

## TUNTUM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DOCUMENT CONTROL		
<b>Policy name:</b>	Allocation Policy	
<b>Version:</b>	V2	
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<b>Approved by:</b>	April 2025	Board
<b>Effective date:</b>	April 2025	
<b>Date of next review:</b>	March 2028	
<b>Customer facing:</b>	Yes	

### 1. Introduction

1.1. This policy outlines our strategy for allocating available properties in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner. It prioritises the optimal utilisation of our housing stock, addressing the diverse needs of our customers and communities while ensuring sustainable reinvestment in our housing stock.

### 2. Policy statement and aims

2.1. This policy aims to:

- 2.1.1. Make the best use of Tuntum Housing's available homes
- 2.1.2. Help tenants and applicants to access homes that meet their needs
- 2.1.3. Promote and sustain diverse and vibrant communities
- 2.1.4. Ensure that our eligibility criteria and allocation practices are fair and transparent for everyone interested in how we allocate our homes.
- 2.1.5. Contribute to our local authority partners' strategic housing function and sustainable communities.

### 3. Legislation or regulatory requirements

3.1. The following key legislation underpins this policy:

#### 3.1.1. **Housing Act 1996 (as amended):**

- 3.1.1.1. Governs local authority housing allocation in England.
- 3.1.1.2. Requires allocation schemes for prioritising applicants.
- 3.1.1.3. Mandates allocations to "eligible persons" and "qualifying persons."
- 3.1.1.4. Applies to local authority nominations to housing association properties.
- 3.1.1.5. Substantially amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, Localism Act 2011, and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018.

#### 3.1.2. **Immigration Acts 2014 and 2016:**

- 3.1.2.1. Requires landlords to verify applicants' and adult household members' 'right to rent' in the UK.
- 3.1.2.2. Mandates compliance with the government's Right to Rent Code of Practice.
- 3.1.2.3. Requires initial and follow-up right-to-rent checks.
- 3.1.2.4. Requires reporting to the Home Office if an occupier loses their right to rent.
- 3.1.2.5. Data Protection Act 2018

## 4. Scope

### 4.1. How We Allocate Our Homes

#### 4.1.1. Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) Schemes

4.1.2. We work in partnership with local authorities across the region and have Service Level Agreements in place to determine the criteria for advertising and allocating properties.

4.1.3. We support local authorities' housing functions, including assistance with their homelessness duties.

4.1.4. When we partner with a local authority Choice-Based Letting (CBL) system, we will adhere to the provisions outlined in the Service Level Agreement.

#### 4.1.5. Direct Lets

In certain circumstances, Tuntum may allocate a property without first advertising it.

4.1.6. Examples of situations where direct lets will be undertaken are:

- a) Properties used for temporary decants
- b) Emergency transfer situations, e.g. due to domestic violence or hate crimes (see transfer policy)
- c) Management moves following a succession or change to tenancy, approved by the Housing Services Manager

#### 4.1.7. Local Lettings Plans

- a. Local Lettings Plans are time-limited plans agreed upon with local authority partners. They set out additional agreements about who can be housed within a defined geographical area to meet specific local issues.
- b. The objectives of these plans are to create sustainable, balanced and cohesive communities and to attain a mixture of occupancy and household types to encourage sustainability

- c. For new developments, we may use local lettings plans to ensure a mixed community is achieved when the housing is first let, such as a mixture of children of different ages in family housing and a mixture of different needs where the local authority is making nominations.
- d. Wherever possible, all new developments will contain at least 25% tenants in work or those making a significant community contribution.
- e. Local lettings plans may also include specific initiatives or incentives to assist with letting available homes in areas with a higher turnover of properties and less demand.

#### 4.1.8. Hard to let properties

- a. A hard-to-let property will have two failed advertising cycles. Properties that may be hard-to-let will be identified at termination, and strategies for advertising and/or incentives will be agreed upon with the Housing Services Manager to secure a successful and timely letting.
- b. To manage properties with significant reletting expenses or those in challenging rental markets, we will evaluate them for potential sale. Our dedicated Disposal Policy governs this process.

