

Policy Selection and Allocation

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1. Purpose

Western Challenge Housing Association has rented accommodation throughout the South and South West of England. The Selection and Allocation Policy provides details of the way in which the Association determines priority for vacancies in the rented housing stock, which includes Intermediate Rented Keyworker Accommodation.

2. Scope

The key objectives of the Selection and Allocation Policy are:

- To allocate accommodation to those in greatest housing need
- To achieve sustainable tenancies and the creation of stable and balanced communities
- To work with local authorities and other partners to meet housing needs and to ensure appropriate allocations and support
- To consider the support needs of new service users as part of the assessment criteria and priority for acceptance for Supported Housing schemes.
- To make effective use of the Association's housing stock
- To treat applicants in a fair and non discriminatory way in accordance with the Association's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- To be effective, understandable and accountable
- To comply with the Housing Corporation Regulatory Code, legislation and to meet the requirements of the Association's charitable status
- To comply with nomination and Choice Based Lettings partnership agreements

3. References

Housing Act 1985
Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
Tenant Handbook
Housing Corporation Regulatory Code

4. Responsible Parties

Western Challenge Association Board Managing Director Housing Manager	Regional Housing Services Committee/Resident Panel Personnel Director Senior Housing Officer
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Area Housing Manager
Housing Officer
The Business Development and
Marketing Department for Keyworker
accommodation

Housing Assistant
Housing Administrator

Where “Housing Manager”, “Area Housing Manager” and “Senior Housing Officer” are specified, this includes General Housing and Supported Housing functions.

Where “Housing Officer” is specified, this should be taken as a Neighbourhood Housing Officer, Home Ownership Officer, Supported Housing Officer or Accommodation Officer.

5. Method

5.1 Gaining access to the Association’s rented housing stock

The Association operates Starter Tenancies for all applicants who have not held an Assured or Secure RSL or Local Authority tenancy immediately prior to a tenancy being offered by the Association. For guidance on this, refer to the Starter Tenancy Policy.

There are a number of different routes to gain access to the Association’s general rented stock.

5.1.1 *Direct applicants*

The Association operates a Points scheme to prioritise between applicants on the waiting list. All applicants registered on the Association’s waiting list must be in housing need as determined by the Points scheme.

Points are awarded to reflect the present housing circumstances under a number of different elements:

- Bedroom deficiency
- Lack/sharing basic facilities
- Condition of property
- Social factors
- Keyworkers
- Medical factors
- Under occupation
- Separated household
- Insecurity of tenure
- Sustaining the balance of a community

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5.1.2 *Transfer applicants*

Tenants of Western Challenge Housing Association wishing to transfer from their present accommodation may be registered on the Association's transfer list. This excludes those housed in Keyworker accommodation.

5.1.3 *Local Authority nominations*

The Association works closely with local authorities to assist them in meeting local housing need and to ensure that local authorities are able to meet their statutory obligations.

The responsibilities of each party are agreed as part of a Nomination agreement. This includes details of the percentage of allocations that the Association has agreed to make to nominations from the local authority. The minimum percentage is 50% but can increase to 100% for some schemes and, in particular, new lettings.

5.1.4 *Referrals through moveUK schemes*

The Association subscribes to moveUK, which enables tenants of the Association and other social rented landlords to move to other Housing Association or local rented housing.

5.1.5 *Reciprocal arrangements*

The Association may also enter into a reciprocal arrangement with another social landlord to rehouse a tenant of the Association on the understanding that the Association will rehouse a tenant of that landlord.

5.1.6 *Common housing needs registers/Choice based lettings*

In some areas the Association has become a partner with other social landlords in a common or joint housing register or choice based lettings scheme. A common housing register enables an applicant to complete one application form and, subject to meeting the rehousing criteria of individual landlords, have their application considered by landlords participating in the scheme.

The choice based lettings scheme is similar to the common housing register but relies on applicants making a bid for a property that they wish to be considered for. All vacancies are advertised by the Local Authority on an agreed basis and have a closing date for applicants to express an interest.

