



TAI CANOLBARTH CYMRU
MID-WALES HOUSING

Yn barod **amdani** **Equal** to the challenge

Allocations Policy

Strategic Aim:	To provide a policy framework for staff to allocate properties. To provide an excellent service to applicants and residents.
Reference No:	Allocations Policy 2019 version
Date of Issue:	October 2019
Next Review Date:	September 2022
Departments Affected:	Community Housing Team (including Allocations Officer), Customer Services Team, Income Management Team, Technical Services Team and New Business Team
Approved By/Date:	Board of Management – 14 th October 2019
Lead Officer:	Jean O’Neill, Interim Director of Customer Services
Statutory Compliance:	<p>Relevant Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Acts 1988 and 1996 • General Data Protection Regulations 2016 • S95 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, places a duty on Registered Social Landlords and Private Registered Providers of Social Housing (Housing Associations) to co-operate with the Local Authority in exercising their homelessness duties. A framework for co-operation between Local Authorities’ and Housing Associations is set out in legislation.

	<p>The Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations Registered in Wales (May 2017), in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We let homes in a fair, transparent and effective way • We engage with others to enhance and maximise opportunities for our service users and the community and our work supports the Local Authorities' in the delivery of its strategic housing role. <p>Performance Standards PS.2 Effective and appropriate tenant involvement and high quality and improving services.</p>
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ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1.0 Introduction

The previous Allocations Policy was approved by Board in January 2017. As nearly three years have elapsed, this policy requires reviewing and updating.

2.0 Purpose

To ensure the Association lets its properties as quickly and efficiently as possible, in a fair and transparent way and in accordance with targets set by Board.

3.0 Policy Statement:

Mid-Wales Housing Association (MWHHA) will allocate its accommodation on the basis of housing need, property suitability and to create sustainable communities, while ensuring the tenancy is sustainable.

MWHHA will not allocate a property where the offer of a tenancy is assessed as being un-sustainable. We will strive to “set up to succeed” rather than “set up to fail”. MWHHA will work with partners to deliver housing to people most in need.

MWHHA will give some priority to people who have to pay “bedroom tax” through both Ceredigion’s and Powys’ allocations policies/scheme/Common Housing Register (CHR)

4.0 Local Authority Partnership Working

The Association will attend Strategic Housing Partnership meetings and operational CHR partnership meetings with each Local Authority, to ensure the CHR and allocation criteria remains appropriate and is regularly reviewed.

4.1 Allocations in Ceredigion

MWHHA is a partner to the Ceredigion CHR. The Association pays an annual fee towards the cost of this service based upon the percentage of stock owned by

MWHA, within the County. The Association will undertake allocations in Ceredigion within the principles of the Ceredigion Common Allocations Policy, which all partners to the CHR have signed up to. The Common Allocations Policy is the main framework for use, in conjunction with the CHR. The high level aim of the policy in Ceredigion is to strengthen the role that social housing has in sustainment of both the community and Welsh language.

Links to documents provided below:-

<http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/housing/housing-options/>

4.2 Allocations in Powys

MWHA is also a partner to the Powys CHR. Again, the Association pays an annual fee towards the cost of the service based upon the percentage of stock owned. The Association will undertake allocations in Powys with the principles of the Common Allocations Scheme, however it will not allocate accommodation where it has been assessed that a potential tenancy is unsustainable. In those instances, an “overlook/skip” on sustainability grounds will take place until the applicant, along with the Local Authority and support agencies are able to mitigate the unsustainability issues. This could mean the Local Authority needs to explore a “Housing First” approach.

Links to documents provided below:-

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/2645/Housing-Policies>

4.3 Allocations in Shropshire

As MWHA has such low stock levels in Shropshire it is unwarranted to be part of the Local Authorities choice based lettings service. Prospective tenants will be sought through advertising vacancies locally, and/or contact with the Local Authority.

4.4 Local Lettings Policies

MWHA retains the right to introduce local lettings policies. There are two types of local lettings policies. Those that have been put in place to support the sustainable allocation of properties for a new development, and those that are put in place to address particular housing management issues like the prevention of anti-social behaviour. Any local lettings policy will need the approval of the Board of MWHA following consultation with the relevant Local Authority. The arrangements must have specific aims, be time limited and include a mechanism for reviewing the success of the policy. Local Authorities require a clear evidence base of need, before considering any local lettings policy. Any local lettings policy will be subject to a proportionality test and equality impact assessment, to ensure it does not indirectly discriminate any group.