4.1.8.1. If a property is to be retained but is still likely to prove hard-to-let, the following list of incentives can be applied to the property in the advertisement by agreement with the Housing Services Manager:

- a) increased decoration allowance
- b) Decorating by DTO/Contractor
- c) Rent-free weeks
- d) fitted floor coverings
- e) fitted blinds/curtains

4.1.8.2. Multiple viewings will be scheduled after shortlisting if there is sufficient interest in the property from applicants.

4.1.8.3. When re-advertising properties that are hard-to-let, the distribution will be expanded beyond the initial advertising scope.

#### 4.1.9. Mutual Exchanges

Tuntum will evaluate requests from existing tenants for mutual exchanges with tenants residing in properties managed by Tuntum, other housing associations, or local authorities. Prospective tenants participating in mutual exchanges must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy. The Mutual Exchange Policy provides comprehensive information regarding this process.

#### 4.1.10. Succession and Assignments

We may allow an existing occupier to succeed, take over the tenancy or become a joint tenant of the property they currently live in. Other than the statutory right of succession (to a spouse or civil partner where there hasn't already been a succession), any person allocated a tenancy in this way must meet our eligibility criteria. Succession and assignments are explained in detail in the Succession Policy.

#### 4.1.11. Eligibility Criteria

- a. All applicants for a Tuntum tenancy, whether applying directly or nominated by a local authority, must be eligible under this policy. If applying for a joint tenancy, both applicants must be eligible. If an existing tenant applies for a transfer, they must still meet the eligibility requirements.
- b. A tenant with a starter tenancy must still be eligible at the end of the starter tenancy or probationary period.

4.1.12. To be eligible for a Tuntum Housing tenancy, an applicant must meet the following:

#### 4.1.13. Housing Eligibility Criteria

##### 1. Age Requirement

- a) Applicants must be **18 years or older**.

##### 2. Residency and Right to Rent

- b) Applicants must be habitually resident in the UK and have the right to rent.
- c) This requires a **degree of permanence** within the Common Travel Area.

##### 3. Immigration Status

Applicants must have an **eligible immigration status**, such as:

- a) Settled status
- b) Indefinite leave to remain
- c) Other immigration statuses that confer eligibility for housing.

##### 4. Local Authority Nomination or Housing Need Assessment

Applicants must either:

- a) Be nominated by a local authority, or
- b) Be assessed by **Tuntum** as being in **housing need**, as per this policy.

## 5. Existing Tenancies

- a) Applicants must not hold an active tenancy elsewhere unless they agree to relinquish it upon being rehoused.
- b) This also applies to their spouse or partner.

## 6. Property Ownership

- a) Applicants must not own or have a legal interest in a residential property in the UK unless the property is unsuitable.
- b) In such cases, applicants must demonstrate they are actively selling the property.
- c) This condition also applies to their spouse or partner.

## 7. Financial Eligibility

### Income Limits for General Housing Applicants

- a) Single applicants: Up to £35,000 gross annual income.
- b) Single applicants with children: Up to £40,000 gross annual income.
- c) Joint applicants: Up to £50,000 gross annual income.
- d) Joint applicants **with children**: Up to **£60,000** gross annual income.

## 8. Savings and Equity Limits

- a) Savings over £20,000 may impact eligibility.
- b) Equity in a property exceeding £35,000 may disqualify applicants unless exceptions apply (see below).

## 9. Applicants will **not** be eligible if:

- a) A single applicant earns over £35,000 gross income (before deductions).
- b) A joint applicant (including couples) earns over £60,000 gross income (before deductions).
- c) A single applicant has £16,000 or more in savings.
- d) A joint applicant (including couples) has £16,000 or more in savings.
- e) Applicants have a financial interest in a property, including:
  - Being **named on a mortgage**.
  - **Joint ownership** or **percentage share** in a property.

## 10. Exceptions for Homeowners & Property Owners

In certain circumstances, homeowners or individuals with financial interests in a property may still be eligible if they lack sufficient financial resources to address their housing needs. Exceptions may be considered for:

- a) Medical or disability grounds requiring suitable accommodation.
- b) Hospital patients ready for discharge whose home is unsuitable.
- c) Elderly homeowners eligible for independent living accommodation

- d) Exceptional cases, where an applicant is unable to occupy their current property.
- e) **Homeownership & equity assessments** will be determined by Tuntum, and complete **financial disclosure** will be required.

