



# Lettings Policy

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

## Contents

1. Policy Scope
2. Policy Objectives
3. Key Terms and Definitions
4. Policy
  - How we let our homes
  - Property Matching and Household Size Criteria
  - Eligibility Criteria
  - Rent Arrears and other debts
  - Anti-Social Behaviour
  - Unacceptable Risk to the Community and Staff
  - Home Owners
  - Tenancy Sustainability
  - Special Circumstances
  - Other Tenancy Breaches
5. Transfers within TCH stock
  - Exceptional Social Needs
  - Management Transfers
  - Moving under-occupying tenants to release large homes
  - Cross Boundary Moves
  - Moving tenants to release adapted homes
  - Transfers within Extra Care Housing
6. Discretionary tenancies
7. Veterans Nomination Scheme
8. Veterans Accommodation – Lawson House
9. Rental Payments
10. Rejection of Applicants
11. Refusing Applicants
12. Complaints and Appeals
13. Monitoring, review and continuous improvement
14. Legislation and Regulation

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

## 1. Policy Scope

- 1.1 This policy outlines Town & Country Housing's (TCH) approach to letting its general needs, sheltered and Extra Care social housing. It details how our homes are let, who we house, the eligibility criteria, our property matching standards, and other relevant information. It is aligned with our tenancy strategy and aims to ensure that we meet our statutory and regulatory responsibilities including how we will co-operate with local authorities to meet local housing needs by taking nominations for our homes.
- 1.2 The policy does not apply to specialist supported housing with scheme specific criteria; intermediate/ market rent or key worker accommodation; properties managed by or on behalf of other organisations; shared ownership, leasehold, or properties for outright sale.
- 1.3 If there is any variance between this policy and individual tenancy agreements, then the tenancy agreement will take precedence.
- 1.4 Restrictions may also apply to particular schemes where there are specific funding or planning conditions regarding occupancy, such as in relation to age or local connection, or where a local lettings plan is in place.

## 2. Policy Objectives

- 2.1 We want to let our homes fairly and transparently in a way which most effectively meets housing need and creates sustainable tenancies and communities, whilst minimising the time they remain empty between each letting.

## 3. Key terms and definitions

- 3.1 A "True Void" is a property which becomes available for letting because it is either newly built or acquired; the tenant has died and there is no statutory right of succession; the resident has moved to another social landlord and no reciprocal arrangement applies; the tenant has bought a home or moved into the private rented sector; or the tenant has been evicted or abandoned the property.
- 3.2 A "Non-True Void" is a property which is available to let because the previous tenant has transferred to another TCH home; the tenant has moved to another social landlord where no reciprocal arrangement applies; or the tenant has been decanted, either temporarily or permanently.
- 3.3 Some local authority nominations agreements make no distinction between true and non-true voids. In others these definitions may vary but we will seek consistency with the above approach where opportunities arise.
- 3.4 A 'Choice-based lettings scheme' (CBL), allows applicants registered with the relevant local authority can bid for vacant properties within the district. Generally, the property is offered to the bidder that has the highest priority under the local authority housing allocation scheme and meets the lettings criteria for that property.

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

3.5 A Local Lettings Plan (LLP) is an agreement between the Local Authority and a Housing Association which sets out how properties will be allocated in certain defined geographical areas to address specific local issues or needs. An LLP will set out clear criteria for the selection of new tenants and why these are being adopted. Where applicable we will consult with local authorities and residents as appropriate in drawing up an LLP, place time limits on its operation and review its effectiveness.

## 4. Policy

### 4.1 How we let our homes

4.1.1 Our homes are let through the following main routes:

- Local authority nominations
- Current TCH tenants that are eligible for internal transfer
- Partner agency nominations
  - Reciprocal arrangements with other Housing Associations or Local Authorities including national and regional housing mobility schemes

4.1.2 We are committed to working with local authorities to assist them with their statutory duties in relation to the homeless and those in priority need.

4.1.3 Nomination agreements vary between local authorities but in most cases they are able to nominate to all first lets and at least 75% of our homes in their district that become available for reletting. Most of these lettings are made through Choice Based Lettings (CBL) arrangements where applicants who are registered with the local authority can express interest (bid) for vacant properties. Where there are multiple bids for properties these will be prioritised according to the relevant local authority's housing allocations scheme.

4.1.4 TCH vacancies in Kent that are to be let through CBL are advertised at: [www.kenthomechoice.org.uk](http://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk) In other areas they are advertised through the local authorities own CBL arrangements.

