall method of deciding priority for re-housing.

**2.4** A proportion, **usually 50%** of our lets are to local authority nominations. Of the **remaining 50%** of lets at least 60% will be via our banding system which gives priority to applicants with an urgent need & up to 40% will be to applicants who have a local connection to the area but may not be in the most urgent need.

Some examples of having a local connection are families who request to live next to parents for support reasons, but who may not be currently living in poor conditions, disabled applicants who request a particular property because of its adaptations & key workers moving into an area to obtain employment

**2.5** We will carry out a basic affordability assessment on every shortlisted applicant. Prior to allocation, the officer will talk to the applicant regarding their finances and the affordability of the property for them. A full and more detailed affordability assessment may be needed should there be evidence they may not be able to afford the tenancy. Their application may be refused and any offer withdrawn. Applicants who are refused on this basis will have a right to appeal and a right to resubmit an application if their circumstances change.

**2.6** We reserve the right to cancel any application in the following circumstances:

- Where it is later found that false or inaccurate information was given
- Where the applicant does not qualify for the choices made on the application, for example they do not meet the age criteria.

### **3.0 The Banding System**

**3.1** **We will assess all applications according to a banding system which will contain four main criteria.** These are:

1. Whether an applicant is in urgent priority
2. Whether an applicant is in non-urgent priority

3. Whether the applicant has a local connection to the area for which they are being considered e.g. to be near work/education/training, medical facilities or to give or receive support or who are undertaking voluntary work within the community
  4. Where the applicant wants to move but has no need to move.
- 3.2** Applicant's within a band will be chosen in ascending date order (earliest first):
- Urgent need + a local connection to the area = Band Gold with local connection indicator.
  - Urgent need but no link = Band Gold without a local connection indicator.
  - Non-urgent need + a local connection = Band Silver with local connection indicator.
  - Non-urgent need + no local connection = Band Silver without a local connection indicator.
  - There is also a Bronze band that is awarded if an applicant wants to live in an area but has no need nor any local connection.
- 3.3** Applicants with the same bands will be chosen in date order.
- 3.4** On the basis described above, applicants who have an urgent need for re-housing will generally receive priority over other applicants
- 3.5** Applicants apply for vacancies on a scheme, not on an individual property.
- 3.6** Matching of applicants circumstances to their choice is a key factor. This will be determined by the local Neighbourhood Officer who will carry out home visits to the top three shortlisted **applicants. The Officer will continue to work down the shortlisted applicants should the situation arise where it has not been possible to allocate from the top three.**  
A decision to allocate will be based on the need of the applicant, the suitability of the vacancy & will take into account the sustainability of the scheme, **taking a risk based approach.**
- 3.7 Lettings to staff members or applicants related to staff members is permitted as long as they meet the criteria for the allocation and Board approval (at least two members of the Board) is given.**

## **4.0 Definitions**

### **4.1** Urgent need is:

Homeless now e.g. **if the applicant is** sleeping rough, living in temporary accommodation, suffering from domestic violence that

has been reported, suffering from severe harassment or a family forced to live apart.

- Urgent medical need e.g. where the applicant has a life threatening or terminal condition, is injured in the Armed forces or cannot leave hospital until suitable accommodation is found.
- Leaving the Armed forces e.g. where the applicant has left the Armed Forces in the past 3 months, is leaving in the next 6 months or is a bereaved spouse/civil partner of armed forces personnel required to leave service accommodation.
- 16 to 18 year olds leaving care. (Please see policy on Housing for under -18 year olds)
- Living in severely unsatisfactory conditions e.g. where the applicant has been served with a Prohibition notice by Environmental Health, served with a Clearance or Closing order, is required to leave their property to allow for major improvement work or disposal or demolition of their property
- Urgent management transfer e.g. where the applicant is a tenant of Chevin and they are under occupying their **property by more than one bedroom and this is causing them financial hardship**, have an urgent medical need, **are the victim of serious harassment** that can only be resolved by moving or **Chevin has decided due to major repairs or other issues to sell, or refurbish the property**

#### 4.2 Non urgent need is:

- Urgent need to receive or give support i.e. where there would be a major adverse effect for you or a household member if you do not receive support or on another family member if you do not give support
- At risk of becoming homeless within 28 days e.g. where the applicant has received notice to leave after 28 days, is staying temporarily with family/friends, has been asked to leave by parent/carer, is suffering from unreported domestic violence and/or is suffering from less serious harassment
- If the applicant has financial problems that are linked to their home for e.g. rent or mortgage arrears or high utility bills
- If the applicant has work or has an offer of work in the area

