CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

N.B. Employees should be discouraged from printing this document. This is to avoid the risk of out of date printed versions of the document. The Intranet should be referred to for the current version of the document.

ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS POLICY

CATEGORY:	Policy
CLASSIFICATION:	Housing and property
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Document Consultation and Review Process

Groups/Individuals who have overseen the development of this Policy:	Housing Team, Executive Team
Groups/Individuals Consulted:	

Document Version Control:

Date	Version	Amendments made	Amendments Approved by
November 2022	**V002**	**Minor amendments:** • *Role titles updated* • *Definitions clarified in Section 4* • *Age requirement clarified* • *Additional information included/clarified regarding grounds for refusal and transfers (paras. 5.9-5.17)*	**Senior Leadership Team**
January 2026	**V003**	**Minor amendments:** • *Job titles updated* • *Updated information about the Tenancy Standard* • *Amended scope* • *Inclusion of information on tenancy fraud* • *Review process*	**Executive Team – January 2026**

For the Use of the Corporate Services Team only:

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CONTENT

Section	Area Covered	Page
1	Policy Statement	4
2	Aim of the Policy and Related Legislation	5
3	Scope of the Policy	5
4	Definitions	5
5	Key Principles and Requirements	6
6	Roles and Responsibilities	11
7	Equality and Data Protection	12
8	Implementation and Training	13
9	Monitoring and Review	13

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Brunelcare seeks to provide fair and open access to its housing through participation in a Choice Based Letting scheme, giving priority to those who need it most via the banding method that the local authority uses when placing people on the housing register.

1.2 The Tenancy Standards issued by our regulator states:

"Registered Providers must allocate and let their homes in a fair and transparent way that takes the needs of tenants and prospective tenants into account"

Registered providers must:

- *Co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing functions and assist local authorities to fulfil their duties to meet identified local need.*
- *Seek to allocate homes that are designated, designed or adapted to meet specific needs in a way that is compatible with the purpose of housing.*
- *Develop and deliver services that seek to address under-occupation and overcrowding of their homes.*
- *Take action to prevent and tackle tenancy fraud.*
- *Have a fair, reasonable, simple and accessible appeals process for allocation decisions*
- *Record all lettings and sales as required by Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) system.*

1.3 Brunelcare's main criteria when providing fair and open access to its housing (save for the exceptions set out in this policy) is that:

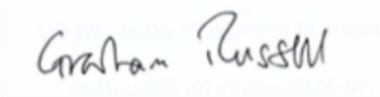
1.3.1 The person is over the age of 60 (in exceptional circumstances and where there is a medical or care need someone may be considered who is over the age of 55), and

1.3.2 they have a housing need, or

1.3.3 they have a disability or health need and would benefit from housing that Brunelcare provides.

1.3.4 For Extra Care Housing, that the person is over the age of 65, or over the age of 55 with a disability, learning difficulties or a mental health concern.

1.4 Brunelcare's approach to allocations and lettings will meet and be managed in line with the tenancy standards as identified above.



Graham Russell
Chair of the Board

Oona Goldsworthy
Chief Executive Officer

2. AIM OF THE POLICY AND RELATED LEGISLATION

2.1 The aim of this policy is to set out how Brunelcare will select applicants and allocate empty/vacant properties, including direct lets.

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

Housing Act 1988
Housing Act 1996
Localism Act 2011
Human Rights Act 1998
Equalities Act 2010
Council Banding Methods
Social Housing Fraud Act 2013

3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

3.1 This policy applies to all allocations of empty/vacant homes within sheltered housing sites, General Needs Housing sites and Extra Care Housing schemes but not leasehold or shared ownership properties.

3.2 This policy documents Brunelcare's approach to allocations and lettings and applies to all applications for housing and any requests for internal transfers/exchanges.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 A *letting* refers to when an applicant has successfully completed the allocation process and signed the tenancy agreement as the tenant.

4.2 *Allocations* refers to the process of selecting, assessing and offering an applicant an available to let property, void, or empty home.

4.3 An *applicant* is defined as someone who has been accepted on to the Home Choice Bristol register, has a live application and has expressed an interest in an available to let property, void, or empty home via the Home Choice Bristol bidding system or internal transfer process.

4.4 A *tenant* is defined in this policy as someone that occupies a property rented from Brunelcare as their sole and principal home and is the person who has signed the tenancy agreement (this includes joint tenants).

