



ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1. Introduction

Crown Simmons Housing provides housing for rent for those in housing need who are unable to afford suitable accommodation through the normal open market process.

We operate in areas where housing is often very expensive and we actively encourage applications from all sections of the community, including from those on low to moderate incomes. We do not operate a maximum income level above which someone is automatically ineligible for consideration.

Some of our homes are designated for particular customer groups, such as those who are working or for older people.

We support Local Authorities to achieve their strategic housing functions and meet identified local housing needs.

2. Objectives of this policy

- To provide affordable accommodation to those in housing need
- To ensure access into our housing is fair and equitable
- To actively encourage and support balanced and sustainable communities
- To make best use of our stock
- To comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements.

3. Allocation of homes

We consider applications from a variety of sources:

Nomination Agreements:

We offer some homes, for example those developed with grant funding, to applicants nominated by local authorities under formal nomination agreements (these can operate as

part of a choice based lettings scheme – see below) . The nominated applicant must also meet the criteria in this policy to be offered the vacancy.

Choice Based Lettings:

We work in partnership with other providers and local authorities to advertise and let many homes through choice based lettings schemes. The applicant must also meet the criteria in this policy to be offered the vacancy.

Crown Simmons Waiting List:

For some of our schemes, including those developed without grant funding or where the nomination agreement doesn't apply to 100% of vacancies, we also hold our own waiting lists. External applicants and our own tenants seeking a transfer to another Crown Simmons home may apply to go on the waiting lists.

Priority on these waiting lists shall be determined by each applicant's relative housing need, having regard, for example, to factors such as overcrowding and health or mobility problems that directly impact on their housing circumstances. Where two or more applicants have equal housing need, priority will be based on date order of their applications.

Management Transfers:

These will be offered to Crown Simmons tenants in exceptional circumstances, for example where

- there is a significant risk to someone's health or well-being if they remain in their current home
- by offering a transfer to an existing tenant Crown Simmons will free up a specific vacancy that is urgently needed by another waiting list applicant

4. Eligibility and assessment

All applicants, regardless of the source of their application, will be subject to verification and assessment to determine their eligibility for a scheme and their ability to sustain a tenancy.

Some of our schemes and vacancies are aimed at working people. Proof of employment will be required in these cases.

Income and affordability:

Crown Simmons will carry out a financial assessment of the applicant's circumstances to ensure they can afford the property.

An offer will not normally be made by the Association if the assessment shows that the monthly rent and service charge payable for a particular vacancy will exceed;

- 40% of monthly household income - applicants without dependents

- 35% of monthly household income - applicants with dependents

We do not operate a maximum income level above which any applicant will automatically be ineligible for housing with Crown Simmons. However, it is our policy not to offer accommodation to someone who we deem able to afford suitable housing through the open market process.

In reaching this decision we will have regard to average housing costs within the particular locality the applicant seeks rehousing, what percentage of their household income is currently spent on rent and also to the applicant's income and any assets they may own.

Tenancy sustainability:

In addition to having regard to affordability, Crown Simmons will also carry out checks, such as tenancy references and home visits, to determine whether an applicant has the ability to successfully sustain a tenancy.

An applicant will not normally be considered able to sustain a tenancy and will therefore be deemed ineligible for housing if any of the following apply:

- An applicant has been evicted within the last five years for a serious breach of tenancy such as anti-social behaviour, racial harassment or rent arrears.
- An applicant currently owes rent arrears on a former or existing tenancy and has not made reasonable efforts and appropriate arrangements to repay the debt.
- Existing care packages cannot be guaranteed or where there is an acute vulnerability and no history of ongoing and sustained engagement with support services
- An applicant has a level of infirmity or requires a level of care beyond that which is suitable for the accommodation.
- The applicant or member of their household has been convicted of a serious offence and it's believed it wouldn't be conducive to community sustainability to offer a tenancy.

The above is not exhaustive list and we may refuse to make an offer on the basis of other reasons. All cases, however, will be considered and treated on their individual merit.

Local Lettings Plans:

We may use Local Lettings Plans (LLP) for certain schemes or localities to help create sustainable communities. Normally we will seek to agree an LLP with the local authority.

An LLP is likely to give preference to certain customer groups or have regard to certain factors. For example, employment status, age of applicants, child density.

5. Type of property

Number of bedrooms:

We will use the following bedroom standard to allocate homes which also meets the DWP criteria for benefit payments:

One bedroom will be allocated for

- each adult or cohabiting adult couple
- 2 children under 10 years old and of either sex
- 2 children 10 years or older and of the same sex
- An unborn child is counted as 1 child (subject to appropriate proof of pregnancy)

Under-occupation of properties:

We will allow under-occupation only in certain circumstances. For example if the age of any child in the household will result in the need for an additional bedroom within 12 months.

An applicant in receipt of welfare benefits will need to demonstrate that any shortfall in benefit will be affordable in the intervening period.

Accommodation for older people:

Homes in designated sheltered schemes and served by scheme managers will only normally be let to people aged 60+ who require supported accommodation.

Some other schemes are non-sheltered but have been designated as being for older people and will only normally be let to people aged 60+ who do not have a support need.

Adapted properties:

Homes that have been specifically adapted or designed for people with mobility problems, such as wheelchair users, will only normally be let to those applicants who specifically require this type of accommodation

6. Type of tenancy

Crown Simmons offers different types of tenancies to applicants, including;

- Starter tenancies
- Assured tenancies
- Fixed-term tenancies
- Assured shorthold tenancies

The type of tenancy will depend on the applicant's circumstances, the accommodation applied for and on any management arrangements in place for a particular scheme.

Further details are set out in our Tenancy Policy.

7. Appeals

If an applicant is unhappy with any decision taken under this policy they may appeal the decision by contacting Crown Simmons and asking for the matter to be formally reviewed. Specific details of the appeals process will be provided to them.

8. Information Sharing

It is recognised that applications for accommodation will include private or sensitive information about an individual applicant or their household. All information provided to Crown Simmons is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998.

All applicants will be asked to give permission for Crown Simmons to seek appropriate information relating to their eligibility and suitability, including tenancy checks and income assessments. Applicants are made aware that information may be shared with other housing providers or relevant agencies, such as through information sharing protocols.

Any failure by an applicant to provide accurate or complete information to Crown Simmons will normally result in their application being suspended or cancelled altogether.



Approved by Crown Simmons Board, 24th February 2015