- If the applicant needs access to specialist education/training for a household member with a disability
- If the applicant is a private tenant who is under occupying their current property
- Where the applicant is living in poor or unsatisfactory conditions e.g. where they are overcrowding the current property, sharing facilities with non household members or their home is lacking in facilities or is in disrepair
- Where the applicant or household member has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities and is caused, significantly affected by, or made difficult to manage by their current accommodation and where re-housing will solve or alleviate that medical condition, or make it easier to manage.
- Where the applicant or household member has a less urgent welfare need e.g. Moving on from Supported accommodation or has recently had a relationship breakdown
- Less urgent need to receive or give support i.e. where there would be a minor adverse effect for you or a household member if you do not receive support or on another family member if you do not give support
- Where the applicant has a non urgent medical need
- **Where the applicant has proof through Social Services that they need a larger property as they are foster-carers**
- **It is the responsibility of the applicant or their advocate to notify the Association of any change of circumstances that will affect their application.**
- **It is the responsibility of the Association to carry out annual reviews of the waiting list and where there is no response to the review from the applicant, the Association retains the right to cancel the application with no further notice to the applicant.**
- **Any application deemed to be fraudulent and/or withhold information and where a tenancy with the Association has been obtained, the Association will take legal action to recover the tenancy.**

## 5.0 Transfers

5.1 We will ensure consideration is given to existing residents who wish to transfer. Evidence shows that many residents would remain tenants of Chevin if we could offer them a move into a property that they feel will be better suited for them. Priority will be given to residents whose circumstances have changed or are affected by under occupation and debt that has arisen as a result of the bedroom tax. This will aim to prevent the unnecessary movement of tenants between different social landlords, bringing more stability to an area.

5.2 Transfer applicants banded as urgent will be given priority over transfer applicants with a less urgent need. Examples of urgent circumstance are as follows;

- Urgent management transfer e.g. **where the applicant is a tenant of Chevin and they are under occupying their property and this is causing financial hardship**; have an urgent medical need, **are the victim of serious harassment (including domestic violence) that can only be resolved by moving or Chevin has decided to sell or refurbish the property**

However we recognise that transfer applicants cannot have a permanent priority over all lettings.

5.2 To ensure this, all transfers will be counted within the 40% letting stream explained in paragraphs 2.4 above.

5.3 Size matching of people to places will be a consideration for us. We do not wish to create significant over or under occupation of properties.

5.4 **Tenants who have breached any of the clauses of their tenancy agreement will not qualify for a transfer such as those who have been responsible for anti-social behaviour, those in rent arrears and those who have not maintained the property in an acceptable condition. An assessment of the condition of the current property will be carried out by the Neighbourhood Officer and Delivery Co-Ordinator**

5.5 If more than one tenant applies for a vacancy with the same **need and banding criteria** the following criteria will be used to decide the outcome:

- Suitability of property to housing need
- Length of time on waiting list
- Length of time as a Chevin tenant

**5.6** New tenants will have to have occupied their property for twelve months before a transfer is considered unless urgent or Exceptional circumstances apply as agreed by the Neighbourhood Manager. Examples of this may include under occupation of our Property.

**5.7** **Transfer applicants who are not in urgent need/awarded Gold banding may be bypassed and the letting decided according to the needs of the business (for example, cost implications of transfers, workload issues).**

## **6.0 Nominations**

**6.1** Nominations are welcome where the Local Authority can provide them. Any nominee should meet our lettings policy, if not, a request for further nominations should be made. A maximum of 50% nominations apply to any one scheme unless different local arrangements have been agreed. There are a small number of schemes where the nomination agreements are 75% or 100%. These are listed in appendix one.

**6.2** Overall we will let at least 50% of all our lets to nominations .On new developments this is usually 100% on first lets and 50% thereafter and will be agreed with the local authority at the time of the new development.

## **7.0 Succession**

**7.1** We recognise the right of succession. The right to succession will be different depending on the type of tenancy agreement.

## **8.0 Mutual exchanges**

**8.1** Our policy recognises the right for our tenants to exchange their tenancy with another housing association or local authority tenants. Some examples of where permission would not be granted would be if our tenant owes rent, has a Possession order (Suspended or otherwise) &/or has been served with a Notice of seeking Possession for breach of tenancy.

## **9. Lettings restrictions**

### **9.1. Local lettings policies**



- 9.1.1 Local lettings policies have been introduced on a number of schemes due to problems such as high anti social behaviour levels which have adversely affected the sustainability of the local community. They are always introduced following consultation with the staff that manage the schemes and the tenants who live on the scheme.
- 9.1.2 We can have a local lettings policy on up to 20% of our properties at any one time.
- 9.1.3 Local lettings policies will be periodically reviewed with staff and tenants.
- 9.1.4 A list of schemes with local lettings policies can be found in Appendix two.

