

ALLOCATIONS & LETTINGS POLICY

The allocation and letting of the co-operative's properties will be made in accordance with its objects as outlined in the co-operative's Rules.

In establishing the Allocations and Lettings Policy, the co-operative has applied the following principles:

- The Allocating Panel will be composed of two members of the ASSC and one external member.
- To do so in a way which is fair, open and transparent
- To ensure utmost confidentiality with respect to personal information concerning applicants

Objectives

The objectives of the Allocations and Letting Policy are to:

- To meet the housing needs of the co-operative
- To provide housing for those referred to the co-operative in accordance with the Nominations Agreement with Lambeth Council who are in housing need and who wish to become members
- To provide housing for those referred to the co-operative under agreements with other housing associations and co-operatives.
- To ensure that all properties are allocated fairly and in accordance with the guidelines as recommended in the HCA Regulatory Framework
- To ensure that the co-operative's Equality and Diversity Policy is adhered to and that allocation of property does not discriminate against any person(s) on the basis of a protected characteristic¹

Composition of the Allocations and Selections Panel (ASSP)

The Allocating Panel will be composed of two members of the ASSC and one external advisor.

Application Handling

The ASSP will be facilitated and supported by the Director of Housing or their deputy. The Director of Housing will assess applicants and those applying to the co-operative for housing or applying for transfer.

Applicants who meet the relevant criteria will be submitted to the ASSP for it to conduct a thorough and objective assessment.

- The decisions the ASSP makes will be based solely on the information provided in the Application and Transfer Forms and in interviews.
- A simple majority will agree all decisions of the ASSP.
- Report all of its decisions to the MC for ratification.
- Appeals against an allocation will only be considered due to administrative failure or failure to follow this policy
- Appeals will be handled by the coops complaints policy
- Appeals must be notified to the Director of Housing within three days of the Panel decision.

Conflict of Interest

Impartiality and integrity will be a crucial requirement of the members of the ASSP.

In the event that any member of the ASSP is related to/has a close personal, business or other connection to an applicant, he/she will disclose this information and will withdraw from the ASSP and the round of allocation interviews. Another Coop member will be selected to replace them.

Transparency and Confidentiality

The list of applicants and all information provided by applicants will be strictly confidential and will not be shared or discussed with any persons outside of meetings of the ASSP.

However, personal confidentiality withstanding, the co-operative is committed to being as transparent as possible when reporting its decisions concerning allocations in the minutes of its meetings, and in any other communications. All applications and personal data submitted by applicants will be administered and kept only by the Director of Housing

At all times the co-operative will be guided by the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the need to ensure proper handling and storage of personal sensitive data².

Proof of Identification

Any applicant for housing or members seeking housing from the coop must submit proof of identification which must include a photograph identification (e.g. passport or driving license), national insurance number, references and, where required by law, proof of immigration status.

Letting Standards

The ASSP shall only consider applications where the household size requirements comply with the letting standards set out below. This is to ensure that a property is neither under nor over occupied, based on household size at the time of allocation.

The lettings standards table below details the minimum and maximum household size. No allocation or transfer will be considered which will constitute under or over occupation.

| Property Size | Household Size |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bed-Sitting Room | 1 adult |
| 1 Bedroom flat | 1-2 adult |
| 1 bedroom disability adapted flat | 1-2 adult |
| 2 Bedrooms | 1-2 adult + 1 to 2 children |
| 2 Bedrooms disability adapted flat | 1-2 adult + 1 carer |
| 3 Bedrooms | 1-2 adult + 2 to 4 children |
| 3 Bedrooms disability adapted flat | 1-2 adults + 2 to 4 children or carer |
| 5 Bedroom House | 1 adult + 4 children |
| | 2 adults + up to 8 children |

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Allocation Priorities

When a property becomes vacant it will be offered to the following groups in this order:

A. Decants

| Priority Level | Criteria |
|----------------|---|
| 1 | Emergency decant of existing coop tenants requiring temporary re- housing because of fire, flood, emergency or planned repairs |
| 2 | If there is more than one household requiring temporary re-housing the tenants will be asked to fill in the housing need section of the application form. |

If there is no household requiring re-housing under A the property will then be offered in this order:

B. Transfers and Nominations

| Priority Level | Criteria |
|----------------|---|
| 1 | Members on the Transfer Waiting List |
| 2 | Nominees in accordance with co-operative's nominations agreement with the local authority or nominations by other housing associations or co-operatives |

Offers will be made to members in order of the highest number of Housing Need points (if their Housing Need points are equal their Co-op Points will be considered as the deciding factor).

Housing Application Vectors

A. Internal Transfer List

All upcoming voids will be notified to all coop members.

Members wish to transfer will need to complete a Transfer Form and return it to the Director of Housing.

Housing need, meeting the Letting Standard and Coop Meeting Attendance will be considerations for transfer.

B. Mutual Exchanges

In a mutual exchange, two tenants swap their homes and assign their respective tenancy agreements to each other (in some cases a new tenancy may be created).

An intention to mutual exchange and end the current tenancy must be notified to the Director of Housing.

Ekarro will ensure that incoming mutual exchange tenants

- Match the property available (guided by the Lettings Standard table.
- are informed that they will lose their Right To Buy status as an HA/LA tenant and they will not be allowed to buy their coop property
- as a coop member and tenant, they will be expected to attend Coop meetings
- will only be able to exchange your property if there are no serious breaches of tenancy or court orders against them, their property is in good condition and there are no rent arrears on their account.

C. Referrals and Nominations

Ekarro is committed to ensuring its housing is accessible to those in greatest housing need, want to live and participate in a housing cooperative. To this end Ekarro will maintain good communications with Lambeth Council, other housing coops and housing associations.

Ekarro accepts nominations for membership and housing from:

- Lambeth Council – under its nominations agreement
- Housing Association and Housing Coop central waiting list
- Coin Street Mailing List – a comprehensive list of people who have expressed an interest in living a housing cooperative
- Direct applicants

Application Assessment Criteria

Housing Need Points

All applications and transfer requests will be assessed to:

- meet the letting standard for the flat/house being applied for
- other aspects of housing need such as overcrowding, lacking amenities, temporary or insecure accommodation, harassment, children and pregnancy

| Points | Housing Need Criteria |
|--------|--|
| 25 | For each additional room required using the minimum housing standards |
| 20 | Family separation – parents or children separated through lack of housing |
| 2 | For each flights of stairs a person has to climb to get to their front door / within their property if anyone in the applicant's household is pregnant (a scan copy or medical certificate must be submitted to support) or under 5 |
| 10 | For each flight of stairs a person has to climb to get to their front door / within their property if anyone in the applicant's household is elderly or with a long-term disability (a medical certificate must be submitted to support) |
| 25 | Harassment – where there is serious harassment reported and corroborated through the Complaints Procedure |
| 10 | Joint tenancies – where joint tenants have separated, the tenant who is no longer living in the property |

Meeting Attendance Points

Co-op members can gain Coop Points for each Coop meeting they attend. in the coop year.

Records of each meeting members have attended will be maintained in a register kept by the Director of Housing

Rent arrears

No applicant will be granted a transfer if they are in rent arrears.

Tenants with an existing NTQ will not be eligible for transfer.

Legislation Appendix

¹. The Equality Act 2010 requires equal access to services regardless of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. In the case of gender, there are special protections for pregnant women.

². Personal Sensitive Data as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 is 'information relating to an individual's race / ethnic origin, their political opinions, religion, trade union membership, health, sexual life, criminal or alleged offences'

Drafted 12 July 2016

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