Agreements to join common housing registers/choice based lettings schemes must be approved by Western Challenge Housing Association Board. Approval will only be given where either the Association is able to apply our own rehousing

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priorities or where a common allocation policy meets the Association's aims and objectives.

5.1.7 Referrals from other agencies for Supported Housing Schemes

Selection and referral agreements may be set up with other agencies to rehouse persons either moving from supported housing or requiring specialised or supported housing. This will include supported housing managed on the Association's behalf by another agency. A procedure setting out the criteria for referral, selection and allocation will be agreed and included as part of the Service Level Agreement between the Association and the support provider.

5.1.8 Nominations for Keyworkers

Where schemes have been developed and funded specifically for Keyworkers, the Housing Officer must liaise closely with the Business Development and Marketing Department in advance of nominations being sought from the nominating agent, which is dependent on the funding source. The Housing Officer will be advised of the accepted applicants and these applications will be administered and assessed in line with the Selection and Allocation Policy.

5.1.9 Decants from the Association's own housing stock

Existing tenants who need to be rehoused whilst major works are undertaken to their property. Permanent rehousing will normally only be offered if the property is to be demolished or the tenant is assessed to be in greatest housing need under the Selection and Allocation policy.

5.1.10 Mutual exchanges

Assured and secure tenants (excluding Keyworkers) have a right to exchange their tenancy with another secure or assured tenant. For guidance on this, refer to the Mutual Exchange Policy.

5.2 Eligibility Criteria

5.2.1 Consideration for rehousing

Before an applicant can be considered for rehousing certain criteria will need to be met. An applicant must:

- be assessed to be in housing need as determined by the Association's points scheme
- be over the age of 16

Where the applicant is requesting a specific scheme it will be necessary for the applicant:

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- to satisfy the local connection criteria of a Section 106 agreement
- to satisfy the criteria of a local lettings policy
- to meet the criteria of special needs accommodation
- to meet the eligibility criteria for Keyworker accommodation

Where the applicant or tenant is applying to register on the direct waiting list or transfer list for a specific scheme an application will be refused in the following circumstances:

- the applicant's assessed housing need under the Points scheme does not meet the minimum points threshold specified in the Lettings Plan for the scheme requested
- the Association does not have suitable accommodation in the area requested
- the scheme is subject to 100% nominations from the local authority or another nominating agency.
- Where no waiting list is held for a specified area.

The applicant will be advised of the reason for refusing an application on the above grounds and will be given advice regarding other forms of accommodation available and contact persons. The applicant will also be given the right to appeal against the decision.

5.2.2 Assessment of application

On receipt of an application or request for an application an initial assessment will be undertaken to determine the individual circumstances and the applicant's eligibility under the Selection and Allocation policy. The Association may request further information to clarify or confirm statements made in the application before confirming acceptance onto the waiting list. The applicant will be informed at any time that a third party is contacted. If it is necessary to obtain information of a sensitive / personal nature regarding the applicant or member of the household, the express consent of the applicant will be sought.

5.3 Refusal of application

An application will be rejected for rehousing at any stage in the lettings process where it is established that the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria. An application may also be rejected when the Association has established that the applicant or a member of their household:

- is in a financial position to afford other suitable housing options such as outright purchase or shared ownership
- has suitable alternative accommodation available
- owes £250 or more rent on their present or a former tenancy

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or where there is evidence, that in the period of two years prior to making an application to the Association, the applicant or a member of their household

- has breached the conditions of their present or a former tenancy
- has committed acts of physical violence, abuse or harassment against an employee or tenant of the Association or another social landlord
- caused damage to a former rented property which rendered it unsuitable for letting

An application will only be rejected under the above criteria following an investigation and an assessment of the individual circumstances. In respect of rent arrears the Association will take into account any repayment agreement and the reasons that the arrears accrued before refusing an application. The Association's policies on enforcement action for the breach of tenancy conditions will be used as the standard to determine whether an application should be refused.