## 9.2 Section 106 agreements

- 9.2.1 Section 106 agreements are made as part of the planning process on a number of our schemes. These restrict who we can let the properties too. Each agreement has unique restrictions that state **for example** only applicants **with links to** specific towns or villages can be considered.
- 9.2.2 A list of schemes with section 106 agreements can be found in Appendix three.

## 9.3 Other letting restrictions

- 9.3.1 A number of our schemes were built with a particular client group in mind. These are usually properties for older people, for example 50+, 55+ or 60+, or for wheelchair users.
- 9.3.2 A list of schemes with other lettings restrictions can be found in Appendix four.

## 10.0 Monitoring

- 10.1 We will check every 1 in 10 lettings to ensure that the policy has been applied properly.
- 10.2 We will monitor all lettings to BME applicants and will report this to our Board quarterly.
- 10.3 We will monitor our nomination performance and report this to our local authorities as they require.
- 10.4 We will monitor the lettings key performance indicators (KPI's) – re-let times, turnover, void loss – and report this to our Board on a quarterly basis.

- 10.5** We will monitor lettings KPI's – re-let times, turnover, void loss – by individual scheme and use this on our sustainability matrix which acts as a performance and asset management tool.

## **11.0 Review**

- 11.1** We will review this policy against the expected outcomes every two years?

## Appendix One

### Schemes with nomination restrictions over 50%

Scheme	Nomination %
Bagdale Court, Whitby	100%
Clifton Court, Thorne	100%
Nursery Court, Low Catton	100%
71 Quay Rd, Bridlington	100%
Greencroft, Broom Valley Rd, Rotherham	100%
Eldon Rd, Rotherham	100%
Middle Lane, Hutton Buscel	100%
Smart Cottages, Hutton Buscel	100%
Holmfield Court, Nevison 3bb for w/c user	100%
43/45 Birkhill 3bb	100%
Chantry Close, Pontefract 3bb	100%
Beckley Rd, Darnley 3bb	100%
1 Ruskin Place (wheelchair user only)	100%
15 Birkhill, Airedale (wheelchair user only)	100%
14 Lockwood Close, Marsh (wheelchair user only)	100%
Cedar Ave, Mexborough	75%
Conisborough, Doncaster	75%
Willow Court, Pocklington	75%
The Willows, Hornsea	75%
The Beverleys, Beeston	75%

## Appendix two

### Schemes with Local letting policies

Scheme	Local Letting policy	Introduced
7/9 Grange Terrace, Chapeltown	Over 25's	2006
85 Grange Ave, Chapeltown	Over 25's	2006
Highfield Green, Sherburn in Elmet	Over 25's & Assured shortholds	2002
Bridge Court, Barlby	Over 25's & Assured shortholds	2002
Ebor House, Bridlington	40+ & No children	2007
Riverside Close, Driffild	Assured shortholds	2007
Preston Rd, Hull (flats only)	40+ & No children	2007
Volage Court, Pocklington	Assured shortholds	2008
Carol Dickson Court, Hull	Assured shortholds	2013
Chandlers Wharf, Malton	Assured shortholds	2013
Grays & Jennings Close, Eastwood	Assured shortholds & Neighbourhood agreement	2000
Danesthorpe, Doncaster	Assured shortholds	2007
Clifton Court, Thorne	Assured shortholds	2005
Adwick le street	Assured shortholds	2008
Gable Mews, Barnsley	Over 25's & Assured shortholds	2007
Huddersfield Rd, Barnsley	Over 25's & Assured shortholds	2007
Attercliffe, Sheffield	Neighbourhood agreement	2007
Bethel Rd, Rotherham	Assured shortholds	2005
Haigh St, Lockwood	Over 25's & Assured shortholds	2000
Nursery Lodge Court, Dalton	Over 25's & Assured shortholds	2000
South Kirkby	Local lettings panel	1999
West St, South Kirkby	Over 55's & Local lettings panel	1999
AW/GB Ct, South Kirkby	Over 55's & Local lettings panel	1999
Holmfield Court, Nevison	Neighbourhood agreement	2006
Crown Flatt Way, Dewsbury	Assured shortholds	2007
Speakers Court, Dewsbury	Assured shortholds	2007
Mill St, Castleford	Over 25's & Assured shortholds	2006
Pollard St, Fartown	Assured shortholds	2008
Cornrace View, Newsome	Assured shortholds	2008