5. KEY PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS

Lettings

5.1 Brunelcare aims to work closely with Local Authorities in order to meet their allocations criteria through using the Home Choice operating system (or equivalent system). This enables the applicant to be considered for housing by all partners after completing an online application form.

With Extra Care Housing, Bristol City Council has an extra care housing waiting list, which is provided to each scheme who they have assessed as suitable for the flats in Extra Care Housing schemes.

5.2 Information about all lettings will be available on the Local Authorities Choice Based Lettings system and recorded on CORE (Continuing Recording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing in England).

5.3 The allocations and letting of properties will be fair and transparent, with clear information and help given to potential applicants and tenants. Equality of opportunity will be ensured for all applicants, having regard for individual needs.

5.4 30% of all empty/vacant properties may be offered to existing tenants and/or as direct lets/internal transfers outside of the local authorities choice based lettings agreement. This percentage will be flexible according to the suitability of available vacancies and the supply of suitable cases for transfer. With Extra Care Housing, 25% of all affordable housing can be offered as a direct let.

5.5 A proportion of lettings will be offered to applicants who may have a lower level of need. This proportion of lettings will be used in the following ways:

5.5.1 Internal transfers to ensure the efficient use of housing stock.

5.5.2 Adverts where Brunelcare tenants are given priority over other applicants (this is a way of letting direct to a current Brunelcare tenant but the bidding process still ensures the tenant with the highest priority can transfer).

5.5.3 Those younger than 60 years of age but in need of housing and the service provided due to disability or health need.

5.5.4 For certain properties, and with the agreement from the local authority we can offer lettings to those who meet our eligibility requirements but are not currently eligible for the Housing Register.

5.5.5 An existing tenant may be made a direct offer where it is known the tenant is in need of a particular property or a tenant or household

member has been a victim of an assault and has an urgent need to move to protect their safety.

5.6 Sensitive lettings will only be considered in circumstances where there is evidence of ASB within the block or scheme. These lettings will be identified by either the Allocations and Lettings Officer and agreed by either Housing Team Manager or the Head of Housing.

5.7 The decision on how each property is to be allocated will be made in conjunction with the information available within the Housing Team and the surveyor responsible for the Void works.

5.8 Brunelcare will work in partnership with Local Authorities and within the guidelines of the individual Choice Based Lettings agreement.

Grounds for Refusal

5.9 Brunelcare will have the right to refuse an applicant if the applicant(s):

- Falls outside of Brunelcare's charitable objectives.
- Has breached the terms of a previous tenancy for which there are statutory grounds for possession.
- Has known antisocial behaviour issues which could pose a risk to current tenants.
- Has rent arrears with their current or previous landlords (including private landlords).
- Has needs that cannot be met independently or by Brunelcare.
- Does not provide evidence of ID, has no recourse to public funds, or cannot prove they have leave to remain or the right to rent.
- Is under 55 or lacks capacity (unless a Trustee or a person with Power of Attorney takes responsibility).
- Has circumstances different from the information given to the local authority on which their priority for housing has been established.
- Has a household which would over or under-occupy the property.
- Is not capable of living independently as the appropriate package of care is not in place, or the applicant does not wish to take advantage of it.
- Has a criminal conviction that means the location or type of accommodation would be inappropriate i.e conviction in relation to sexual offences or convictions relating to arson.

- Already owns a property or has sufficient income to enable them to buy a property or pay market rent (although applicants may be considered who require another aspect of our service even with sufficient assets).
- Would experience financial hardship if an offer were made.
- Does not meet the age requirements of the housing scheme (i.e. over 55 years of age).

5.10 The applicant and the Local Authority will be informed of any offer or refusal. If the applicant is unhappy with the decision to refuse an offer, the Head of Housing will review the decision. The applicant has a right to use Brunelcare's Managing Comments, Concerns, Complaints and Compliment Policy if unhappy with the decision. If the applicant's complaint is upheld, they would be offered the next appropriate tenancy.

5.11 If the applicant wishes to refuse the offer, the implications will be explained, and the applicant told to contact the Local Authority. Applicants regarded as homeless will be informed in writing that the Local Authority's duty has been fulfilled by us on its behalf.

5.12 Following a refusal by either the applicant or Brunelcare, the property will be offered to the next person on the selection list or re-advertised.

5.13 All new tenants to Brunelcare who have had a lifetime tenancy in social housing (whether at a social or affordable rent) directly before signing a new tenancy agreement with Brunelcare will be given a starter tenancy (except if it is a Market Rented property).