## 11. Exceptions for Armed Forces Personnel

Applicants **must not** be disqualified based on local connection criteria if they are:

- a) Current or former regular armed forces members.
- b) Bereaved spouses or civil partners of armed forces members, where the death was attributable to service, and they are no longer entitled to Service Family Accommodation.
- c) Serving or former reserve forces members needing to move due to a serious injury, illness, or disability sustained in service.

## 12. Exceptional Circumstances

Discretion may be applied in **extraordinary cases**, including:

- a) Individuals fleeing violence (e.g., domestic abuse).
- b) Urgent rehousing needs due to critical circumstances.

## 13. Compliance with Equalities Legislation

This policy ensures compliance with equality legislation to prevent discrimination against **protected groups**.

- 4.1.14. Applicants whose combined gross income and savings/equity enable them to rent or purchase a property on the open market are ineligible for a Tuntum Housing tenancy, except as specified within this policy.

### 4.2. References

- a) Tuntum Housing values tenants who pay their rent on time, look after their homes and are not a nuisance to their neighbours. Where possible, we will take references from previous landlords for nominees and direct applicants.
- b) Where the applicant has not held a tenancy before, we may seek a character reference from, for example, an employer, college, social worker, community care worker or other similar support mechanisms.
- c) Where the applicant has previously held a tenancy, we will request references for the preceding three-year period.
- d) We may withdraw our allocation offer if we are unable to obtain a suitable reference.
- e) The Housing Services Manager will authorise the decision to withdraw an application

#### 4.2.1. Pets

- a) We generally do not permit pets to reside in our properties with shared communal facilities. Certain pets are only permitted where properties have their own entrance and private gardens. Tenants must seek permission from Tuntum to keep a pet on their property.
- b) We will ensure that information about pet ownership and the required permission is readily available to all customers and clearly communicated to new customers during the viewing and sign-up process for each specific scheme, project, or property.

#### 4.2.2. People subject to immigration control

People who are subject to immigration control and are not eligible for housing under the Housing Allocation Regulations 2002 cannot be housed. Tuntum will ensure compliance with the requirements of the Immigration Acts of 2014 and 2016, which require landlords to allocate properties only to those with a 'right to rent'.

#### 4.2.3. Anti-Social Behaviour

If the applicant or any member of their household has been evicted for anti-social behaviour or breach of tenancy, has a current harassment or non-molestation order, Injunction, Notice of Seeking Possession, or any other Court Order against them, which makes them currently unsuitable to be a tenant, this will usually mean that they satisfy our eligibility criteria.

#### 4.2.4. Rent Arrears

- a. Anyone who owes money to a former landlord will usually not be eligible to be allocated housing unless they have an agreement to repay the money to the landlord and have maintained the agreement to the satisfaction of Tuntum.
- b. Tuntum will not rehouse any housing applicants with former landlords' rent arrears exceeding £250 unless they fall under discretionary exceptions, which include victims of domestic abuse and those involved in witness protection schemes.
- c. Tuntum will consider housing applicants with former landlord rent arrears of £250 or less if they demonstrate vulnerability and/or have a consistent payment plan, with the last six consecutive payments made on time.

#### 4.2.5. Criminal Convictions

- a. Applicants will be required to declare any unspent criminal convictions, excluding minor motoring offences. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, spent convictions are not required to be disclosed and will not be taken into consideration during the application process. Tuntum reserves the right to request further

information and conduct relevant checks to assess the suitability of applicants, taking into account the nature and relevance of any disclosed convictions to the proposed tenancy. Tuntum will assess each case individually, taking into account the safety and well-being of existing residents and the broader community.

- b. Tuntum will seek advice and information from police and the probation service on any applicants that have been convicted of serious criminal offences, to assess whether it is safe to house them in a particular location. There may be occasions, due to the nature of the offence and the risk assessment, where housing cannot be offered to the applicant

#### 4.3. Grounds for Refusing an Application

4.3.1. Tuntum Housing Association may refuse an application if any of the following apply to the applicant or a household member and if we determine that allocating housing would negatively impact neighbors or the local community:

