2025-27

LOCAL SPACE

Allocations and lettings policy

This policy outlines how we ensure the best possible use of the housing we have available to provide safe, good quality homes to those who need them most.

For any questions, please contact us.



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1. Introduction

1.1
This policy has been designed to ensure the best possible use of our housing stock to maximise rehousing opportunities and minimise void periods. Detail regarding allocations to our key worker properties are set out in our Key Worker Allocations Policy. To read our Key Workers Allocations Policy, please contact us.

1.2
Local Space provides a unique range of safe, secure, good quality homes for those who need them most, families and individuals, vital to its position in Inner London. Our approach to allocations enables us to continue this role and provide our future customers with options and opportunity in a fair and transparent way.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1
Our allocations options enable us to make the best use of our stock and in a way which is consistent with the purpose of the property portfolio and our mission and values.

2.2
We recognise that providing quality homes is the foundation for a thriving future, so we are committed to meeting the housing needs of our customers in the communities where we work by:

- Helping to fulfil the allocations policies and statutory obligations of the local authorities where we work.
- Making the best possible use of our housing stock to maximise rehousing opportunities and minimise over and under occupation.
- Letting empty properties as quickly, efficiently and effectively as possible, having regard to the need to let high-quality accommodation in accordance with our Letting Standard.
- Allocating property size according to the current need of the household other than where there is evidence of medical or disability need.
- Letting homes in our Key Worker scheme to people in key local employment at rates below current market rent levels.

2.3
Our Equality and Diversity Policy applies to the provision of housing and related services. Local Space acknowledges that in society certain groups and individuals are unfairly and unlawfully discriminated against. We are committed to helping redress the effects of unfair discrimination and disadvantage and to ensure that equality of opportunity and diversity become integral features of all its activities. The association will always ensure that it does not discriminate unlawfully on the grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, religious beliefs, HIV status, disability, race, nationality or national or ethnic origin.

2.4
Local Space regards the lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important to its successful operations and to maintaining confidence between employees, customers and other stakeholders. For more information about how we deal with personal information please see our Data Protection Policy.

3. Applications

3.1
Due to the complexity of our property portfolio, we are not part of a choice-based lettings scheme. This is because a large percentage of our homes are subject to nominations from our partner local authorities discharging their homelessness duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Before nominating a family to one of our homes, the local authority undertakes a suitability and affordability check.

3.2
Applications for our keyworker properties can be done by completing the application form which can be found on our website: www.localspace.co.uk. Local Space operates a waiting list for our Keyworker accommodation. All other allocations are subject to 100% nomination rights from local authorities.

3.3
Applicants, including applicants whose first language is not English, are able to get advice and assistance about our allocations and mutual exchange services by telephone, email and at our office.

3.4
Generally, applications for a tenancy will not be considered from people who:

- Are subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 or fall within a class of persons from abroad prescribed as ineligible.
- Are not habitually resident in the UK and do not have recourse to public funds.

3.5
Local Space will **exclude** applications where an applicant or a member of their household who has been guilty of behaviour serious enough to consider they may be unsuitable to be a customer or is being investigated for behaviour which may result in a possession order or a caution or conviction.

3.6
If it becomes apparent that an applicant, after being granted a tenancy, has obtained that tenancy through knowingly or recklessly providing false and misleading information, we may take action for possession.

4. Tenancies

4.1
All tenancies will be allocated in accordance with our Tenancy Policy. General needs properties are let on long term - assured shorthold tenancies. For our keyworker properties we offer two-year fixed term tenancies with the option to extend after each two-year period providing the customer still meets the eligibility criteria.

5. Customer viewings, acceptance and sign-up

5.1
We will aim to arrange a viewing for the customer within 48 hours of being nominated. We will ordinarily expect the customer to accept or decline the property within 24 hours of the viewing. Where a customer declines a property, we will contact the nominating local authority to let them know.

5.2
A sign-up will take place after a viewing within 48 hours of the customer accepting the property. The sign- up enables a Housing Officer to:

- Re-confirm the eligibility criteria and requirements.
- Advise the full amount to be paid at the sign-up: Currently we only collect rent deposit and rent in advance from keyworker customers e.g. if the rent is £1000 per month, at sign-up a keyworker customer will pay £2000. All other customers are not required to make a payment at sign-up.
- Review the documents required
- Explain the Terms and Conditions of the Tenancy Agreement
- Go through any potential benefit eligibility
- Identify and tenancy support needs
- Explain key features of the property including white goods, boiler and gas maintenance and utilities
- Provide advice on tenants' insurance
- Provide information about customer involvement
- Explain the settling in visit.