## Appendix three

### Schemes with Section 106 agreements

Scheme	S106 agreement
East Yorkshire rural villages	Local residents only
Laking Lane, Wold Newton	Local residents only
Sands Lane, Holme upon Spalding Moor	Local residents only
Cedar Place, Easingwold	Local residents only
Mattison Close, Northallerton	Local residents only
Abel Close, Boroughbridge	Local residents only
East Park Rd, Spofforth	Local residents only
Ibbetson Close, Masham	Local residents only
Cross Green Crescent, Cross Green, Leeds	Local residents only
Church Close, Redmire	Local residents only
Hudson House, Reeth	Local residents only
Storey Close, Helmsley	Local residents only
Middle Lane, Hutton Buscel	Local residents only
Smart Lane, Hutton Buscel	Local residents only
All Saints Court, Selby	Local residents only

Each agreement will be different and reference will need to be made to the S106 agreement for specific details

## Appendix four

### Age restricted schemes

Scheme	Property type	Beds	Age restriction
Springwood Sheltered, Huddersfield	Flats	1 & 2	60+
St Edmunds Close, Airedale	Flat	1 & 2	60+
St Edmunds Close. Airedale	Bungalow	2	60+
Chapel Court, Hambleton, Selby	Bungalow	2	60+
Chatham Court, Rotherham	Flat	1	60+
Kilburn Court, Harrogate	Flat	1	60+
Redbrook Court, Barnsley	Bung/Flat	2	60+
Dane St/King St/Queen St, Thurnscoe	Bungalow	2	60+
Oldfield Close, Hoyland, Barnsley	Bungalow	2	60+
Argosy Close, Bawtry, Doncaster	Bungalow	2	60+
Northfield Court, Wickersley	Flat	1 & 2	60+
Willow Court, Wickersley	Flat	2	60+
West Mount Ave, Wath upon Dearne	Bungalow	2	60+
Cross Keys Court, Horbury	Flat	1 & 2	55+
Chantry Close, Pontefract	Flat	2	55+
Henry Moore Court, Castleford	Bungalow	2	55+
Aaron Wilkinson Court, South Kirkby	Bungalow	2	55+
Holmfield Court, Nevison	Bungalow	2	55+
Meadow Court, Ossett	Flat	2 & 3	55+
Bridge St, Normanton	Flat	1 & 2	55+
Freestone/Bosworth Ave, Altofts	Bung/Flat	1 & 2	55+
Broom Court, Rotherham	Flat	1, 2 & 3	55+
Bellbrooke Close, Darfield, Barnsley	Bungalow	2	55+
Bondfield Crescent, Wombwell	Bungalow	2	55+
Roy Kilner Way, Wombwell	Bungalow	1 & 2	55+
Ebor/Hallam Close, Wombwell	Bungalow	2	55+
Kendray, Barnsley	Bungalow	2	55+
Martin's Rd, Lundwood	Bungalow	2	55+
Sanhill Court, Great Houghton	Bungalow	2	55+
Mount Pleasant, Grimethorpe	Bungalow	2	55+
Gardeners Court, Filey	Bungalow	2	55+
Rowedale Close, Hunmanby	Bungalow	2	55+
Sandybeds, Scarborough	Bungalow	2	55+
Sinclair Court, Scarborough	Bungalow	2	55+
Springhill Close, Scarborough	Bungalow	2	55+
Arthur Kucan Close, Hull	Bungalow	1 & 2	55+
Aldborough Grove, Hull	Bungalow	2 & 3	55+
St John's Court, Hull	Bungalow	2	55+
Ings Estate, Hull	Bungalow	2	55+
Preston Rd, Hull	Bungalow	2 & 3	55+

John Hadland, Hull	Bungalow	2	55+
Mast Drive, Hull	Bungalow	2	55+
Eastern Dr/Ave, Arbourthorne	Flat	2	55+
The Willows, Sheffield	Flat	2	55+
Cedar Place, Easingwold	Bungalow	2	55+
Arnwood, Otley	Flat	1 & 2	55+
Manor Court, Otley	Flat	1 & 2	55+
214c Chapeltown Rd, Chapeltown	Flat	1	55+
Piper Lane, Colburn	Bungalow	2	55+
Hallgarth, Catterick Garrison	Bungalow	2	55+
Ruskin Drive, Airedale	Bungalow	2	50+
Ebor Court, Selby	Flat	1,2, 3	50+
Milefield Court, Barnsley	Bung/Flat	2	50+
Windsor Gardens, Thurnscoe	Bungalow	2	50+
Hazelbarrow Court, Sheffield	Flat	1	50+
Abbey Grange, Beauchief, Sheffield	Flat	2	50+
William Hey Court, Harehills, Leeds	Flat	1	50+
Victoria House, Kirkstall, Leeds	Flat	1 & 2	50+
Brookhouse Court, Mansfield	Bungalow	2	50+
Church Cottage Mews, Balby	Bungalow	1	50+
Conisborough, Doncaster	Bungalow	2	50+
Piper Lane, Colburn	Bungalow	2	50+