5.4 Applicant requiring support or specialised accommodation

Where an applicant or a member of their household requires additional support to sustain a tenancy or accommodation of a specialised type or location an assessment will be undertaken in conjunction with other relevant agencies. As part of this assessment the applicant's individual needs will be considered in relation to the accommodation and any other additional service offered by the Association. Relevant agencies such as Health, Social Services and Probation will be contacted to determine any special requirements and whether additional support will be offered to the applicant. The make up of the existing tenant group, location and amenities will also be considered. An application will be refused where it is established that the applicant

- requires support services which cannot be supplied by the Association or by an arrangement with a relevant agency to enable an applicant to sustain a tenancy
- has specialised housing requirements and the Association does not have suitable accommodation available
- is incompatible with existing tenants.

5.4.1 Deferral of consideration of applicant's circumstances

Where an applicant has voluntarily relinquished accommodation and moved to a situation which attracts higher priority under the Association's Selection and allocation policy without a justifiable reason, the priority at their former accommodation will be used to assess their application for the first 6 months of their application.

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The Association also has the discretion to suspend an application for 6 months where two reasonable offers of accommodation have been made and these have been refused by the applicant for insufficient reasons.

The onus will be on the applicant to contact the Association following this 6-month period to re-register. They may be required to complete a new application form in order for an assessment to be made.

5.4.2 Decision

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of the assessment of their application (this applies to the initial assessment and any subsequent assessments). Any decision to defer or refuse an application on any of the above grounds must be approved by the Area Housing Manager. The applicant will be advised of the reason for the decision in writing and will be given a right of appeal and advice on other housing options, as appropriate.

Outcomes of the assessments will be explained to referral agencies with the prior permission of applicants.

5.5 Local lettings policies

Local lettings policies may be developed in the following circumstances:

- as part of a community strategy on new or modernised estates
- to address management problems on existing estates
- to improve difficult to let estates
- to sustain the balance of existing communities.
- as part of the arrangements for selection, allocation and referral to supported housing schemes as part of Service Level Agreements with partner agencies.

A local lettings policy may be adopted which gives weighting to factors other than housing need in order to promote greater stability and balance of communities, reduce void periods, assist specific groups find an appropriate solution to their housing needs and to reduce high turnover rates.

A local lettings policy will only be introduced following consultation with tenants, the local authority and any other relevant agencies and community groups. Local lettings policies must have clear objectives and provisions for monitoring and review. The Association's Board must approve local lettings policies.

The Regional Housing Services Committee/Resident Panels will be consulted on the development of the Lettings Policy and involved in the monitoring and review as required.

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5.6 Lettings plans

A lettings plan will be developed in April of each year with targets for each scheme. The plan will take into account the anticipated number of lettings in the year and the requirements of nomination and other agreements. Where demand for the scheme is excessive the plan will specify a minimum points total for inclusion on the waiting list. Minimum points total will not apply to tenants of Western Challenge Housing Association who will be able to register on the transfer list for any scheme, irrespective of whether their application gains any points under the Selection and Allocation Policy. Lettings Plans are not appropriate to Keyworker accommodation or supported housing schemes where 100% referral agreements are in place.

The plan will set out the proportion of lettings to be allocated to the following categories of applicant:

- Direct applicants
- Transfer applicants
- Local authority nominations
- moveUK referrals
- Nominations, including asylum seekers
- Referrals from other agencies.

Where the Association is a partner in a common housing register, allocations will also be made in accordance with the lettings plan.

Schemes on the lettings plan will be listed under each local authority area and an overall target for the area will be set to reflect the percentage of the ethnic population. The Association will work closely with local authorities to establish whether the percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic households varies in the areas where the Association's properties are located and targets for these areas will be amended accordingly.

The plan for each regional office will be referred to the Regional Housing Services committee/Resident Panels who will have responsibility for annual monitoring performance against the plan. A copy of the plan will be held in each regional office.

5.7 Record keeping and monitoring

All applications received will be recorded on a computerised allocation system. This will also include applications accepted under the HOMES scheme.