4.1.5 Local Authorities may also make direct nominations outside of CBL, for example where a property is adapted or has features that meet a particular customer's need and those facilities would otherwise be under-utilised.

4.1.6 TCH does not operate a general transfer list so current tenants whose homes no longer meet their needs will generally need to apply to join the relevant local authority's housing register or to mutually exchange.

4.1.7 TCH may however let vacancies that are not subject to local authority nomination rights to its existing tenants;

- where they have exceptional social needs that can be better met by a move to alternative accommodation
- to address local management issues
- who wish to downsize to a smaller property
- who wish to move to another area but do not qualify to join the relevant local authority's housing register
- to free up a fully adapted property for a customer that needs this type of accommodation, or

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

- where a discretionary tenancy is offered, for example, where there is no right of succession, or a sole tenant has abandoned the property leaving their partner with children in occupation of a property.
- who wish to move to an alternative apartment within the same Extra Care housing scheme.

4.1.8 In addition, TCH holds waiting lists of eligible applicants for its Extra Care housing schemes from which allocations are made in the absence of a nomination agreement or where no suitable local authority nomination is received within agreed timescales. Applicants for Extra Care housing that are registered with TCH are prioritised in accordance with the following criteria: -

- Priority 1 – Applicants reliant on benefit support or unable to meet their housing needs on the open housing market and with a local connection with the local housing authority where the accommodation is located.
- Priority 2 – Applicants reliant on benefit support or unable to meet their housing needs on the open housing market and with a local connection with Kent.
- Priority 3 – Applicants reliant on benefit support or unable to meet their housing needs on the open housing market with no local connection with Kent.
- Priority 4 - Applicants not reliant on benefit support and able to meet their housing needs on the open housing market and with a local connection with the local housing authority where the accommodation is located
- Priority 5 – Applicants not reliant on benefit support and able to meet their housing needs on the open housing market and with a local connection with Kent.
- Priority 6 - Applicants not reliant on benefit support and able to meet their housing needs on the open housing market and with no local connection with Kent.

4.1.9 Where applicants have the same priority status consideration will be given to the urgency of housing needs and the length of time an applicant has been registered with TCH.

Note: local connection is considered to mean current residential connection, previous residential connection (minimum 5 years) or having a close relative living in the area.

4.1.10 Vacant properties may also be allocated temporarily or permanently to TCH tenants who have to be re-housed in an emergency such as following a fire or flood; to enable major repairs or improvements to be carried out or because the property is to be demolished, redeveloped or sold. See Town & Country Housing Temporary and Permanent Decant Policies for further information.

4.1.11 Referrals may be accepted from other parts of the Peabody Group and we are committed to working with a small number of specialist partner agencies – such as armed forces charities – who make referrals to our homes.

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

- 4.1.12 Decisions on how a property that becomes available should be let will be based on whether it is a true or non-true void (where relevant) as well as:
- Funding or planning obligations, or if there is a local letting plan.
  - Nomination agreements with local authorities.
  - Whether the property has been specially adapted.
  - Targets for internal transfers and other groups including Move-On from supported housing, referral and mobility schemes
  - The likely level of demand for and ease of letting the property and the need to minimise the time a home remains empty.
  - Opportunities to create chains of moves to make the best use of our housing stock.
  - Any local tenancy management issues requiring care in the selection of a suitable new tenant (often referred to as “sensitive lets”).

4.1.13 We also actively promote mobility through mutual exchange and tenants have access to the internet based HomeSwap. Further information is set out in TCH’s Mutual Exchange Policy.

## 4.2 Property Matching and Household Size criteria

4.2.1 TCH aims to make best use of its accommodation and to minimise financial risks, including those arising from Housing Benefit and Universal Credit size criteria restrictions by ensuring properties are fully occupied, but not over-crowded, at the point of letting.

4.2.4 Based on the size criteria from the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (as amended) tenancies will only be offered where the property has an appropriately sized bedroom for:

- Each adult couple
- Any other adult aged 16 or over (but not lodgers)
- Any two children aged under 10
- Any two children of the same sex aged under 16
- An adult or child needing a separate bedroom because of severe disability or ill health.
- A resident or non-resident carer where the tenant or a household member needs overnight care (where confirmed by a social care assessment).

4.2.5 Only people that will use the property as their principal home will be taken into account when assessing appropriate bedroom size. Children who are subject to shared access arrangements will only be counted as part of the household if they reside with the applicant(s) for at least 50% of the time. Evidence of access arrangements agreed between parties or by the courts will need to be evidenced.