5.14 All tenants who have had an assured tenancy on a social rent property in another of Brunelcare's properties before signing a new tenancy agreement on a social rent will be given a new assured tenancy, which will not be preceded by a starter tenancy (except if it is a Market Rented property).

Tenancy Fraud

5.15 Brunelcare has a number of controls in place to prevent / detect tenancy fraud which are set out in the Tenancy Policy 2025. Brunelcare will seek possession and/or penalties under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013.

Internal Transfers

5.16 A list will be kept of tenants that wish to move within our existing stock. The tenants on this list will be available for a direct offer and qualify for the internal transfer scheme if:

- they are moving to give or receive support;

- they are a victim of domestic abuse, hate crime or anti-social behaviour (which has involved threats or actual violence);
- the current property cannot be adapted adequately or as a medical priority; or
- the current property is too small or too big for the household's needs or subject to a notice warning of a space hazard.

5.17 Existing tenants can apply for a transfer but will only be considered if they have an assured or secure tenancy. Any tenants with a demoted, introductory/starter tenancy or assured shorthold tenancy will not be considered within the first 12 months of their tenancy unless they have exceptional circumstances. If there are exceptional circumstances, then each case will be considered and the Director of Customer Services will make the final decision.

Examples of exceptional circumstances may include cases where there is proven domestic abuse, racial harassment or a need to move nearer to support although there may be other cases that may be considered.

5.18 A tenant transferring to another of Brunelcare's tenancies will normally be offered a full assured tenancy. If not, they will be requested to sign Form 8, which acknowledges the tenant's acceptance to a reduction in security of tenure (i.e. moving from a full Assured Tenancy to a Starter/Introductory Tenancy). This may be the case where they have (for example) rent arrears on their current tenancy.

Direct Lets

5.19 Where there is a failure to let a property after two advertising cycles through the normal routes, such as a choice based letting process, the property will be designated as hard to let and advertised in order for direct applications to be considered. In the case of Extra Care Housing, following Bristol City Council's timescales, the property may be offered as a direct let or internal transfer.

5.20 In this situation, where the applicant has either a housing need or a care need which is met by the property, they will be considered for a hard to let property even if they have moderate income/assets/savings.

Pets

5.21 Due to the nature of the accommodation provided, all schemes have a no pet policy (unless required as an assistance animal/support animal, medical evidence may be requested) and allowing pets in a property where the tenant has them already when they apply for housing will be considered in exceptional and at Housing Team Manager/Centre Manager's discretion.

5.22 Permission to have a pet when allocated a property does not mean that permission will be given to replace a pet if it passes away.

The Lettings Process

5.23 Brunelcare will work with the Local Authorities when allocating empty/vacant properties using their allocations process.

5.24 The Housing Team Manager will authorise all allocations prior to an offer being made, and the reason for not selecting the unsuccessful nominations/bidder will be clearly marked. In the case of Extra Care Housing, Bristol City Council will send a nomination list to the individual sites informing them on a weekly basis who has been contacted and where the individual is in the process (e.g. viewing, care assessment, or arranging to sign tenancy).

5.25 A reasonable offer is one deemed to be of a size, type and in a location requested by the applicant. If the offer is refused the Local Authority will decide if it is a reasonable offer.

5.26 Once the allocation has been made the Allocation and Lettings Officer or the ECH Officer will contact the applicant.

5.27 The Allocations and Lettings Officer or the ECH Officer will ensure computer records are kept up to date with offers made and the outcomes of such offers.

5.28 Allocations and Letting Officer/ECH Officer/Centre Managers are expected to prioritise viewing of properties with prospective tenants to keep void times to a minimum.

5.29 All properties will be subject to escorted viewings by a member of the Housing/Extra care team. This can be conducted virtually, if appropriate in the exceptional or unusual circumstances.

Applications for Employees or their Relatives

5.30 Employees, board members and their families who are applicants for housing or who are being actively considered or bidding for a Brunelcare managed property will be dealt with strictly in accordance with this Policy.

5.31 Employees and board members must declare this interest to the Company Secretary who will provide them with the necessary advice and support. Housing will only be allocated to employees, board members or their relatives following the approval of the Board. The Board will only consider such an approval when the Company Secretary has confirmed that the following requirements have been fully met:

- There was full disclosure of the individual's interest or connection;
- consideration of the application was based solely on published allocations criteria; and
- no person having any direct personal knowledge of the applicant played any part in the assessment or decision.

