Allocations and Lettings Policy

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Review frequency	3 yearly
Latest review date	14th November 2022
Approved by and date	Board 13th December 2022
Next review	November 2025

Version Control				
Version	Date	Description	Updated by	Approved by
2	14/11/2022	Review following audit to include recommendations before board approval	Helen Western	Board
3	30/03/2023	Include exclusions in policy	Helen Western	CEO
4	09/09/2025	PDF and version control added for website delivery	Darren Marajh	N/A

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Allocations and Lettings Policy

Introduction

3CHA's objective is to provide good quality affordable, sustainable housing and associated services to people in housing need and to provide existing residents with the opportunity to transfer to other accommodation as their needs change. The organisation can offer both supported and general needs housing to those who have been assessed to be accommodated to these property types.

Our supported housing aims to give each individual to whom we offer a service the best possible opportunity to gain the skills and confidence necessary to enable them to play an active role within the community, and to move on to independent accommodation wherever possible. As a result, we will only offer a licence or tenancy to those who we feel can benefit from a service of this nature.

The rent for our accommodation is set annually in accordance with legislation and approved by the 3CHA board. 3CHA specify the core rent that can be charged and will share the information with referral agencies and individuals applying for accommodation at the point of referral or on request. The majority of services that we offer are funded by Housing Benefit. The total accommodation charge is broken down into core rent, eligible (for Housing Benefit) service charges and a personal charge. Where 3CHA contract with managing agents the rents are specified by 3CHA on the licence or tenancy agreement. To mitigate any risk of errors at the outset, completed agreements are monitored monthly.

Exclusions

With due regard to the skills and policies of local support agencies, 3CHA would not normally consider applications from the following:

- Users of illegally obtained drugs
- People with a history of arson
- People with a history of sexual offences
- People presenting a risk under the Child Protection Act
- Any person convicted of a serious offence which was racially-motivated
- Any person adjudged likely to endanger the health or safety of residents or staff

Allocations criteria – supported housing (See Appendix A)

3CHA will consider applications from individuals based on the following criteria:

- In need of the support and other services offered
- Able to manage any alcohol dependency/drug dependency with support

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- Over 18 years of age; (Under 18's will be considered in exceptional circumstances and with the express agreement of the Head of Operations (Guarantor required for 16-17)
- Able to share with people from a variety of backgrounds, ages, and cultures
- Able to manage on a day-to-day basis with background practical support, the level of which may vary according to different needs
- Able to budget for themselves, with support
- Able to manage own medication, if prescribed, with support
- Able to negotiate the physical aspects of the building (with necessary adaptations made by the organisation where possible) and manage simple household tasks
- Able to look after themselves

The above criteria will apply to all applicants. Where there is a formal agreement with a local authority or referral agency, different criteria may apply. These will be clearly documented. Due to the nature of the accommodation, all applicants will have a need for support, be willing to accept the support and work in collaboration with the support provider.

Allocation decisions will also consider the following:

- Balance of needs in a scheme or individual property, where appropriate
- Risk factors, such as incidents of violence or arson

Allocations criteria – general needs

Unless there is formal agreement with the local authority, 3CHA will consider applications, based on the following criteria:

- In need of the property & services offered
- Over 18 years of age (Guarantor required for 16-17)
- Able to budget for themselves & manage their tenancy agreement conditions without support
- Able to negotiate the physical aspects of the building (with necessary adaptations made where possible).

Sources of applications

Applicants may apply directly to some of our services, or through referral agencies such as local Authority Choice Based Lettings, CAB, Social Services, Probation, Health Commissioning Authorities, and other supported housing agencies. Some services will have been established under a nomination agreement with the local authority.

Selecting, Monitoring and Reviewing Referral Agencies

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3CHA, or support providers working in partnership with 3CHA, will:

- Maintain a list of referral agencies: to include agencies who specifically work with BME service users and/or under-represented groups in the project or service.
- Make initial telephone contact with all agencies in the area who may be able to refer appropriate service users. Follow this up by mailing the information packs to named individuals and ensure that regular contact is maintained. A personal visit may be appropriate.
- When setting up a new project, aim to be in contact with potential referral agencies as early as possible in the development process.

Referrals

Agencies must provide in full the following information to apply for supported housing

- A completed in full application form: which includes an assessment of need; accommodation history; benefits entitlement and current contact with support agencies.
- A completed full risk assessment.

For self-referrals the information included in the above documents should be gained at interview stage and where applicable, further information will be sought from the applicant's support agencies.

Applications without the above completed in full will not be considered and further information will be sought from the referral agency.