Applicants will be categorised on the computerised allocation module according to the status of the application in relation to rehousing. The status of each application will be shown as one of the following:

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REGISTERED	Applicants being assessed for eligibility and housing need prior to their application being authorised
RE-REGISTERED	Applicants previously registered who have renewed their application and this is waiting to be authorised
AUTHORISED	Applicants assessed and accepted on the waiting/transfer list
OFFERED	Applicants who are being considered for an offer of alternative accommodation
COMPLETED	Applicants who have accepted the offer of accommodation or can be removed from the list (i.e. they have secured their own accommodation)
DEFERRED	Applications deferred by WCHA in line with Policy
SUSPENDED	Applications suspended by WCHA in line with Policy
CANCELLED	Applications cancelled

Each time an application status changes, a reason for this change will be recorded on the allocation module.

5.8 Allocations

Whenever a vacancy arises reference will be made to the Lettings Plan to ensure that the category of applicant selected fulfils the Association's agreed targets. This would not apply to keyworker or supported housing schemes where a referral, selection and allocation procedure is in place.

5.8.1 *Matching the property to size of household*

Properties will be allocated according to the size of the household. The following minimum household/property size matches will apply:

Bed-sitting Room	Single person
1 Bedroom (1 person)	Single person
1 Bedroom (2 person)	Single person or couple
2 Bedroom (3 person)	Couple, families with one child, 2 single persons
2 Bedroom (4 person)	Families with one or two children
3 Bedroom (5 person)	Families with two or three children
4 Bedroom (6 person)	Families with three or more children

The following principles will apply when allocating accommodation:

- applicants will not be allocated a property in excess of these standards unless there is either proven medical evidence that a separate room is required or where the applicant is in the process of arranging staying contact or has confirmed staying contact with child/ren from a former relationship and this is subject to accommodation being sufficient.
- no more than two children are to share a bedroom

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- a child aged 8 or more will not be expected to share a bedroom with someone of the opposite sex.

This section would not apply to keyworker or supported housing schemes where a referral, selection and allocation procedure is in place.

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5.8.2 Selection of applicant from the Association's waiting list

Where the allocation is to be made direct from the Association's waiting lists, applicants will be selected by referring to the computerised allocation module. A print out will be placed on the allocation-monitoring file signed by the persons making the allocation decision.

5.8.3 Selection of applicant registered on a common housing register

Where the Association is a partner in a common register a direct referral will be requested for allocations that are not subject to a nomination agreement with the local authority. Direct applicants must be assessed to be in housing need under the Association's Points scheme and must meet the eligibility criteria as determined by the Selection and allocation policy.

5.8.4 Exceptions to selecting applicant in greatest need

When selecting from the Association's direct waiting list, transfer list or a direct referral from a common register, the allocation will be made to the applicant assessed to be in the greatest housing need under this policy.

The only exceptions will be:

- where the resultant vacancy would satisfy greater housing need by transferring an existing tenant
- where a property has been identified as difficult to let and where flexibility would reduce the number of empty properties
- where a local lettings policy has been approved which takes into account other factors to ensure the sustainability and balance of a community
- where a property has features which make it suitable for a specific applicant on the waiting list
- where there are specific social or physical factors affecting the letting and that a "sensitive" letting is required to ensure a sustainable tenancy. Examples may include re-housing of applicant close to former partner following the breakdown of a relationship or the letting to a flat where all other tenants are elderly.
- where support is provided, consideration needs to be given to other contractual obligations, such as Supporting People contracts and service

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- level agreements for supported housing in the selection of applicants. where the applicant is a keyworker who has been assessed, approved and nominated by a recognised agent specifically for keyworker accommodation.

5.8.5 Allocation decision

Two members of staff will always make the decision on allocations. This will normally be the Area Housing Manager and the Housing Officer/Housing Assistant. In the absence of the Area Housing Manager two Housing Officers/Housing Assistant may make the decision.

All allocations will be recorded on the Allocation monitoring file and where selection has not been made to the applicant in greatest need, the reasons for the decision will be recorded.

5.8.6 Offer of accommodation

All applicants will be interviewed prior to confirmation of the offer of accommodation. This may either be through a home visit, an office interview or at the time of viewing the accommodation. The Association may undertake the interview, managing agent, local authority, registered social landlord or a partner in a common housing register. Until such time as an interview has been undertaken the offer will be provisional.