5.32 Full disclosure of the individual's interest or connection is required to be made in writing, to the Company Secretary at the earliest stage in the process in question. A declaration must be made by the employee or board member that they, or a relative, plan, or may plan to make a bid for a property, before any decisions are made as to the way the property will be advertised and let.

5.33 If the relative does not inform the employee or board member until a decision is made, or a bid process has started, and/or the employee or board member does not inform Brunelcare, the application will not be allowed to proceed.

5.34 It is critical that the employee or board member takes no part in the decision making surrounding a new letting where a relation is likely to apply (e.g. where a decision to let a property in a certain way could give a relation an unfair advantage).

5.35 Similarly, the employee or board member must also take no part in any subsequent vetting and decision making involving any housing bid or application where a relation has applied.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Brunelcare (Employer and Landlord)

6.1 The Board has overall accountability for the activities of the organisation, which includes allocations and lettings. The Board will ensure that it receives appropriate assurance that the requirements set out in this policy are being met.

6.2 The Board discharges its responsibilities for allocations and lettings through the Chief Executive Officer. It will report back to residents or their family representatives on how Brunelcare manages and assures the independence and objectivity of its allocations and lettings process.

Chief Executive Officer

6.3 The Chief Executive Officer has overall accountability for the provision of an efficient and effective allocations and lettings process.

6.4 The Chief Executive Officer discharges the day to day operational responsibility for allocations and lettings through the Director of Customer Services.

Director of Customer Services

6.5 The Director of Customer Services is responsible for the operational delivery of this Policy and the associated procedures.

6.6 The Director of Customer Services will put clear mechanisms in place:

- to monitor and measure compliance with the policy, setting a performance framework that includes key Performance Indicators (KPIs);
- provide regular performance reports to the Board; and
- ensure performance against key performance indicators is regularly reported to Brunelcare's customers.

The Head of Housing/Head of ECH & Community Services

6.7 The Director of Customer Services has delegated responsibility for ensuring that allocations and lettings operate in accordance with Brunelcare's policies for sheltered accommodation to the Head of Housing, and the Head of ECH & Community Services for ensuring that allocations and lettings operate in accordance with Brunelcare's policies for Extra Care Housing.

6.8 The Head of Housing / Head of ECH & Community Services is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the lettings and allocations processes.

Housing Team Manager

6.9 The Housing Team Managers who report to the Head of Housing are responsible for all the administration involved in the offering or refusal of offering of properties. Extra Care Housing Officers are responsible for ensuring administration is correct in this area.

Allocation and Letting Officers / Extra Care Housing Officer

6.10 Allocation and Letting Officers are responsible for ensuring that Local Authorities are informed of allocation outcomes, and the computer and paper records are kept up to date. They are responsible for the advertising/marketing of all empty/vacant properties and for all the administration associated with the selection, viewings, offering and sign ups. As well responsible for completing CORE forms and recording CORE on the appropriate authority's systems

7. EQUALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Equality and Diversity

7.1 Brunelcare seeks to embed an environment where all applicants, potential residents and employees are treated as individuals, fairly and in a consistent way. We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of respect and dignity and actively challenging discrimination, should it ever arise. This Policy will be applied in a way that is consistent with these principles.

7.2 This policy is available on request in other formats (for example in an alternative language, in Braille, on tape, in large type).

7.3 Within the allocations and lettings process there will be sensitivity to the specific needs of all new applicants and customers and the Charity will actively seek to identify those needs and ensure that those needs are met, where appropriate.

Data Protection

7.4 Brunelcare is committed to ensuring protection of all personal information that we hold, and to provide and protect all such data.

7.5 Brunelcare is dedicated to safeguarding the personal information under its control and in maintaining a system that meets the Charity's obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation. Brunelcare's practice is set out in the Data Protection Policy.

8. IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING

8.1 The Head of Housing and the Housing Team Manager are responsible for the implementation of the policy along with ensuring staff receive the appropriate training.

8.2 Housing colleagues, Extra Care Housing colleagues and Customer Services colleagues should be referred to this policy upon induction.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

9.1 Information about all lettings will be provided on the Choice Based Lettings system and recorded on CORE (Continuing Recording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing in England). This will be used to monitor lettings and will be reported to the Board annually.

9.2 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or following any major statutory or regulatory changes, significant changes in procedures or practices, or if the author deems it to be required.