



# Allocations Policy

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Reviewed by: Head of Allocations and Lettings

Applies to: Housing Management Teams

Approved by: The Board, RCC and Housing Managers

Lead Officer: Head of Allocations and Lettings

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## 1. Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 Swan aims to provide high quality and well managed rented homes which are allocated through a lettings service which is transparent, fair and efficient and ensures void times are kept to a minimum.
- 1.2 Swan is committed to working in partnership with local authorities to assist them to meet their statutory obligations to people with housing needs.
- 1.3 The aims and objectives of this policy are to increase choice and mobility for existing residents by making better use of stock and creating mixed and sustainable communities.
- 1.4 This policy is supported by detailed procedures and takes into account statutory and regulatory requirements of bodies such as the Tenants Service Authority and Communities and Local Government.

## 2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 Under the term set out in local authority nominations agreements a percentage of all Swan properties must be offered to each council's housing department. This percentage will normally be 100% for all newly built properties and no more than 75% for re-lets of family sized properties and at least 50% of 1 bedroom properties.
- 2.2 Remaining properties will be let to those registered on Swan's transfer list through a Choice Based Letting (CBL) system wherever possible. Exceptions will include:-
  - when there is a need for transfer following a management priority decision
  - there is a need to make a positive contribution to the sustainability of an area
  - there is little or no demand for an area or property type
  - to make better use of existing housing stock
  - to make an offer of accommodation under the National Witness Mobility Service
  - under the terms of a local lettings policy

## Policy Statement

### 3. Eligibility

- 3.1 All Swan assured or secure tenants will be eligible to register on the transfer list for a move to another home. Tenants with starter tenancies and assured short-hold tenancies living in general needs properties are not eligible to register on the transfer list.
- 3.2 Applications will normally only include immediate family members. i.e., the applicant, their partner and any dependants and/or children.
- 3.3 Tenants who have breached their tenancy will not be allowed to register on the transfer list or if they have already registered before the breach, will be suspended until their breach is amended. Those who owe monies to Swan may not be considered for a transfer until all debts are cleared, this includes rent arrears, recharges, court costs and housing benefit overpayments. Those who have committed acts of anti-social behaviour will not be considered for a transfer for at least 6 months from the last act. Note this clause does not apply to transfers of accommodation made under the terms of the Harassment Policy and/or the Domestic Violence Policy where applicants have been awarded Management priority.

- 3.4 All transfers will be subject to a satisfactory property inspection which will be carried out prior to any offer being confirmed.
- 3.5 Independent adults without an interest in a property, living in a Swan home for longer than three years may register on the transfer list for a one bedroom home within the same local authority, though they will not be considered a priority over those with a Swan tenancy.
- 3.6 Tenants living in a Swan supported housing property may register on the transfer list for consideration to transfer to a general needs property. Though will not be considered for a move until they have successfully lived in a Swan home for at least one year.
- 3.7 Swan will not normally offer a tenancy to someone less than 18 years of age in its general needs accommodation unless the local authority has agreed to be a guarantor.
- 3.8 Swan will not normally offer a tenancy to someone who previously held a tenancy with them which was breached.

#### 4. Priority

- 4.1 Applicants registered on the transfer list will be placed in one of the following bands:
  - Band one – those with the highest level of housing need and an urgent need to move or under occupying by at least 2 bedrooms
  - Band two – those with a high level of housing need
  - Band three – those with a moderate level of housing need
  - Band four – those with a lower level or no housing need to move
- 4.2 Priority will be given in each band for time waited only. If an applicant changes band, their time priority will start anew.
- 4.3 Band one will include those who have been given priority status due to a management move and such applicants will normally only be made one suitable offer of accommodation with priority status removed if the offer is refused without good reason.
- 4.4 Those seeking medical priority must complete a medical priority request form and be aware that their GP or Consultant may be contacted and asked to provide supporting evidence for their application. Band one priority will only be given if it is evidenced that the applicant's current accommodation is having a severely detrimental effect on their medical condition.
- 4.5 Tenants who wish to downsize from a 2 bedroom or larger property into a one bedroom will be eligible to apply for the downsizing scheme and if successful will be granted Band one status.
- 4.6 Priority for overcrowding will be given to households under the terms in the 'bedroom standard'. This means a separate bedroom is required for children of the opposite sex aged over 10 years. Higher priority may be awarded to overcrowded households when bedrooms are exceptionally small. (ie., suitable for one person only).
- 4.7 Detailed priority band classifications are defined in Appendix 1.

#### 5. Suitability

- 5.1 Property and household ratio guidelines are provided and followed whenever possible though there may be occasions when properties are let to households outside of the guidelines. See appendix 2.