For Supported Housing, a full assessment needs to be undertaken prior to the service being offered and a home visit assessment carried out prior to any offer of accommodation where support provision is part of the accommodation. Ideally the Sheltered Housing Officer should be involved in the assessment so that they can feed into the Support Plan.

The purpose of the interview is to confirm the circumstances and that the applicant meets the Association's criteria for selection and allocation of a property.

The offer of accommodation will be confirmed in writing, and wherever possible, the applicant will be contacted by telephone to provide maximum notice of an offer and to minimise the void period. The applicant will normally be asked to confirm acceptance within 3 days of the offer/or property becoming void. Arrangements will be made to view the property within this timescale.

5.8.7 Allocations to 16 or 17 year olds

Persons under the age of 18 are not able to hold an interest in land and, therefore, special arrangements have to be made regarding the granting of a tenancy. The tenancy agreement will be endorsed to state that the Association will hold the tenancy on trust for the benefit of the tenant until the tenant reaches

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the age of 18.

An applicant under the age of 18 will be asked to nominate a litigation friend. The role of the litigation friend is to safeguard the young person's interests in the event of the Association having to take court proceedings for a breach of the tenancy agreement. However, they will not be personally liable for the actions of the young person.

5.8.8 *Rehousing of an employee, member of the Association's main governing body, sub committees or area committees and their relatives*

Schedule 1, Housing Act 1996 and subsequent Housing Corporation determinations outline the circumstances which need to be satisfied for the Association to rehouse an existing or former employee and their relatives or a member of the Association's main governing body, sub committees or area committees and their relatives. Applicants will be required to declare such an interest on the application form.

The Association must be satisfied that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria and priorities set out in the Selection and Allocation policy. Where an applicant is subject to Schedule 1, Housing Act 1996 the approval of the Board of Western Challenge Housing Association must be obtained prior to acceptance onto the waiting list.

At the time of the selection for a property the Chair of the Association's Board must approve the allocation under delegated authority and must be satisfied that all of the following conditions have been met:

- that the applicant has the highest priority under the Selection and Allocation policy
- that the applicant has had no involvement in or influence over the allocation
- that other rehousing options are not available

Where the applicant accepts the accommodation the Personnel Director should be informed for inclusion in the Quarterly review report to the main Western Challenge Group Board".

5.8.9 *Rehousing of Asylum Seekers.*

The Association will consider nominations from the Local Authority for rehousing asylum seekers who have received a positive status determination by the Home Office under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

The Association will work closely with local authorities and other agencies to establish the suitability of an area for the rehousing of asylum seekers. The make up of current tenants, management issues, social factors and the availability of amenities, facilities and community support will be considered.

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Targets will be agreed and incorporated into the Lettings plan for individual schemes.

The process outlined in Section 5.1 for individual assessments will be followed to determine individual support needs and the suitability of the accommodation and location to ensure that the applicant would be able to sustain a tenancy.

5.8.10 *Rehousing of applicants from A8 Countries*

As of 1st May 2004 an additional 10 countries acceded to the European Union: Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic (these are known as the A8 Countries).

Nationals of the A8 countries will be eligible for social housing/homelessness assistance if they secure employment and comply with the Home Office's Workers Registration Scheme (or if they become genuinely self-employed). Nationals from Malta and Cyprus will be eligible for social housing if they secure employment (with no need to register) or become genuinely self-employed.

Certain categories of EEA applicant are eligible for housing on an "unconditional" basis. This includes:

- workers;
- self-employed;
- providers of services, and
- recipients of services.
- retired from being employed, or self employed, in the UK.

Applicants who are legally employed can be expected to provide documentary evidence which shows that they:

- are registered with the Home Office,
- are here on a work permit or other authorised scheme, or
- have been working continuously for 12 months.

Further guidance on dealing with applicants from A8 Countries is contained in the 'European Union accession: eligibility for housing allocations and homelessness assistance' guidance notes.

