RELIANCE SOCIAL HOUSING
GENERATE | ACQUIRE | DEPLOY



Policy Control	
Policy Name	Allocations Policy
Policy Owner	Chief Operating Officer
Author	YDC
Version No.	1
Approved by Chief Executive	Apr 2024
Approved by Board	Apr 2024
Date of Implementation	Apr 2024
Date of Last Review	Aug 2026
Date of Next Review	Aug 2027

Allocations Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Reliance has a vision to actively contribute towards reducing homelessness within its communities by providing individuals with the start they need on their journey towards becoming more independent. Crucial to achieving this vision is a focus within the allocation of our homes to create and maintain sustainable and balanced communities.

1.2 The Reliance Allocations Policy sets out the qualifying and eligibility criteria and specifically, how households are prioritised for our accommodation according to their needs. Having this policy in place ensures that social housing is offered to the people who need it the most.

1.3 Reliance work in partnership with Birmingham City Council and other registered providers. Birmingham City Council's Housing Allocation Scheme is the council's method for deciding who gets prioritised for social housing and they operate a choice based letting scheme called "Birmingham Choice". Applicants for housing who have applied through this scheme will have their housing need assessed at point of registration. Within this scheme a key objective is to provide applicants with honest and accurate prospects advice at first point of contact.

1.4 If you are accepted onto the housing register, applicants will be able to express an interest in (bid for) a Reliance home via this scheme when a suitable one becomes available.

1.5 This Policy sets out in detail who can or cannot be accepted under the policy and how this assessment is made. It also sets out how applicants can apply for and access affordable housing. The policy complies with the requirements of the Housing Act (1996) as amended, making sure that reasonable preference is given to households with specific housing needs. This policy also takes into consideration the Localism Act (2011) and the Equalities Act (2010).

1.6 A copy of the policy is published on the Reliance website, alongside advice on how to apply to Birmingham Choice.

2. Definition

2.1 An allocation is the nomination of an applicant or existing tenant to be an Assured or an Assured Shorthold tenant of a Housing Association.

3. Purpose

3.1 To ensure the Allocations Policy is fair, accessible and gives all households an element of choice. To ensure that Reliance homes are allocated fairly and based on who needs them most, making the best use of all affordable housing stock.

3.2 To ensure the Reliance application process is efficient and accessible using a range of communication methods which embrace technology (email, texts, social media and through an online portal)

3.3 To empower customers to work with us and via Birmingham Choice and share the responsibility of finding a new home which meets their needs.

3.4 Given our mixed portfolio of social and Supported Exempt Accommodation, with the weighting toward the latter, this policy also specifically outlines the process for allocating and letting supported exempt accommodation to ensure fair, transparent, and needs-based housing provision.

4. Policy

a) Exclusions

4.1 The following are not considered allocations under this Policy (covered by Section 160 Housing Act 1996):

- Succession to a tenancy on a tenant's death pursuant to S89 Housing Act 1985 and S17 Housing Act 1988. This will be dealt with by Reliance under the relevant legislation and policies
- Assignment of a tenancy by way of a mutual exchange
- Transfer of the tenancy by a court order under family law provisions or under the Civic Partnership Act 2004
- An introductory tenancy (including assured shorthold) becoming an assured / secure tenancy
- Transfers initiated by Reliance e.g. decant to alternative accommodation to allow for major works
- Provision of non-secure temporary accommodation in discharge of homelessness duty or power
- Where a property is required for a 'direct match'
- Joint tenancies which may include the granting of a new tenancy through changes from a sole to joint tenancy and from a joint to a sole tenancy
- Households requiring a move through the Witness Protection Scheme, or similar, at the formal request of the appropriate authority
- Some adapted properties with significant adaptations that may be direct matched to an appropriate applicant

b) Prioritising – Social Housing

4.2 100% of all Reliance's social lettings in Birmingham will go via the Birmingham Choice scheme.

4.3 Reliance has entered into a Nomination Agreements with Birmingham City Council and this agreement sets out how we will work together to assist those applicants on the local authority Housing Register through membership of their Choice Based Lettings scheme. Section 170 of the

Housing Act 1970 requires Registered Providers to support the local authority by assisting in the provision of accommodation for people with priority under the Council's Allocation Policy.