- 5.2 Children will not be taken into account on an application if they have a permanent home elsewhere. Applicants will be asked to evidence proof of child benefit entitlement and proof of residency or custody order.
- 5.3 Swan retains the right to refuse an application from a vulnerable adult unless it is satisfied that an appropriate support package is in place.
- 5.4 Swan will only consider applications from sex offenders when the local authority can confirm they have investigated the risks associated with rehousing in an identified property and monitoring arrangements are in place.
- 5.5 Swan will not normally offer accommodation to any person who has an interest in a property elsewhere, either through ownership or a tenancy.
- 5.6 Properties with an adaptation will normally only be let to a household who has been assessed as in need of such an adaptation.

## 6. General Information

- 6.1 Properties which are to be let to a transfer applicant will be let through the HomeKey choice based lettings scheme. Tenants must first register on the transfer list before they can register on HomeKey. Properties which are identified for an urgent management move may be directly let with the agreement of the Head of Allocations.
- 6.2 Transfer list applicants are encouraged to seek a mutual exchange to increase their chances of moving and as such Swan is a member of the Homeswapper scheme. All potential exchanges of property must be approved before they can take place. Further guidance is provided on mutual exchanges.
- 6.3 Transfer applicants have the right to request their application is reviewed if they have information which they believe has not been considered when their priority status has been decided. Reviews should be made directly to the Lettings Team with an explanation as why the review is being sought.
- 6.4 The length of time taken for an offer of accommodation to be made is dependant on several factors including:
  - Banding category
  - The size and type of property required
  - The area(s) of choice
  - Suitable properties becoming available

Therefore it is not possible to advise applicants on when they are likely to be offered accommodation, though information is available on the number and type of properties in an area and the number of transfers made previously.

- 6.5 Overcrowded households may qualify for assistance under spacesaver measures when a move to a larger home is not possible. This may include storage items and space saving furniture.
- 6.6 This policy is reviewed every 3 years or in response to a change in regulatory guidance, best practice or legal precedent.

## 7. Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 Swan Housing Group strives to meet the needs of all customers and is committed to reducing inequality, eliminating discrimination and promoting good relations between people of different groups. We will be sensitive to the specific needs of all new applicants and nominations.
- 7.2 We will ensure that no-one is disadvantaged on the basis of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, gender, disability, religious, sexual orientation, marital status, age or any unjustifiable criteria.

## 8. Related Policies and Procedures

- Mutual exchange procedure
- Downsizing procedure
- Management moves procedure
- Medical priority procedure
- Lettings procedures
- Domestic Violence Policy
- Harassment policy
- Vulnerable Applicant and Tenant Policy
- Starter Tenancy Policy and procedures

APPENDIX 1

BAND	CIRCUMSTANCES
1	Has medical category A
1	Has been awarded a Management Move
1	Currently under-occupying a 3 bed or larger home will move to 1 bed
1	Qualifying household member unable to succeed
1	Is experiencing harassment which is racial, sexual, homophobic or religious
1	Is fleeing domestic violence
1	Current property needs to be demolished or disposed
2	Has medical category B
2	Currently under-occupying their home but still needs 2 bedrooms
2	Household aged over 60 years in general needs property wishing to move into sheltered accommodation
2	Is statutorily overcrowded
2	Currently living in adapted property which no longer need
2	Has children of opposite sex sharing bedroom at least one over 10 yrs
2	Has more than 3 children sharing a bedroom
2	Child over 1 yr sharing a bedroom with parent(s)
2	Currently occupying a 2 bed, but will move to a 1 bed
3	Has medical category C
3	Current property needs major works
3	Has children of opposite sex sharing bedroom
3	Has children of same sex sharing bedroom at least one over 10 yrs
3	Has more than 2 children sharing bedroom
3	Has child(ren) under 10 years living in flat
3	Single person living in swan supported housing (i.e., pike or Foyer)
3	Needs to move due to employment opportunities or commitments
4	Has children for weekend and holiday access
4	Wants to move to similar property in different area
4	Wants to move nearer family or friends
4	Current property needs minor repairs
4	Is registered foster carer
4	Assessed as needing a live in carer
4	Has children of same sex sharing bedroom under 10 yrs
4	Wants to move nearer school / shops
4	Has MP or local councillor support
4	Adult other than the tenant living in Swan property
4	Is a victim of anti-social behaviour
4	No medical priority

APPENDIX 2

	Designated one bedroom	Bed-sit	1 bedroom home	2 bedroom home	3 bedroom home	4 / 5 bedroom home
Single person over 60 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Couple over 60 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
One person	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Couple	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Household with one child under one			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Household with one child over one				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Household with 2 children				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Household with 3 children				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Household with 4 or more children					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>