5.8.11 *Refusal of offer*

Where an applicant refuses accommodation offered, an assessment will be made as to the reasonableness of the refusal and the likelihood of the Association being able to meet the applicant's requirements. Applicants will be removed from the waiting list following two reasonable offers of accommodation. This decision must be made by the Area Housing Manager and will take into

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account all the circumstances of the application in relation to the reasonableness of the offers.

All reasons for refusal will be recorded. This information will be used to devise strategies for individual difficult to let schemes.

5.9 Appeals

An applicant may request a review of a decision at any stage of the selection and allocation process. If the applicant is not satisfied with a decision or action taken under the Selection and Allocation policy, they may appeal against the decision by using the Appeals Procedure.

NB: This is a separate process to the Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Procedure should be pursued if the customer is dissatisfied with the way that the Association has handled an issue or dealt with the customer. The Appeals Process should be followed if the customer requests a review of a decision that has been made by the Association.

5.9.1 Stage 1

An appeal from the tenant must be:

- In writing/recorded in writing
- Made within **10 working days** of the decision being made
- Addressed to the Area Housing Manager/ Senior Housing Officer
- Outline the reason of dissatisfaction

The tenant should expect a response from the Area Housing Manager/ Senior Housing Officer:

- Within **5 working days** (of receipt) to acknowledge their letter
- Within **10 working days** (of acknowledgement) as a final response to their letter (this response includes a Stage 2 appeal form).

NB: 1 month after the response date, the case may be closed if the tenant has not registered any dissatisfaction with the outcome.

5.9.2 Stage 2

Should the case be taken further, the tenant should:

- Complete an Appeal Form
- Address it to the Managing Director
- Return it within **10 working days** of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The tenant should expect a response from the Managing Director within **10**

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working days of receipt of their Appeal Form

5.9.3 Stage 3

Should the tenant continue to be dissatisfied, as a 3rd and final stage, they may request that the Appeals panel considers their appeal. This must be:

- Within **10 working days** of receipt of the Stage 2 response
- In writing/recorded in writing to the Managing Director

The Appeal Panel consists of 2 members of the Association's Committee of Management, 1 of which must be a Tenant representative. The hearing must be arranged for a time no more than **1 month** from this notification and will go ahead even if the tenant is unable to attend / be represented.

A written report must be issued by the Managing Director/Housing Manager/Area Housing Manager/Senior Housing Officer and circulated along with a copy of the written appeal from the applicant. This should be given to all members of the Appeals Panel and the tenant a minimum of **5 calendar days** before the date of the hearing.

The tenant can chose to take one of the following options in order to support their appeal:

- Not attend however send/record a written statement
- Attend and in addition to sending in/recording a written statement
- Attend and represent themselves verbally
- Attend and be accompanied by a professional or "lay" representative / advocate
- Not attend however be represented by professional or "lay" representative / advocate

The tenant must give the Association at least **7 calendar days** notice in writing of their intention and also if they are choosing to attend, they must inform the Association of any special requirements to be catered for (disabilities, hearing impairment, non English speakers).

PLEASE REFER TO COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – GUIDANCE FOR ARRANGING AND CONDUCTING AN APPEAL PANEL

The Appeal Panel will advise the tenant that the formal response will be sent to them within **14 calendar days**.

The formal response will advise the tenant of any findings made by the Panel, their decision and the reason for their decision.

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5.9.4 **The Housing Ombudsman Service**

Should the tenant complete all 3 stages and still be dissatisfied, they have a right to complain to the Housing Ombudsman.

Housing Ombudsman Service
Norman House,
105-109 Strand
London WC2R 0AA

Tel: 0845 7125 973

The Ombudsman has the power to reject the appeal or order a solution but this can take many months to resolve. In these circumstances, the Association will decide on the appropriate course of action on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances.