4.4 This agreement therefore ensures that those with a housing need will have priority access to Reliance homes.

4.5 An Allocation Policy must give priority to certain groups of people. this is called reasonable preference. Applicants can bid for homes and will be prioritised by band and by date in line with the criteria set out in the banding framework below:

4.6 Applications will be placed in one of four priority Bands depending on the household's housing circumstances. Applicants will be notified of the date that the band priority was awarded.

The priority Bands are:

- **Band A**
  Band A will consist of applicants entitled to a reasonable preference and are granted additional preference with a very urgent need to move for an allocation of social rented housing

- **Band B**
  Band B will consist of applicants entitled to a reasonable preference with an urgent need to move for an allocation of social rented housing

- **Band C**
  Band C will consist of applicants with a need to move for an allocation of social rented housing

- **Band D**
  Band D will consist of applicants from Bands A or B, or C who have exhausted their right to refuse an allocation of social rented housing or have failed to bid on more than three occasions where a suitable property would be available.

c) Prioritising – Supported Exempt Accommodation

4.7 Priority will be given to applicants who:

- Are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Have high support needs
- Are referred by partner agencies

4.8 **Eligibility Supported Exempt Accommodation:**

- Age 18 or over
- Have support needs that align with our services
- Require housing and support to live independently
- Be eligible for housing benefit"

5.0 Property Eligibility

5.1 As the demand for social housing 'SEA' exceeds supply, Reliance will seek to maximise the use of available homes without creating overcrowding. Only permanent members of the household will be considered when assessing either housing need or the type of property which can be offered. In determining the housing make up, Reliance will consider that any person will have just one principal home. For children whose parents live separately that will normally be with the parent in receipt of child benefit.

5.2 The assessment for social housing appropriate size of accommodation will take account of the following:

- The size and makeup of the moving group. One room will be allocated to two children of either gender up until the age of 10 years, two children of the same gender will be allocated one room up until the age of 16 years' old
- Unborn children will be included as part of the moving group when proof of pregnancy is supplied after 20 weeks (verified by MATB1 form)
- An adult carer, living full time and permanently in the household, caring for the tenant or an existing member of their household, will be allocated their own bedroom

5.3 There may be occasions where an allocation is made to a customer who will under-occupy a property.

5.4 For SEA the assessment applications will be based on:

- Level of support need
- Urgency of housing requirement
- Suitability for available accommodation
- Ability to engage with support services

a) Suspensions and Refusals

5.5 Reliance is accountable to the communities in which we work; to minimise the adverse impact some tenants might have on the wellbeing of other tenants, and to build sustainable communities. Therefore, where there is evidence that an applicant poses significant risk to Reliance, its homes and/or existing tenants, we will seek to refuse and possibly suspend the applicant. However, Reliance may refuse or suspend applicants for the following reasons:

Housing related debts

Housing related debts include rent arrears, former tenancy arrears, service charges, court fines, re-chargeable repairs and any other housing related debts. Reliance will suspend applicants who have a housing related debt of over £200 unless they can prove that they have had an agreement in place to clear this debt for a minimum of 6 months. If the debt is over £500, they must be able to prove that they have had an agreement in place to clear this debt for a minimum of 12 months. The applicant will be suspended until they have kept to an agreement for the required period. This applies to debts with either Registered Providers or Private Landlords.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Reliance will suspend applicants when we have reasonable grounds to believe that they have behaved in a way that would constitute a breach of tenancy conditions, and may pose a risk to Reliance, other tenants or the community. Reasonable grounds include:

- applicants who have had action taken against them for anti-social behaviour within the last two years. This may include an anti-social behaviour order, a notice of proceedings for anti-social behaviour, an injunction, or a written warning in the last three months
- Applicants who have had a history of anti-social behaviour within the last two years as highlighted by their current or previous landlord. In these circumstances staff must investigate the claims and be confident that this constitutes anti-social behaviour and not simply 'hearsay'
- Applicants who have been proven to be violent or aggressive towards staff
- Applicants who have had any court action taken against them for any hate crime

Suspension for anti-social behaviour will be for a period of five years unless during this time the applicant can prove that their circumstances have changed and they are no longer likely to commit anti-social behaviour.