Information received will be checked against the allocations criteria and a decision made if accommodation can be offered. The applicant and the referral agency, if applicable, will be notified of the decision. Where the application has been unsuccessful the reasons will be given in writing and will include the right to appeal.

How to appeal

The applicant/referral agency can appeal against any negative decision in writing within 7 days of the application being rejected. The appeal will be considered by a manager who will take into account all information already provided plus any other information that is available. A decision will be made within 7 days and will be communicated to the applicant/referral agency in writing.

If the applicant/referral agency is still dissatisfied with the decision, they have the right to appeal to the 3CHA Head of Operations within 7 days following the receipt of the appeal outcome. The Head of Operations will consider the appeal and other information available. A decision will be made within 7 days and will be communicated to the applicant/referral agency in writing. The Head of Operations decision is final.

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Sign Up Procedure

Introduction

Once an applicant referral has been assessed and accepted, 3CHA or a managing agent acting on behalf of 3CHA will arrange a sign-up appointment. To ensure that the correct core rent and charges are correctly detailed, the licence or tenancy agreement is controlled and monitored by 3CHA.

During the meeting we, or our managing agents will:

1. Complete a risk assessment and a summary of the applicants support needs. This should be included with the benefit claim
2. Check the referral information to ensure that accurate information is held including National Insurance number and proof of eligibility for social housing through settled British citizenship, or for non-British citizens, an unrestricted right to remain
3. Record contact details, phone, mobile, fax, email, family, next of kin, social workers, and other information in accordance with 3CHA's GDPR policy
4. Provide two copies of the licence agreement, completed as specified by 3CHA (complete with a breakdown of the rental charge and an inventory) – one for our files and one given to the resident
5. Explain the residents' rights and responsibilities, including their obligation to pay rent and service charges and of 3CHA's breach of licence policy
6. Support the resident to claim or update details for any benefits – including completion of a housing benefit claim
7. Provide a residents handbook including what to do in the event of a fire, 3CHA complaints policy, emergency contact details and any house rules
8. Agree a post sign-up visit/support meeting within the first seven days of the start of the licence/tenancy.
9. Complete a consent form allowing statutory authorities to disclose confidential information to staff
10. Complete a signed agreement that staff working on behalf of 3CHA may discuss the residents benefit claims – including housing benefit – with benefits staff

First support meeting

The first support meeting must include completion of the support plan, review of the risk assessment and confirmation of the residents' rights and responsibilities and is a chance for them to clarify any queries that they may have.

Ongoing regular support meetings must be agreed with the resident

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If it becomes clear that a new licensee or tenant may have existing financial difficulties, it may be appropriate to offer debt counselling or money advice at this stage.

Associated policies

- Rent Setting Policy

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Appendix A - Supported Housing Eligibility and Management Principles

1. Preamble

The purpose of supported housing is to offer safe, good quality accommodation to homeless individuals with specific identified needs and to support them during their residency.

2. Eligibility

The support needs of individuals may arise from a number of factors, arising from (but not limited to) -

- Drug or alcohol dependency
- Mental illness
- Mental handicap
- Recent release from imprisonment
- Domestic violence
- Rough sleeping
- Physical disability
- Refugee status
- Ill-treatment by reason of sexuality or gender

3. Exclusions

With due regard to the skills and policies of local support agencies, there will be a general pre-supposition that individuals within the following categories will not be offered supported housing -

- Users of illegally-obtained drugs
- Arsonists
- People with a history of sexual offences
- People presenting a risk under the Child Protection Act
- Any person convicted of a serious offence which was racially-motivated
- Any person adjudged likely to endanger the health or safety of residents or staff

4. Referral

The availability of the accommodation will be widely made known and relationships established with a range of agencies, including (but not limited to) –

- Social services
- Housing departments
- Police
- Probation services
- Homeless campaigning agencies

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- Community organisations
- Other supported housing providers

5. Supporting residents

Care, support and supervision are offered to residents through the relevant support agency and are accounted for by direct service charge.

From a housing perspective, resident are offered intensive, personal management, tailored to their circumstance, including (but not limited to) – Assistance to tenants to resolve or prevent housing debts that impinge on their ability to pay for their housing

• Assistance to claim and manage housing benefits

• Advice and assistance in relation to fulfilling licence conditions

• Advice and assistance to tenants on how to use equipment in their own home

• Advice and assistance to tenants in relation to their own personal safety and the safety and security of their accommodation

• Advice and assistance to tenants in relation to organising repairs or improvements to their home (property or contents)

• Mediation in tenants' neighbour disputes

• Issuing and enforcing occupancy agreements

• Collection of and accounting for rent

• Organising and repair of properties or their contents

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