5.0 Sensitive Lets

There may be occasions when an allocation is made as a “sensitive let”. This may be due to a history of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity, involving the previous tenant. If the property is deemed a “sensitive let”, certain households may be excluded from consideration for the property, in exceptional circumstances. This will be at the discretion of the Chief Executive or Director of Customer Services (or another Director in their absence). Sensitive lets will be objective and clearly evidence based.

6.0 Management Moves

MWHA retains the right to undertake “management move” allocations. Management move allocations are when an allocation is made outside of the normal process, in order for a suitable allocation to be made, for exceptional circumstances. This may be on the grounds of social or welfare issues, such as domestic abuse or where the tenant is at significant risk by remaining in the property. An example could be where the Police advise that a tenant needs to be moved without delay, as they are in danger. Please note: there have been no management moves carried out within the last three years. This will be at the discretion of the Chief Executive or the Director of Customer Services, (or another Director in their absence). .

7.0 “Immediately Available” Accommodation

When appropriate, MWHA will market properties outside the Common Housing Register in areas of low demand or where a particular property size or type is in low demand. Consideration will be given to using MWHA and Local Authority websites, MWHA and Local Authority Facebook pages, other social media such as Instagram and LinkedIn, and more traditional forms of advertising, such as Estate Agencies and Post Offices.

8.0 New Developments

New developments will be allocated according to the allocations policy/scheme/CHR in place within that county, unless a local lettings policy has already been approved.

9.0 Rehousing Requests By MWHA Tenants (also known as transfers)

Any rehousing requests by MWHA tenants are dealt with in accordance with the allocations policy/scheme/CHR for that LA area.

10.0 Adapted Properties

Where an adapted home becomes vacant, MWHA will work in partnership with the Local Authority to let the property from an adapted or accessible homes register. Every attempt will be made to ensure that adaptations within the property are matched to the needs of an applicant.

Where a tenant with an adapted home no longer needs or requires those adaptations, they will be encouraged to move, and could be given rehousing priority under a management move.

Where an applicant is identified as requiring adaptations, consideration will be given to the cost, practicality and suitability of adapting the property, prior to an offer being made.

11.0 Underoccupation / Moves Due To ‘Bedroom Tax’

Both Ceredigion and Powys’ allocations policy/scheme/CHR give some priority to people who have to pay “bedroom tax”.

12.0 Allocations to Staff and Board Members

An “allocations committee”, comprising the Director of Customer Services and one Board Member, has delegated authority to approve the allocation of housing to a Board member, an employee of MWAHA or their close relative, under Schedule 1. This committee does not have to meet in person; the discussion can take place via a telephone call, but must be fully documented and signed off retrospectively by all parties concerned in that decision.

13.0 Conclusion

Failure to manage our void properties effectively would result in a loss of income for MWAHA. Failure to allocate properties appropriately may also lead to unsustainable, dysfunctional communities. MWAHA will employ a tenancy sustainability assessment, in situations where the sustainability of a tenancy is dubious.

Strategic Risk Factors	MW19OE Operational Effectiveness	
Equality Impact Audit	How does/will this policy ensure needs are met fairly, particularly with regard to race, gender, disability etc.?	<i>An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken by both Ceredigion and Powys County Councils.</i>
	Is it felt that this Policy might affect different groups adversely. If so what is the justification for this, and is it legally permissible?	<i>Full Equality Impact Assessment completed</i>
	Have any representative groups in the locality been asked for their opinion and if so what was the outcome?	No
Tenant Engagement	How does/will this policy ensure the needs of tenants are met?	<i>This policy is intended to ensure a fair, transparent and effective way of allocating properties.</i>
	How is it felt this Policy will impact on the rights and obligations of tenants?	<i>This policy reinforces the pre-existing rights and responsibilities contained within the occupancy agreement held by the resident.</i>
	Have tenants been consulted and were the outcomes of that consultation taken into account	<i>To be discussed at the Tenants and Residents Forum on 4th October 2019.</i>

	when considering the introduction of this Policy?	
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POLICY NAME:	
Responsible Director/Policy Author: Jean O'Neill, Interim Director of Customer Services	
Date when the policy is/has been considered/approved by/sent to:	
Tenants' and Residents' Forum	04/10/19
Armchair Group	01/10/19
Equality Review Group	
Relevant Committee	N/A
Board of Management	14th October 2019
Final copy sent to Governance Officer with EIA	
Placed in group folder and staff informed	
Translated and placed on website	