5.10 **Performance standards**

One of the principle objectives of this policy is accountability. In the operation of the Selection and Allocation policy the Association will meet the following standards:

- All application forms will be assessed within 5 working days of receipt and a response sent within 7 working days of receipt
- Applicants will be given a right of appeal against any decision made in respect of their application under the Appeals procedure
- All applicants will be interviewed prior to rehousing to confirm their priority in relation to others registered on the waiting list
- Standard forms will be used at all stages in the lettings process to ensure that all applicants are assessed on the same basis
- Allocation decisions will involve a minimum of two members of staff and will be made in accordance with the published policy
- A copy of the Selection and Allocation policy will be sent to all local authority partners and the Housing Corporation.
- Lettings performance will be monitored against Lettings plans and performance against the plans reported to Regional Housing Services committee/Resident Panels annually.
- Lettings activity will be included in the annual performance report to tenants.
- The Association will participate in the Housing Corporation CORE system for monitoring all new lettings.
- Details of lettings activity will be reported to Regional Housing Services committee/Resident Panels on a quarterly basis.
- Records will be maintained of the reason for the decision on all allocations from the direct waiting list

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- All new tenants will be given the opportunity of commenting on the quality of service provision by completing a new tenant questionnaire
- Applicants will have a right to inspect their application during normal office hours
- Applicants will be advised if a third party is contacted as part of the assessment of their application
- Applicants will have a right to view the accommodation offered

The Association will send a leaflet for applicants and tenants to explain the Selection and Allocation policy, together with the Tenants and Applicants Charter. The leaflet is available in different languages and formats, as required.

6. Points scheme

Bedroom deficiency

Points are awarded on the basis that a separate bedroom is needed for each of the following:

- for each couple
- for each adult aged 18 or over, not living as part of a couple
- one or two children of the same or opposite sexes under eight sharing a room
- one or two children of the same sex aged 8 to 17 years

For each bedroom in the present accommodation short of this standard 20

Points will also be awarded in the following circumstances:

Where there is a difference of 10 years or more between children of the same sex sharing	10
Where the applicant is expecting a baby and an additional bedroom is required following the birth	5

Sharing/lack of accommodation or facilities

Shared kitchen	4
No kitchen	10
Shared living room	2
No living room	10
Shared inside toilet	4
Shared outside toilet	6
No toilet	12
Shared bath/shower	4
No bath/shower	10
No hot water in kitchen	2
No hot water in bathroom	2

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No cold water supply in kitchen	4
No cold water supply in bathroom	4
No electric supply	10

Condition of property

Disrepair	up to	15
Dampness	up to	5
Inadequate heating - any applicant		4
- applicant elderly, with dependant child or medical problems		4
Decant from Western Challenge property for major work		100

Medical

Points are awarded to applicants (or a member of their household) with a medical condition and whose condition is made worse by their accommodation and where a move would alleviate this problem.

Urgent	- applicant either unable to live in the accommodation due to ill health or mobility or is housebound - applicant's accommodation impacting on life threatening illness	50
Moderate	- applicant or a member of their household suffers from a continuing or intermittent medical condition and problems of coping with the condition are made more difficult by present accommodation or facilities.	20
Minor	- applicant or a member of their household suffers from a continuing or intermittent medical condition of a kind that would be marginally affected by a change of accommodation	5

Until supporting evidence is provided to confirm a medical condition only 5 points will be applied to the application.
Only one category will be awarded.

Social factors

To move nearer to family/other service to give or receive support	5
To move nearer to work	up to 5
To move nearer to shops, schools, public transport	up to 5

Where the applicant has a child aged 10 or under and the present accommodation

■ has no outside drying facilities	5
■ is above/below ground floor with a lift	2

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■ without a lift	5
■ 2nd floor and above	5
■ has no garden	5
■ need for sheltered accommodation	10
Where the present accommodation is causing financial hardship (33% of income spent on rent/mortgage.)	10

Keyworkers

Where properties have been developed and funded specifically for Keyworkers and the applicant is a recognised keyworker and has been assessed, accepted and nominated in this capacity by a recognised nominating agent 50

In the event that the Keyworker accommodation is oversubscribed, the applications should also be assessed in line with the other criteria set out in the Points Scheme in order to prioritise all applications.

