

SUBJECT:	APPROVAL DATE:	2014
ALLOCATION POLICY	EFFECTIVE DATE:	2014
	REVIEW DATE	2017

ALLOCATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' Housing Association's primary aim is to provide affordable, good quality accommodation and to provide comfort and security to older people and households in greatest need, giving particular consideration to those associated with education.

THA also aims:

- To contribute towards providing balanced and sustainable communities and where necessary will consider local lettings plans.
- To comply with the requirements of the HCA (Homes & Communities) Regulatory Code.
- To provide an annual summary of lettings
- To consult with Local Authorities and other bodies to identify housing need in each area in which the Association operates
- To explore options for development in accordance with the Association's Business Plan and Development Strategy

The purpose of this Allocation Policy is to detail how our vacant properties will be let. THA aims to provide information on policies and procedures in clear language which is easy to read.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

THA has adopted an Equality and Diversity Strategy. At all stages in the application and allocation process we will ensure, by regular monitoring procedures and that we comply with the principles of this strategy. Regular reports on performance will be made to the Housing Management and Maintenance Committee. It is THA's aim to ensure that the percentage of tenants from Black and Minority Ethnic(BME) groups at least matches the overall percentage of BME groups in the areas of operation where BME groups exceed 10%.

LEGAL STATUS

This Allocation Policy meets the legal requirements set out in the following Acts and complies with the HCA Regulatory Code.

- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 1985
- Data Protection Act 1998

- Equality Act 2010

SOURCES OF APPLICANTS

Local Authority Nominations

THA has, in the past, received grant funding from the Housing Corporation. In line with locally agreed protocols, THA has nomination agreements with some local authorities for a percentage of voids.

Where a Choice-Based Lettings System exists, THA will comply with the necessary requirements.

THA will consult with Local Authorities periodically on nomination arrangements.

See Summary of Nomination Agreements

Direct applicants

THA has an open waiting list for each sheltered scheme. This is subject to review when any Choice-Based Lettings Schemes are introduced.

The priority of each application is assessed under the agreed Points System. This information will be verified during a Home Visit prior to an offer of accommodation being made.

It is THA's Policy not to offer accommodation to applicants who have sufficient resources to rent or purchase privately. There are set limits on income and savings which are agreed annually by the Board. These are reflected in the agreed Points System.

See Points System – Procedure & Guidance Notes

The waiting list for general needs housing is restricted to those in housing need who are associated with education and also from THA staff in residential posts who cease to be employed by the Association. However, there are conditions on any offer of accommodation made to such employees of THA.

See Benefits to Staff and Board

Referrals from Mobility Schemes

THA may accept referrals under an agreed national mobility scheme from other housing associations and local authorities.

Transfer Applicants

Tenants who have held their current tenancy for 12 months may apply for a transfer provided that they are not in rent arrears and their present accommodation is in good order.

See Transfer & Exchange Policy

Applications via Mutual Exchanges

Tenants can exchange their homes either with another THA tenant or tenants of another housing association or local authority. Tenants requesting this must complete an application form. Permission will not normally be granted if the tenant is in arrears or the move will result in a property being over or under occupied. Permission will not be granted to Assured Shorthold Tenants or Starter Tenants to exchange their homes.

See Transfer and Exchange Policy

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information provided in connection with an application will be treated as confidential in accordance with THA's Confidentiality Policy. In accordance with the HCA Regulatory Code and the Data Protection Act, all information that THA holds on tenants and applicants must be kept safe and secure and deleted when no longer required.

CORE (Continuous Recording System)

The Association participates in CORE and uses the data provided to assess its performance year on year and also in comparison with similar Associations. This does not include lettings on Assured Shorthold tenancies.

SEX OFFENDERS

THA will collaborate with the Local Authority, Police, Probation Service and Social Services under the Multi-Agency Public Protection (MAPPA) guidelines on any risk assessment and action plan for known offenders looking for housing. An allocation will only be made if the property and the area are considered suitable and appropriate.

CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

THA does not ask applicants about previous convictions but if information is brought to THA's attention the Association reserves the right to verify the information and assess the appropriateness of any allocation. This will only be done if the nature of the offence is likely to lead to estate management problems and is in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)

RIGHT OF OCCUPANCY

An offer of accommodation will not be made if the applicant does not have the right of occupancy in the United Kingdom.

HOW TENANTS ARE SELECTED

THA uses a points based system to allocate points relating to the current housing situation of the applicant and how suitable the accommodation on offer is for them

See Guide to General Needs Housing Points System Guide to Sheltered Housing Points System

Points System for Internal Transfers

The Points System is reviewed every three years.

All applications to the Association must be made in writing using the current Application form. Upon receipt of the form at Head Office an applicant's priority for re-housing is assessed on the basis of the Association's Points System.

The information given on the form will be verified during a home visit prior to an offer of accommodation being made.

See Home Visit- Needs & Risk Assessment Procedures

Acceptance onto the waiting list does not guarantee an offer of accommodation.

Applicants are unlikely to be offered accommodation if:

- They have sufficient financial resources to rent privately or purchase accommodation to meet their housing needs
- There is clear evidence from an official source that the applicant is or has been guilty of serious anti-social or racist behaviour and it is likely that housing the applicant will cause annoyance, harm or risk to Association tenants, staff or others living in the area
- They have rent or mortgage arrears and have not entered a suitable repayment agreement with their landlord or lender which has been kept to for at least 6 months
- Have an immediate need to be re-housed but no suitable property is immediately available.
- The applicant has knowingly given false information or information has been withheld deliberately

CRITERIA FOR APPLICANTS TO SHELTERED HOUSING

- Applicants should normally be over 60, in housing need and able to maintain an independent lifestyle
- In schemes which are proving difficult to let, the age requirement may be reduced to not less than 55 years. This is subject to any restrictions placed by the funding arrangements
- In instances where applicants are assessed as having the same level of housing need, priority will be given to those who have been associated with education.
- THA's sheltered schemes are currently not designed to accommodate wheelchairs

CRITERIA FOR DIRECT APPLICANTS TO GENERAL NEEDS

The Association accepts direct applications from teachers and others associated with education. The Board has agreed that the following groups may be considered as direct applicants:

- Working teachers including
Peripatetic teachers

Teachers in state and independent schools
Nursery, primary and secondary teachers
Further Education and university teachers
Student Post Graduate Certificates in Education/ Bachelor of Education
teachers
Supply teachers

- Those employed in schools
- Local authority education staff, including inspectors and advisers
- Education union and welfare staff
- Nursery nurses

The exception to this is Waltham Forest where only working teachers in the borough may apply.

EMPLOYMENT CRITERIA

(a) Areas of operation

Direct applicants for general needs housing must work within one of the six Boroughs in which the accommodation is situated namely, the London Boroughs of Bexley, Brent, Croydon, Haringey, Kingston upon Thames or Waltham Forest.

(b) Contracts of employment

Applicants may be employed full or part-time (a minimum of 16 hours per week) on either permanent or temporary contracts. In the latter instance a minimum contract period of a year is required.

(c) Continuing employment

If accommodation is offered it should be noted that it will be only for such time as the applicant is employed in the above listed Boroughs, or in an adjoining Borough, and in the field of education. Should this employment cease, alternative accommodation will need to be found by the tenant. Such applicants will be issued with Assured Shorthold Tenancies which will be reviewed annually and only renewed if the above criteria is fulfilled.

If an Assured Shorthold Tenant retires due to age or ill health and has held the tenancy for more than one year, the tenant will be offered an Assured Tenancy.

ACCEPTANCE ONTO THE WAITING LIST

Applicants will receive written acknowledgement that they have been accepted onto the waiting list and how many points they have been awarded.

Applicants are required to notify the Association of any change of circumstances.

Applicants are invited by the Association to renew their application annually.

Applicants will be considered for properties according to the Association's property size policy. A copy of which is available upon request.

See Property Sizes

APPEALS

Any applicant who has a complaint regarding the service received from the Association should write to the Housing Services Director and a copy of the Association's Complaints Procedure will be sent to the applicant. All complaints and appeals received will be subject to ethnic monitoring.