5.3
All customers are responsible for contacting utility companies and for paying all utility bills and services for their property including council tax.

6. Settling-in visit

6.1
A settling-in visit will be arranged with all new customers four to six weeks after sign-up, this is mostly in person but sometimes via telephone. We appreciate that arranging a visit may be difficult due to work commitments; however, it is a service that we are keen to offer to all new customers. This visit will help Local Space ensure that customers are:

- Settling into their new homes
- Satisfied with our allocations and lettings services
- Satisfied with their new home
- Paying the right amount of rent
- Clear about their responsibilities and the opportunities to get involved.

7. Transfers

7.1
Local Space does not operate a transfer list; however, we will consider a transfer request from Social and Affordable Housing tenants. In very rare circumstances, for example in cases of Category 1 Hazards, Local Space will source suitable alternative accommodation regardless of tenure.

8. Mutual exchange

8.1
Customers are eligible for mutual exchange, subject to approval. Local Space are members of HomeSwapper, a mutual exchange service with properties nationwide. Customers can register and advertise their home via HomeSwapper. It enables customers to swap homes with other families living in social housing. Once the customer finds a match, Local Space will carry out checks to ensure the

property the person is moving into is suitable and affordable. We reserve the right to refuse a request to swap if we have concerns about affordability and suitability.

8.2
We support mutual exchanges because Local Space does not have a transfer list and recognise that sometimes people need to move and council waiting lists can take years for a suitable offer to be made.

9. Succession

9.1
Local Space does not operate a discretionary succession scheme, however customers have statutory succession rights, whether they have an assured or assured shorthold tenancy (AST), under the Housing Act 1988. This legislation provides that where the tenant had a periodic assured or AST immediately before their death, their spouse, civil partner or person living with the tenant as spouse or civil partner is entitled to succeed to the tenancy, where they were also occupying the property as their only or principal home with the tenant immediately before their death. The successor will acquire the same tenancy enjoyed by the tenant, so in the case of an AST, the successor will acquire an AST by succession.

9.2
Only one succession is permitted under the Housing Act 1988 and is only available where the tenancy is a sole tenancy, e.g. the succession rights will not apply in the case of joint tenancies. Where a joint tenant dies, the tenancy continues in favour of the surviving joint tenant by survivorship. A succession is not possible where the tenant was themselves a successor tenant.

9.3
Key Worker Scheme (FTT) – partners meeting the statutory succession criteria will be able to remain during the remaining period of the FTT. As for any fixed term tenant whether they can remain at the end of that period will depend on whether they meet the renewal criteria.

9.4
Key Worker (AST) – Spouses or partners meeting the statutory succession criteria and who are 60 and over will be able to remain as periodic AST. Spouses or partners under 60 meeting the statutory succession criteria will be able to remain on a two year less one day FTT. As for any fixed term tenant whether they can remain at the end of that period will depend on whether they meet the renewal criteria.

10. Right to buy and right to acquire

10.1
The Right to Buy is only applicable to council tenants and therefore there is no Right to Buy of any properties owned or managed by Local Space. Also, because of our property portfolio, only a very limited number of customers could be eligible for the Right to Acquire, which is similar to RTB and allows eligible tenants of housing associations to purchase their home at a discounted price. To be eligible, customers must be a secure or assured tenants, and the property must have been built or bought by Local Space after March 31, 1997, using public funds. You must also have been a public sector resident (including with a housing association) for at least 3 years.

10.2
The discount offered under the Right to Acquire is generally less generous than the Right to Buy discount. The discount is a flat rate, regardless of the length of tenancy. To apply, customers will need

to complete a Right to Acquire application.

11. Appeals and complaints

11.1
Applicants have the right to appeal decisions made under this policy if they believe an error has occurred in the assessment or allocation process. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 21 days of the decision being communicated, clearly stating the grounds for the appeal. All appeals will be reviewed by a senior officer not involved in the original decision. In addition to appeals, applicants can raise a formal complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service they have received during the allocations process. Complaints will be handled in accordance with our Complaints Policy, and applicants will be informed of their right to escalate concerns to the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

12. Monitoring and review

12.1
This Policy will be reviewed two years after the date that it was approved unless regulatory or statutory changes require a review to take place sooner.

12.2
Local Space will monitor the impact of this policy as part of its continuous improvement including:

- The number of void properties per month
- The average turnaround time for re-letting void properties.

13. Relevant legislation on this policy

13.1
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Housing Act 1988
- Housing Act 1996
- Regulatory Framework Tenancy Standard