4.2.6 Unborn children will be taken into account as regards the number of bedrooms required within the third trimester of pregnancy.

4.2.7 Where a full-time and permanent carer is required the applicant will be entitled to one additional single bedroom.

4.2.8 Approved foster or adoption carers will be allowed an additional bedroom.

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

4.2.9 Our property/household matching standards will apply to all lettings but may be varied where it is reasonable to do so as part of local arrangements or in exceptional circumstances such as where the household's living conditions will be improved. This will only take place with the written agreement of the household concerned.

4.2.10 Under occupation may be allowed where:

- A local lettings plan is in place and allows this
- Urgent rehousing is required but only a larger property than strictly needed is currently available.
- An under-occupier wants to downsize to a smaller property that still exceeds their needs (one additional bedroom will be allowed)
- By agreement with the local authority for their nominations
- Where there is low demand.

4.2.11 Priority for two bedroomed accommodation in sheltered and extra care housing will be given to couples or two adult households, e.g. siblings, or single people with a confirmed need for non-residential day and night carer(s) provided the applicant meets the eligibility criteria for the accommodation and has the means to pay the rent.

### 4.3 Eligibility criteria

4.3.1 All lettings will be subject to verification of applicants' circumstances, identity, an affordability assessment and a credit check where necessary to ensure that all tenancies are sustainable. We aim to support all tenants to sustain their new tenancy. This will mainly be through referral to a range of financial inclusion, employment or health and wellbeing services as appropriate.

4.3.2 We reserve the right to carry out our own checks, conduct risk assessments and decline local authority or other partner nominees or seek further information or assurances before offering a tenancy to any applicant who we believe to be unsuitable or poses an unreasonable risk to the community or staff. We also reserve the right to decline any applicant where the local authority (or other nominating partner) is unable to provide timely, thorough and accurate background information about vulnerability, previous tenancy conduct, or safeguarding concerns.

4.3.3 We will consider the following applicants to be ineligible for a tenancy:

- Applicants who provide false or misleading information in relation to their application.
- Applicants who do not provide evidence to confirm they have UK or EU citizenship; indefinite or limited leave to remain in the UK; or have applied for an extension of their leave to remain if it has expired.
- Applicants without the Right to Rent as defined under the provisions of the Immigration Act 2014. Any person with a time-limited Right to Rent may be offered housing but will be subject to a follow up check when this expires.

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	



- Applicants under the age of 18 (i.e. ‘minors’) unless they have a contractual right to succeed to a tenancy or are nominated by a local authority and have a suitable guarantor or trustee and any necessary support in place.
- Applicants we have served with a Notice due to a breach of tenancy, unless we no longer consider the Notice to be valid – a Notice served for rent arrears will be considered invalid where the tenant has repaid their arrears.
- Applicants who we have obtained a Possession Order against, unless the order is for rent arrears and they have repaid all of the debt, or the order is for another breach of tenancy but we are no longer pursuing legal action.
- Any tenant with a Fixed Term Tenancy which TCH has determined will not be renewed and has served a notice to this effect
- Applicants who have previously been evicted from or has abandoned either a TCH property or that of another social or private landlord.
- Any internal applicants whose tenancy agreement does not allow a right of internal transfer or any tenant who has not successfully completed the probationary period of their tenancy.

4.3.4 To qualify for Extra Care housing applicants must be at least 55 years of age and have a requirement for a minimum of 3.5 hours personal care and/or essential domiciliary support.

#### 4.4 Rent Arrears and other debts

4.4.1 Applicants will be ineligible where they:

- have an outstanding debt with us (including any debt TCH has previously written off) unless the applicant has maintained an agreement to repay this debt for at least 6 months and under the terms of that agreement, all debts will be cleared within a maximum two-year period.
- have previously been evicted by TCH due to arrears of rent. They must clear their debt in full before any offer of accommodation will be made.
- Owe rent arrears to another landlord, unless they are taking reasonable steps to repay the debt.

4.4.2 Applicants with rent arrears or other housing related debts may however be considered in exceptional circumstances such as where:

- There is an evidenced and serious risk of harm (for example, harassment, hate crime or domestic abuse) and this would be alleviated by a move.
- The applicant has significant support, health or housing needs that could not be met in their current accommodation but will be in the proposed property.
- The arrears are entirely due to an outstanding housing benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC) claim and the tenant has provided comprehensive evidence that they are entitled to HB/ UC for the period in question and that once this is paid the arrears will be cleared in full.

