

Lettings Policy

(Community Support Accommodation)



Review lead / author name and job title	Director of Communities		
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2			
3			
4			

POLICY FOR LETTINGS OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT ACCOMMODATION

POLICY

1.0 Principles

- 1.1. To accommodate people who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness, and who are in need of and accepting of support in their transition to independent living.
- 1.2. To be accountable to stakeholders and funders, including the local authority and referral agents, and ensure that our community support services are provided to people meeting the eligibility criteria for the service and in the greatest need.
- 1.3. To make optimum use of our properties and minimise void losses, allowing that lettings may be deferred to allocate rooms/flats appropriately, considering the specific needs of clients.
- 1.4. To take a risk-based approach to the types of tenancies we offer, i.e. licences or assured shorthold tenancies, taking into account the likelihood for rent arrears and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.5. To enable transfer between our Community Support accommodation services where the needs of an individual may be better met.
- 1.6. Subject to the above, to ensure equality of opportunity in the selection and allocation of accommodation.
- 1.7. To assist the local housing authorities, and children's and adult services, to fulfil their statutory duties towards homeless people in need of support.

2.0 Scope of Policy

- 2.1. This lettings policy applies to our directly managed schemes for designated groups as follows:
 - 1 Wheatsheaf Close, Ely – young single people (aged 16 - 25)
 - Young Futures Support Service, Cambridge and South Cambs – young single people (aged 16 - 25) referrals are via the Young Futures Partnership

- 82 Russell Street, Cambridge – single adults (aged 18 - 64) with a learning disability, or who are on the autistic spectrum
- Young Parent Project 31-38 Peter Maitland Court, Cambridge – single young parents, or expectant (at least 6 months pregnant) mothers (aged 16 - 25)
- 40 Norwich Street, Cambridge – single adults (aged 18 - 64) with a learning disability or related difficulty, or who are on the autistic spectrum.
- Alison House, Cambridge – single adults (aged 18 - 64) with a learning disability, or who are on the autistic spectrum
- Corona House, Cambridge – single women with mental health difficulties (aged 18 - 64)
- 204 Norwich Road, Wisbech – young single people who are in care (aged 16 - 17)

In partnership services, where we provide a supported housing management service only and where support to residents is provided by a third party, we work closely with them to ensure that eligibility criteria for the service are met. As the landlord, we make the letting and therefore have the final say on whether accommodation is offered.

3.0 Applications

- 3.1 Referrals may be made by any statutory or voluntary agency, or individual, who has contact with these client groups. Individuals may also self-refer. 204 Norwich Road only receives referrals from Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Children’s Resources Teams. Applications to the Young Futures Support Services accommodation are via the Inform system used by the Young Futures Partnership.
- 3.2 Consideration for a place is based on the following criteria:
- 3.2.1 Strengths and needs assessment, which ascertains the applicant’s need for support and housing.
 - 3.2.2 Risk assessment and safety planning, to ascertain the degree to which they present a significant risk to themselves, other occupants or staff.
 - 3.2.3 The degree to which they are likely to benefit from the opportunity and degree of motivation to use the support offered.
 - 3.2.4 Whether they face one or more of the following situations:
 - (a) They are believed to be at serious risk of harm if they remain where they currently are.

- (b) They are currently residing in a children's resource centre, or with foster parents; or are leaving hospital, care or residential education and feel unable, for the time being, to adapt to a fully independent lifestyle; are unable to go back to their parental home or to relatives; or are street homeless or sofa-surfing.
- (c) They have been, or are about to be, evicted from the family home or wherever else they are currently staying, and have no appropriate alternative accommodation.
- (d) They are failing to cope in their accommodation due to lack of the necessary life skills or ability to take responsibility.

3.3. Those over the age limit may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

3.4 Young parents must be capable of taking full responsibility for the care of their baby.

3.5 Applicants to the Young Parent Project, 31-38 Peter Maitland Court, will only be considered where the applicant and baby are assured of move-on accommodation via the local authority at the end of the placement. The young parent may be male or female. Mothers are usually at least six months pregnant on admission.

3.6 Out-of-County placements may be taken though it is expected that the applicant will have local connections.

4.0 Equality & Diversity

4.1 Subject to the age criteria, applications are welcomed from all groups regardless of disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

4.2 The schemes are not intended for people with serious offending or criminal behaviour, or severe learning disability or mental health needs, unless our risk assessment and safety planning deem them suitable.

4.3 Applications from people who would pose a serious risk to the safety and welfare of other clients and staff will be refused.

4.4 People on release from a custodial environment, or subject to a Court Order, will be considered, subject to risk and needs assessment.

4.5 Applicants who have a recent history of significant substance misuse (class A drugs/alcoholism) must be participating in a programme of rehabilitation.

4.6 Apart from Wheatsheaf Close and Corona House, which have accommodation adapted to meet the needs of those with mobility issues, the schemes are not suitable for wheelchair users – though reasonable aids and adaptations may be considered for non-wheelchair users, in line with our Aids and Adaptations Policy.

5.0 Right of Appeal

We use the principles and criteria in this policy when considering appeals against decisions on lettings. If a customer is dissatisfied with our decision taken in respect of their application for housing, they may appeal to the Community Support Services Manager within seven days of being informed of the decision (or to the Director of Communities if the Manager was involved in the original decision). It may not be possible to delay re-letting a property while an appeal is being considered, however the outcome of the appeal may help to inform a future allocation decision for the applicant.

6.0 Monitoring

Our Customer and Home Committee receive an annual report on lettings in the first meeting following the end of its financial year. Quarterly monitoring also takes place on the satisfaction of customers with the lettings process, and on ethnically diverse lettings against target.

7.0 "CORE"

We participate fully in the CORE (Continuous Recording) system for monitoring the characteristics of new tenants e.g. age, income, employment status, reason for re-housing. The data provides central government with statistical data on trends in social lettings over time. Although any information sent to the CORE system is entirely anonymous, the data is covered by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), and once submitted digitally to CORE, the paper record completed with the new tenant is destroyed.

8.0 Access to Information

All customers have the right to see information that we hold about them or that has been provided about them by a third party (e.g. GP, Social Worker, previous landlord), if the third party agrees. We also ensure that we meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Data regulation (GDPR) and signpost all customers, including those applying for housing, to our Privacy Notices.

9.0 Lettings to Staff/Committee Members/their relatives

We may offer accommodation to our employees, former employees, Board or Committee members, or their relatives. However, such a person would receive exactly the same consideration as any other customer and would be given no priority because of their connection to us. They would also have no involvement in, or influence over, the decision-making process.

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