Criminal offences

We may suspend applicants that have been convicted of a serious criminal offence that has not been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and may pose a risk to Reliance, other tenants or the community. This is not a blanket policy and we would not suspend an applicant solely on the basis of an unspent conviction. We consider every case individually and the following should be taken into account:

- Nature of the crime
- Locality of the crime 53
- Locality of the victim (s) if applicable 54
- Advice from police and probation
- Other references available
- Any suggestions of danger to residents or staff

We ask all applicants to give details of any offences and to sign a declaration that they have been open and honest about such convictions. Suspensions for serious criminal convictions will be for a period of two years unless the applicant can prove a change of circumstances and Reliance are confident this person no longer poses a high risk to Reliance, other tenants and the community.

Misrepresentation

Reliance will suspend applicants who have knowingly or recklessly misrepresented their circumstances to obtain the tenancy of a social landlord. This suspension will generally be for a period of up to two years depending upon the information they provided to mislead the landlord.

Eviction

Reliance will suspend applicants who have previously been evicted from either a social landlord or private landlord within the last five years. This may be eviction due to nuisance, damage to the property, illegal earnings, rent arrears or other breach of tenancy conditions. Reliance will consider suspending tenants who have been evicted from a social landlord longer than 5 years ago although when making this decision. Reliance will take into consideration individual circumstances, especially SEA applicants, and any tenancies held since the Eviction.

Suspensions for eviction will be for a period of five years from the date of eviction unless the applicant can prove a change of circumstances and Reliance is confident this person no longer poses a high risk to Reliance, other tenants and the community.

Reliance may need to refuse applicants for specific homes without suspending their application. This may be for the following reasons:

- Does not meet eligibility criteria
- Failure to provide satisfactory references or supporting information Reasonable grounds to believe/evidence that the applicant has provided false information on their application form
- The property is considered unsuitable based upon support needs or adaptation requirements of the applicant
- Unwilling to comply with any special tenancy conditions deemed reasonable e.g. support
- Reliance does not have accommodation suitable to the applicant's needs, e.g. specialist care provision

6. Lettings to Employees

6.1 To ensure compliance with good practice and governance arrangements, a procedure has been developed to monitor and regulate any offers of housing, resulting from, or including members of Reliance staff, board members and their immediate relatives. In order to operate this procedure, applicants will be asked during the application and interview process to declare whether they are or are related to an employee or board member of Reliance. All offers to members of staff must be approved by the Group Chief Executive.

7. Sensitive Lets

7.1 In a small number of cases, it may be appropriate to carry out a sensitive let to a property where the previous tenant, or tenants in the locality, has been causing anti-social behaviour. An applicant would be directly matched with a property to stabilise the area. In these cases, the eligibility criteria will be displayed in the advertisement so that applicants know whether they are eligible to apply for that property.

8. Management Moves

8.1 In exceptional circumstances when a current tenant is considered at risk of serious physical or emotional harm if they remain in their current property, a Management Move can be approved by the Social Housing Manager. This allows for homes to be let outside the published scheme where there are no other options which are suitable and timely. Tenants approved for a management move will be offered one suitable property; if this is refused the tenant must apply for re-housing through the usual process.

9. Complaints and Appeals

9.1 If a customer is not satisfied with the way their application for re-housing has been handled, they can refer to the Reliance Complaints Policy.

10. Monitoring and Delivery

10.1 Reliance will record all lettings as required by the Continuous Recording of Lettings system (CORE).

10.2 Reliance will collect Key Performance Indicators relating to the Allocations Policy including average re-let times and void loss, turnover, void cost and customer satisfaction.

11. Legislation and Regulation

11.1 The statutory and regulatory standards which underpin this policy are:

- The Tenancy Standard
- Homes Standard
- Housing Act 1970, Housing Act 1980, Housing Act 1985, Housing Act 1988, Housing Act 1996
- Allocation of Housing (England) Regulation 2000 91
- Homeless Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Immigration Act 2014
- Immigration Act 2016
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

11.2 Related Reliance Policies and Procedures

- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

12.0 This policy will be reviewed every two years. Any changes will be subject to approval of the relevant committee and Reliance Board.

Version No.	Changes	Made by	Date
1	N/A – original version		2024
1a	Format only	Company secretary	August 2026