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	



- Where a move will enable TCH to carry out its housing management or maintenance functions more effectively.

4.4.3 If TCH agrees to offer a tenancy to an applicant that owes it money, a clause will be written into their new tenancy agreement creating a contractual obligation to clear the debt, according to an agreed repayment schedule.

4.4.4 Where a statutory home loss payment, or any other payment or compensation is due, TCH reserves the right to offset this against any outstanding rent or other debts, including any debts or recharges identified on the applicant's current home once they have moved.

## 4.5 Anti-social Behaviour

4.5.1 Applicants will be ineligible;

- If they or a household member has perpetrated anti-social behaviour, within the last two years or they have an unspent conviction for a serious crime against a person.
- Where an injunction, Closure Order, Suspended Possession Order or Possession Order has been granted or there has been a criminal conviction relating to behaviour/ activity in the locality of the previous tenancy address(es) within the preceding five years;
- Any applicant who is subject to legal action by another landlord on the grounds of a serious breach of tenancy, such as anti-social behaviour or action under the Environmental Protection Act – this includes service of a formal Notice including but not limited to a Notice of Seeking Possession or Notice to Quit;

4.5.2 In deciding whether to reject an applicant because of anti-social behavior we will consider when and for how long the behaviour took place, the length of time that has elapsed since, and whether the applicant can evidence any change in circumstances and/ or improved behaviour to demonstrate they are suitable to become a tenant.

## 4.6 Unacceptable Risk to the Community and Staff

4.6.1 Any applicant convicted of violent or sexual offences where we are not provided with full access to their Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement assessment or other relevant information to enable us to undertake a risk assessment or we are not supplied with details of any support/supervision package and monitoring arrangements may be excluded.

4.6.2 Exclusion on the basis of unacceptable risk to the community or staff will normally be subject to advice or guidance from other organisations and agencies such as the police, probation, health or social care agencies.

## 4.7 Homeowners

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

4.7.1 Applicants who own or have a legal interest in a property anywhere in the UK or abroad will be ineligible, unless the relevant local authority determines it is unreasonable for them to continue to occupy it and they do not have the financial means to access a more suitable home, in which case they may be considered for sheltered properties for which there is lower demand

#### 4.8 Tenancy In-sustainability

4.8.1 Applicants may be ineligible where:

- They cannot demonstrate they can afford the rent (and any service charges) and other household costs. Such a decision would only be made after a full assessment of the applicant’s financial circumstances, including a trial benefit calculation. TCH uses a standard affordability assessment tool which has been consulted on with all local authority partners. – this requirement may be waived where an appropriate third party or agency has agreed to guarantee or underwrite the rental liability;
- Ultimately and very much as a last resort TCH may refuse an applicant where it is considered that arrangements will not be in place to meet their care and support needs or proposed arrangements will be insufficient and as a consequence the applicant would be unable to sustain their tenancy In cases where such concerns arise, at the point where an offer would otherwise be made, TCH will seek to establish if sufficient care and support can be put in place. This will usually be through an external agency or service.
- they have support needs but have refused, or failed to engage with, help from external agencies and the lack of such provision would, in TCH’s view, negatively affect the applicants’ ability to sustain the tenancy or move into the property at the commencement date
- The applicant(s) or a member of their household has specific current or expected requirements that cannot be met. For example, a disabled adaptation or adjustment that cannot be practicably implemented at the property in a reasonable period of time or at a reasonable cost, or a property that is otherwise unsuitable in the view of a health or social care service professional.

4.8.2 In order to achieve balanced communities in Extra Care Accommodation, with emphasis on maintaining and growing personal independence, TCH will seek to balance the numbers of residents with low, medium and high care needs.

4.8.3 Applicants rejected on tenancy unsustainability grounds will be offered advice/ assistance and/or sign posted as appropriate with a view to enabling them to be able to sustain a tenancy in the future.

#### 4.9 Other Breaches of Tenancy

4.9.1 Any TCH tenant found to have failed to keep their current home clean and in good condition (save for the completion of any repairs and safety checks that are TCH’s responsibility).

#### 4.10 Special Circumstances

4.10.1 Homes that have been built, or adapted to be accessible to people with disabilities, will be allocated to people with similar needs wherever possible to

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

make best use of these homes. Where an adapted home cannot be matched to a suitable applicant we may remove adaptations and return the property to a general needs void standard subject to any current funding conditions and following consultation with the relevant local authority.