Insecure accommodation

Living in Bed and breakfast accommodation	10
Lodger status (this does not include living with family members)	10
Resident of hostel	10
Assured shorthold tenant	5
Tied or service tenancy due to be terminated within 6 months	10
Caravan or boat dweller with no permanent site	10
Applicant living in supported accommodation and no longer requiring the level of support offered.	10

Where an applicant is eligible for the following points a further award under Bedroom deficiency, lack of facilities, condition of property, social factors, insecure accommodation and separated families will not apply

No fixed abode (only awarded to applicants not in priority need under the homelessness legislation)	35
Applicant accepted by local authority as unintentionally homeless and in priority need	50

Sustaining the balance of a community

These points are awarded where an applicant has a local connection with a specific parish and their continued residence in the area will assist the balance of the community. Points will only be awarded if the applicant is requesting the area as their first choice.

Points will be awarded under this element where the applicant or a member of their household:

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- Lived in the parish for at least 10 of the first 16 years of their life
 - Is currently employed in the parish
 - Is currently resident in the parish and has lived there for a minimum of 5 years
- Points to be awarded 10

Underoccupation

Where the applicant is a tenant of a social rented landlord only
 For each bedroom in excess of the bedrooms requested 10

Separated families

Where members of the household have previously lived together but
 are now forced to live apart because of lack of accommodation 20

Where the family arrangements are such that the applicant is in the process
 of arranging staying contact with child/ren from a former relationship and this
 is subject to accommodation being sufficient or staying contact is confirmed
 and the existing accommodation is insufficient. The decision to award points
 will be based on the number and sexes of the children and the regularity
 of staying contact.. 10

Discretionary Management Points – Western Challenge Tenants Only

- Where the tenant or a member of their household has been
 the victim or threatened with physical violence or racial or sexual
 harassment and continues to be at risk . This includes domestic
 violence. 100
- Where a move would be in the best interests of the management
 of the housing stock. 100

The following Discretionary Management Points may be awarded to any applicant and is
 not limited to Western Challenge tenants only

- Where the applicant is being referred under the Witness
 Protection Scheme supported by the Police 100

Points awarded under the Discretionary Management Points section will only be
 awarded in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the Area
 Housing Manager and supported by the Housing Manager / Managing Director.

7. Data Protection and Confidentiality

The exchange and processing of personal information will be treated with appropriate levels of confidence and will be fair and lawful. In particular the Association will ensure that the relevant processing is notified to the Information Commissioner and is conducted (where relevant) with the necessary consent of the individual concerned. The Association will ensure that personal information is accurate; not kept for longer than is necessary; secure; and adequate, relevant and not excessive. All information will be processed in accordance with the rights of the individual.

8. Equality and Diversity

Western Challenge's intention is to develop a culture that embraces all customers and potential customers, integrating their needs and aspirations into everyday business. We recognise that there are many barriers to true equality of opportunity, ranging from overt prejudice in favour of, or against, particular groups or individuals to unwitting ignorance of different lifestyles and needs. On whatever level it exists discrimination is neither acceptable nor tolerable. To this end, WCHA has developed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy (GCE112PO).

In operating this policy the Association will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, social position, politics, trade union membership or social disadvantage, or any other personal circumstances. The Association will not discriminate against the disabled by evicting a person for reasons relating to their disability, even where the disability is directly linked to the anti-social behaviour, unless it is necessary in order to avoid endangering the health and safety of another person.

In addition, the Association has a separate policy on Harassment, including racial harassment which demonstrates how we intend to fulfil our duties under Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976. The general duty under this Act is to:

- Have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups
- Encourage people to report racially motivated incidents
- Support complainants and their families
- Take action against perpetrators

Our aim throughout all our policies and procedures is to make the promotion of racial equality central to the way our services are designed and delivered.

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9. Related Documents

1. Selections and allocations procedure – WOP99PR
2. Customer Service Charter – WL1010
3. Complaint management procedure - WCE84PR
4. Equality, diversity and inclusion policy - GCE115PO
5. Confidentiality, privacy and data protection policy - GCE122PO
6. GCE005PR – How to write policies, procedures, strategies and guidance notes

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