

YMCA TOGETHER

Allocation Policy and Procedure

December 2021

Policy Objective

This Policy sets out the aims and principles through which YMCA Together allocates properties. YMCA Together provides a range of quality, affordable property for people in housing need for a wide range of reasons.

The overarching aim of this Policy is to make the best use of stock available, meet housing need where possible and create sustainable communities.

The Policy does not include a transfer of property through means of a management move or decant of a tenancy, instances such as these are covered in their respective procedures.

Policy

Housing need will be addressed by providing good quality, affordable housing across a broad range of tenures.

Offers will take into consideration how the housing stock can best be used in terms of occupancy level, facilities and preventing tenancy fraud, such as unlawful subletting or obtaining a tenancy through false statement.

YMCA Together seeks to make the allocation of our properties sustainable by matching the properties available to the needs of the individual household as identified in their application and other information provided by the tenant. The allocation of properties will comply with legal and regulatory requirements. Properties will be re-let as quickly as possible to meet housing need and to minimise rent loss.

Nominations

Allocations will be made in accordance with the Nominations Agreements between YMCA Together members and Local Authorities where YMCA Together manages stock.

Lettings Schemes

YMCA Together will support Local Authorities to discharge their statutory duties, including those under the homeless legislation and the allocation of properties through lettings schemes. This will also ensure fair and transparent access to rehousing whilst maximising tenant choice and mobility. Properties advertised in this way will be allocated according to the agreed allocations Policy set by Local Authorities, although YMCA Together will retain

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the final decision whether to grant a tenancy. YMCA Together will sometimes allocate properties outside these lettings schemes. Examples of when this would be:

- ▶ To meet emergency re-housing needs,
- ▶ When existing customers swap homes (mutual exchange)
- ▶ Where decants or temporary moves are required for works to be carried out.

Other lettings for YMCA Together will advertise some properties for example 'hard to let' properties or non-social housing stock, via national letting schemes such as Zoopla and Rightmove.

Should the need arise, YMCA Together will also develop and maintain its own waiting list.

Local Lettings Agreements

Local Lettings Agreements may be agreed to facilitate balanced and sustainable neighbourhoods. These agreements will be evidence based and established following consultation with residents and other relevant stakeholders.

Supported Allocations

We will deliver allocations processes in a way which supports the full range of actual and potential tenants, including those with support needs, those who do not speak English as a first language and others who have difficulties with written English.

Exclusions and Suspensions

Some applicants may not be eligible for YMCA Together accommodation, this includes:

- ▶ Households excluded by law from holding a tenancy
- ▶ Households that do not meet the 'Right to Rent' requirements under s.22 of the immigration Act 2014
- ▶ Applicants who, either as a tenant of YMCA Together or another landlord have acted in a manner which would have seriously breached the terms of our tenancy, for example anti-social or criminal behaviour or who have significant rent arrears.

Sometimes applicants may be ineligible for a limited period for example until they:

- ▶ Have maintained payments of arrears for an agreed period Have provided evidence that their behaviour has changed.

References may be requested before offering accommodation. YMCA Together will consider failure to provide references as equal to providing poor references for the purpose of

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deciding whether to grant a tenancy. If applicants cannot provide a reference for example, because they have had no previous tenancy, alternative arrangement may be considered.

The provision of false information on application forms will be considered to be obtaining the tenancy by false statement and YMCA Together may seek to recover possession of the property through the County Court.

Under Occupancy and Overcrowding

YMCA Together will not allocate to anyone where it would cause under occupation of a property or create a situation where a property would be overcrowded.

If we become aware of these situations during a persons tenancy we will take appropriate steps to resolve this including supporting them to find suitable accommodation and working with the local authority to find alternative accommodation.

Successful Tenancy Plans

Where it is considered, as part of the pre-tenancy assessments, that a household will not be able to sustainably afford (either due to the level of household income, or due to the financial capability of the tenants) the Tenancy, YMCA Together will work with the household to improve their situation, but ultimately reserve the right not to allocate the property to them.

Under 18s

YMCA Together does not normally re-house under 18s other than as a necessity; however persons leaving care may be offered accommodation by prior arrangement with the Local Authority.

Supported Accommodation

YMCA Together provides specialist supported accommodation for people with support needs through Supported Housing. Applicants applying for Supported Housing will require a separate assessment to establish eligibility. YMCA Together reserves the right to not allocate should the eligibility criteria not be met

Residential Rehabilitation Accommodation

Residential Rehabilitation Accommodation has its own selection process. Eligibility for Residential Rehabilitation Accommodation is assessed via an in-house assessment in order

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to determine the applicants care and support needs along with suitability for Residential Rehabilitation Accommodation.

Adapted Properties

In seeking to make best use of the stock, where a property has been designed or adapted for a person with a disability, YMCA Together will seek to allocate it to a household best suited to the design or relevant adaptation. YMCA Together may seek possession of the property via the County Court if a property is adapted and there are no longer any occupants that require such adaptations.

Tenancy Mobility

YMCA Together recognises that the housing needs of a household may change over time and the accommodation originally provided may no longer be suitable. YMCA Together will advise on housing options for tenants wishing to move to more suitable accommodation.

All offers will be dependent on the availability of suitable properties and a history of meeting conditions of tenancy. YMCA Together reserve the right to commence legal proceedings in appropriate cases where a property is no longer deemed suitable. The decision of YMCA Together in this regard will be final.

Mutual Exchange is the mechanism that allows tenants of Social Landlords to exercise any statutory or contractual right they have to exchange their tenancies by assignment, with consent and approval of the housing provider. Whilst YMCA Together does not currently have capacity to offer Mutual Exchanges. Tenants would be enabled to access their own housing solution through Mutual Exchanges, if housing stock allowed in the future.

Regular reviews of the volume of transfers will take place to maintain an appropriate balance between social and commercial responsibilities and wider neighbourhood sustainability.

Lettings to employees, former employees, board members and their relatives

In addition to meeting the requirements of this Policy and our Allocations Procedure, all lets to employees, former employees, board members and their relatives or associates must

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meet the allocation criteria and be approved by the SLT Director with overall responsibility for Housing (Deputy Chief Executive).

Appeals

YMCA Together operates a process for appeal for applicants to utilise to appeal any restrictions applied by YMCA Together to rehousing other than as set out above.

How the Policy will be delivered

This Policy sets out YMCA Together overall approach to allocations, although additional localised arrangements may be adopted to meet the needs of an area as set out by the relevant Local Authority. Any such arrangements will form the subject of a Local Lettings Policy approved by the Local Authority.

This Policy will, on approval, be communicated to employees via email. It will be published on the internet site for tenants and stakeholders.

If employees become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the Policy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the responsible officer for the Policy. This feedback will be incorporated into the Policy / procedural review process.

The SLT Director with overall responsibility for Housing (Deputy Chief Executive) will authorise any lettings to be made outside the main lettings schemes for example Management Moves and Decants.

Related Documents

- ▶ Allocations Procedure
- ▶ Tenure Policy
- ▶ Decant Procedure
- ▶ Mutual Exchange Procedure
- ▶ Starter Tenancy Procedure
- ▶ Local Lettings Policies
- ▶ Local Authority Strategy and Allocations schemes

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YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

SUPPORT & ADVICE

ACCOMMODATION

FAMILY WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRAINING & EDUCATION