4.10.2 We may consider a “sensitive let” is required in certain circumstances and so will apply restrictions on who can move into a property. This may be because of ongoing anti-social behaviour, the vulnerability of the potential tenant, or where a new or current resident could pose a risk to their neighbours.

#### **4.11 Peabody Employees**

4.11.1 We will let a property to a Peabody employee providing they meet the above eligibility criteria and have been nominated according to one of the routes outlined in section 4.1.1 of this policy. Such lettings will be subject to additional authorisation controls to ensure that Peabody Group probity standards are upheld.

### **5. Transfers within TCH stock**

#### **5.1 Exceptional Social Needs (ESN)**

5.1.1 Urgent internal transfers may be recommended by staff or an external agency/ organisation where a TCH tenant or a member of their household is subject to or at risk of violence, harassment or abuse or hate crime that seriously threatens their health and wellbeing. Innocent parties that are affected by serious criminal activity, or witnesses or potential witnesses that require protection may also be considered.

5.1.2 TCH will carry out reasonable enquiries to determine the severity of the threat or risk and to ensure that a move will eliminate or minimise this before accepting an ESN application. A Police disclosure/ recommendation will generally be required.

5.1.3 TCH may also seek to assist tenants facing life threatening situations through reciprocal rehousing arrangements with local authority partners and other social landlords and by participation in the national witness protection scheme.

5.1.4 ESN moves will usually be to a different Local Authority area so as to distance the tenant from their risk.

5.1.5 Tenants may be removed from the ESN list if they refuse a suitable offer of accommodation which meets all the requirements stipulated by police or support agencies. and a move to a different Local Authority area

#### **5.2 Management Transfers**

5.2.1 Where all other moving options have been exhausted TCH staff may recommend an internal transfer to address local management issues. This may include significant neighbour nuisance which cannot otherwise be resolved or where the tenant or a member of their household:

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

- Has severe medical/mobility difficulties which would be relieved by a home on ground floor level, or that is adapted or suitable for adaptation.
- Needs to move to another area or home to be able to receive care and support.
- Needs to be nearer specialist services such as special medical care.
- To have a larger or more suitable home where the tenant has been approved for adoption or fostering.

5.2.2 Documentary evidence will be required to support the need for a move from professionals such as GPs, consultants, Occupational Therapists, care managers, counsellors, support agencies and health service.

5.2.3 Recommendations for ESN and Management Transfers will be considered by a panel comprising both Regional Operations Managers and the Housing Options Manager and may be cancelled if a suitable offer of accommodation is refused.

### **5.3 Moving under occupying tenants to release larger homes**

5.3.1 TCH will accept applications to 'downsize' from tenants who have at least one more bedroom than they need to help free up larger homes for overcrowded households.

5.3.2 Residents down-sizing through this scheme will receive a standard contribution towards moving expenses which will be agreed annually.

5.3.3 TCH may also seek to address under occupation by offering separate housing to a qualifying household where, for example, the offer of two one bed homes will release a family home with three or more bedrooms.

5.3.4 Tenants who wish to downsize from their current accommodation must also apply to join the relevant Local Authority housing register and advertise for a mutual exchange.

5.3.5 TCH may cancel applications to downsize where a suitable offer of accommodation is refused.

5.3.6 Where a qualifying successor is under-occupying a property, TCH will seek to recover possession of the home and to make the successor a direct offer of suitable alternative accommodation.

### **5.4 Cross Boundary Moves**

5.4.1 Applications will be considered from current tenants who wish to move to a different local authority area but they do not qualify to join the relevant local housing register and TCH has suitable housing stock in the district.

### **5.5 Releasing Fully Adapted Homes**

5.5.1 Tenants residing in specially adapted homes who no longer require these facilities may apply for a management move to an alternative general needs home.

### **5.6 Transfers within Extra Care Housing**

5.6.1 Current Extra Care Housing tenants may be considered for a transfer to

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

another apartment within the scheme in the absence of a local authority nominee and where it is considered the existing tenants rehousing request should take priority over others on waiting list for the accommodation.

## 6 Discretionary Tenancies

- 6.1 TCH may also decide to grant a discretionary tenancy outside of the normal allocations process. Examples could include; where a sole tenant has abandoned the property and left his/her partner in occupation with a child/children or an adult child/children.
- 6.2 Discretionary tenancies may also be granted to a family member who is in housing need but who does not have a statutory right to succeed.
- 6.3 Discretionary tenancies will be subject to the same verification and eligibility criteria as set out in this policy and applicants will also need to evidence that the property has been their sole and principal home for at least the preceding 12 months.

