

# Allocations Policy

Pinnacle Affordable Homes (“PAF”)



## 1. Policy aims

Pinnacle Affordable Homes is committed to providing a range of quality homes that will meet local housing requirements and therefore assist local authorities in the delivery of their housing strategies.

In doing this PAF will:

- Promote and enable choice of accommodation for those people whose housing options are restricted by virtue of their income in relation to local house prices
- Encourage and promote social inclusion whilst creating sustainable communities
- Ensure that access to housing is on a fair and equitable basis
- Let properties in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements and with the intention of incurring minimal loss of rent and service charge income
- Comply with financial and regulatory controls relating to the allocation of affordable housing properties.

## 2. Policy scope

This policy covers our approach to allocations of Affordable Rent properties.

### Affordable Rented Homes

Affordable Rented housing offers households in need of accommodation access to secure, affordable and well managed homes.

The approaches to allocations set out in this policy will help PAF to:

- Build and sustain diverse and balanced communities
- Minimise the cost of homelessness to local authorities and to council taxpayers
- Make efficient use of housing resources, including incurring minimal rent loss
- Ensure that access to housing is on a fair and equitable basis
- Let properties in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements
- Let properties in accordance with relevant nominations agreements.

### Who we house

Our primary purpose as a Registered Provider is to provide accommodation for people in housing need who are unable to afford to rent housing on the open market. It is expected that all applicants will meet the eligibility criteria, which will be set by the relevant local authority. All applications for housing will be considered carefully before an offer of accommodation is made and in some cases we may request additional information.

Where prospective tenants require support to enable them to access or maintain a tenancy PAF will take those needs into account and aim to provide the support required through our own services or through other agencies. Support needs will not be a bar to applicants providing that the necessary support can be provided.

## Who we cannot house

PAF will adopt a 100% nominations agreement with relevant local authorities for its affordable rented properties. By law, Local Authorities are unable to house the following:

- Households subject to immigration control, including asylum seekers (although there are exceptions to this rule, each will be treated on its merit by the Local Authority responsible)
- Households who have come from abroad and do not qualify for public funds (e.g. social security benefits).

Local Authorities also have powers to treat as ineligible any applicant who has behaved badly enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant. This may have happened in an existing or a previous tenancy. Examples of such behaviour include:

- Repeated or significant non-payment of rent
- Certain breaches of tenancy conditions
- Behaviour (either that of the applicant(s) or of someone living with or visiting them) that is likely to cause nuisance or annoyance to others
- Using the home for immoral or illegal purposes
- Committing an arrestable offence in or near the home
- Serious neglect of the condition of the home
- Securing a tenancy by providing false information

## Choice Based Lettings

All lettings will be made to people on the local authority housing register who bid through the choice based lettings scheme or who are directly nominated by the Council.

PAF, working with the Local Authority, will assist applicants to express interest where they:

- Do not have access to the internet
- Have a disability or health condition that would prevent them from accessing the web site
- Are absent due to illness
- Require additional assistance

Where an applicant is put forward for accommodation through the choice based letting scheme their individual circumstances will be considered prior to allocation in every case using the information provided by the Local Authority on their application form and any information provided subsequently.

## Housing need and priority

As demand for affordable housing is greater than the number of properties available, PAF prioritises allocations of vacant properties to applicants in the greatest need. This system of prioritisation will be

facilitated by our participation in nominations agreements and choice based lettings schemes, and will be linked to Local Lettings plans where appropriate.

Generally, vacant housing will be offered to the top applicant identified through choice based lettings at the time of the vacancy, whose housing needs and requirements best match the property type available. However, in certain circumstances this may not be the case, for example, where a property has been adapted and that adaptation may be more suitable to an applicant with fewer points, or if the lifestyle of the applicant with the highest number of points is considered to be unsuitable for that property.

Where an offer to the top applicant is not made, this will be recorded together with the reason for the decision.

Where an offer of housing has been made and accepted and it transpires that the applicant has given false information we may commence legal action for repossession to end the tenancy.

## Tenancy Checks

Potential tenants nominated through choice based lettings schemes will need to provide satisfactory checks that demonstrate their ability to pay their rent and, where appropriate, how well they have conducted any previous tenancy held by them.

Applicants may be asked to consent to information being shared with other housing providers and housing service providers.

## Homes for people with a disability

These properties are usually specially adapted for use by disabled people. When these properties become vacant, they are reserved for households needing the specialised facilities offered by the property, regardless of the priority of other applicants.

## Pets

Except in the case of assistance dogs, pets will be permitted with prior written consent where our own interest in the property does not require us to restrict this.

## Registered sex offenders

Registered sex offenders are required to inform PAF when they apply for housing that they are a registered sex offender as it is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 for offenders to withhold this information. The risk posed by Sex Offenders cannot be assessed by PAF who will be guided on this by agencies charged with the management and monitoring of sex offenders including the police and social workers.

## When we may not offer accommodation

There are a small number of people that PAF will not allow to live in our homes. This helps PAF to provide a better quality of life for all its residents and the wider community.

PAF may not house people in the following circumstances, if the applicant, the applicant's spouse, partner or someone who lives with the applicant:

- Owes PAF money and has not made and kept to an agreement to pay this debt
- Has been subject to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order or ASB injunction
- Poses a threat to the community

- Has a mental health condition that result in them being unable to sustain a tenancy even with assistance from specialist support agencies.

## Appeal against ineligibility

If an applicant is unhappy with the decision not to grant a tenancy, their complaint will be dealt with in line with the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

## Lettings

All new tenants will be provided with a copy of

- The tenancy agreement
- A welcome pack
- How to rent guide
- Valid Gas Safety, EICR and EPC certificate
- Notification of Asbestos if low grade Asbestos has been identified.

## Tenure

Starter tenancies will be offered to all new tenants on affordable rented properties as defined by the Rent Standard. This will be a 12 month Assured Shorthold Tenancy which will be reviewed to determine if the tenancy has been satisfactorily maintained. If a further tenancy is offered, then this will be for a fixed term of five years. A starter tenancy may be extended in accordance with the terms of the tenancy agreement.

## Joint tenancies

PAF will grant joint-named tenancies on all occasions when individuals seek housing as a couple, unless any one of the joint tenants are ineligible for accommodation in which case a joint tenancy will not be granted.

## Confidentiality

The privacy of applicants will be respected, and care will be taken to maintain confidentiality. Personal data will be collected and stored in line with our Data Protection Policy. Responsible information sharing can play a key role in the letting of our homes, and compliant information sharing protocols with local authorities will be followed where they are in place.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. PAF will consider and take into account the housing policies of relevant local authorities and regulatory requirements when updating the policy.