## 7 Veterans Nomination Scheme

- 7.1 TCH participates in a voluntary scheme with Stoll Housing and the Royal British Legion to rehouse veterans living in temporary or unsuitable housing.
- 7.2 TCH will offer up to 3 one bedroom properties or studio flats each year to Stoll who will refer nominees to TCH for consideration.
- 7.3 TCH will carry out its normal eligibility checks prior to deciding on whether to make nominees an offer of a tenancy.

## 8 Veterans Accommodation at Lawson House

- 8.1 Lawson House Extra Care Housing Scheme includes 20 apartments, 18 one-bedroom and two two-bedroom, exclusively designated for veterans. The inclusion of homes exclusively for veterans has been possible due to the significant financial contributions of sponsors, including The Lawson Trust, after which the development is named.
- 8.2 To be eligible for these apartments applicants are must be:
  - A former member of the Regular Forces (Regular Army, the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines or the Royal Air Force) or;
  - A serving member of the Regular Forces who needs to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service;
  - A bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Regular Forces who is leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner;
  - (Note: consideration may be given to bereaved spouses or partners who are no longer residents in service accommodation, depending on their need and demand from serving or former services personnel generally)
  - A serving or former member of the Reserve Forces (Reserve Forces means the Army Reserve, the Territorial Army, the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marines Reserve, the Royal Air Force Reserve or

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

the Royal Auxiliary Air Force) and need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

## **9. Rental Payments**

- 9.1 TCH rents are charged on a weekly basis, falling due in advance each Monday. By signing a TCH tenancy agreement, applicants agree to 'pay the total rent and all other charges due on the first day of each period when it is due'.
- 9.2 To comply with their tenancy terms, all new tenants must pay at least one weeks rent at sign up and set up ongoing payments by direct debit so that their rent account does not go into arrears. The actual amount to be paid will be determined by how often the customer chooses to pay their rent i.e. if this is monthly, one months' rent must be paid at sign up.
- 9.3 If no payment is made at sign-up, TCH reserve the right to refuse to grant the tenancy and reject the application if no payment is made at sign up.

## **10. Rejection of Applicants**

- 10.1 We reserve the right to reject applicants that are deemed ineligible by any of the criteria set out in sections 4.3 – 4.9 of this policy.
- 10.2 Rejected applicants have the right to request a review of the decision as set out in section 11 of this policy.
- 10.3 TCH may decide, on a case by case basis and where there are exceptional circumstances, to house an applicant who does not meet the eligibility criteria subject to approval from the Regional Operations Manager.

## **11 Refusing applicants**

- 11.1 We will consider an applicant to have refused an offer of accommodation sent to them through their preferred means of communication where they do not respond to the offer within the 24 hours unless a valid reason is given.
- 11.2 We will cancel an application where an internal applicant refuses an offer that meets their assessed needs.

## **12 Complaints and Appeals**

- 12.1 Applicants who are dissatisfied with the service provided by the nominating local authority or a policy decision made by them must direct their complaint or appeal to the authority in accordance with its published complaints policy.
- 12.2 Applicants wishing to complain about this policy or its application should contact the Housing Options Officer who dealt with their application in the first instance to discuss the reasons for the decision.
- 12.3 If the applicant is still unhappy, they can appeal, setting out their reasons in writing, within 3 working days of the decision to the Housing Options Manager.

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	

- 12.4 The appeal will be considered within 10 working days of being received, by a designated service manager.
- 12.5 The appellant will be notified of the outcome of the review in writing within 3 working days.
- 12.6 Properties will not generally be held vacant pending an appeal to a local authority or to TCH so as to minimize the time that properties are left unoccupied.

### **13. Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement**

- 13.1 This policy has been consulted upon with the resident policy review group which questioned the equity limit below which home-owners may be considered for rehousing. It was clarified that £150k equity is not generally sufficient for older people to purchase a home more suitable for their needs and that they will generally only be considered for sheltered housing for which there is lesser demand.
- 13.2 The policy will be reviewed every three years unless legislation, business or sector developments require otherwise, to ensure that it continues to meet its stated objectives and takes account of good practice developments.

### **14 Legislation and regulation**

- 14.1 Due regard has been given to the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing, the Housing Acts 1985, 1988, 1996, 2004, the Equalities Act 2010, the Localism Act 2011, the Welfare Reform Act 2012, and the Immigration Act 2014.

Effective from 1 December 2020	Author; Keith Cane	
V1.2 August 2023 (inc. Extra Care)	Directorate: Operations	