- a. They have had a conviction or a caution in the past 3 years for an offence, which makes them unsuitable to be a tenant. For example, assault, selling drugs, carrying offensive weapons, keeping dangerous dogs, causing damage to property, burglary, soliciting, keeping stolen goods, etc. All unspent convictions must be declared on the housing application form (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974).
- b. They have been evicted or had a possession order (suspended or outright) or an injunction made against them in the past 5 years for anti-social behaviour, including harassment, intimidation or domestic violence and/or criminal or immoral behaviour while a tenant with their previous landlord.
- c. The applicants, a member of their household or guests or visitors to their home have perpetrated antisocial behaviour, harassment, domestic violence, or other unacceptable behaviour including a history of causing serious nuisance or annoyance to neighbours and had tenancy enforcement action taken against them in the past 3 years.
- d. Tuntum or another landlord has commenced legal action for breach of tenancy within the past 3 years, and a Court has made an order against the applicant.
- e. Applicants with outstanding rent, service charge, or other housing-related debts owed to Tuntum or any other landlord will generally be ineligible for housing. Exceptions may be considered in cases where:
  - A tenant has been approved for a move to a smaller property due to welfare benefit reductions rendering their current home unaffordable.



- Current tenants have maintained and adhered to a pre-agreed payment plan for a minimum of three consecutive months, with outstanding arrears not exceeding £250.00 at the time of application, or have maintained a clear rent account for the same period.
  - Former tenant arrears exceeding six years from the date of accrual will not be considered in the assessment of eligibility.
- f. To mitigate former tenant debt, applicants with outstanding debts exceeding £250.00 will typically be deemed ineligible for re-housing by Tuntum. Re-housing may be considered in exceptional circumstances, precisely where:
- The applicant demonstrates evidence of significant vulnerability.
  - The applicant has established and consistently adheres to a regular payment plan, resulting in a demonstrable reduction of the outstanding debt to £250.00 or less.
  - All cases will be assessed on an individual basis, taking into account the applicant's circumstances and Tuntum's commitment to responsible debt management.
- g. There is evidence of violence or threats of violence, harassment or intimidation towards a staff member or contractor of Tuntum or any other social landlord in the past 5 years. We may make exceptions to the above criteria if we receive a recommendation from a current landlord or relevant support agency (e.g. probation officer) which demonstrates the applicants/nominees current suitability to hold a tenancy, and we are satisfied that there is a care and/or support plan in place that provide sufficient support to them to maintain the terms and conditions of the tenancy.
- h. Nominations may be rejected if the local authority does not provide sufficient information required to assess an applicant for a particular property fully or failed to supply the nominations in time in line with the nominations agreement.
- 4.3.2. Housing Ex-Offenders (including Sex Offenders)
- a. Tuntum aims to create safe, secure, and sustainable communities and will have regard for the best interests of our existing residents in that community when making such decisions.
  - b. We reserve the right to restrict offers of housing that are deemed inappropriate in relation to any information obtained through a risk assessment or support needs assessment process.
  - c. Where high-risk offenders that are subject to a multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA) are being nominated by a local authority, then the local authority must demonstrate that they have investigated the risks associated with re-

housing the applicant and demonstrate that the property and area are suitable before a nomination is made.

4.3.3. In addition, the local authority will need to provide:

- a. A detailed risk assessment and details of a care package together with any monitoring arrangements
- b. Appropriate contact details of support agencies to assist the nomination process and management of the tenancy.
- c. We reserve the right to reject nominations if we consider that the individual's support needs make them unsuitable for the home being offered to them.

4.3.4. Housing Fraud

- a) Anyone found to have deliberately lied, provided false information, or withheld information as part of an application will not be accepted as an eligible applicant by Tuntum.
- b) A tenancy obtained by deception will be repossessed. If we discover this type of irregularity at the offer stage, we will withdraw the offer.

4.3.5. Affordability

- a. Applicants may be offered properties with varying rental models, including Social (approximately 50% of the local market rent), Affordable (up to a maximum of 80% of local market rent), and Intermediate Rent (at 20% below local market rent). All of these options are designed to provide housing for individuals who cannot afford housing on the open market.
- b. We will undertake a comprehensive assessment of all applicants, including transferring tenants, direct applicants, and those nominated by local authorities, to understand their capacity to maintain a successful tenancy. This assessment will consider affordability alongside other relevant factors. Where potential risks of tenancy failure or rent arrears are identified, we will explore available support options and collaboratively develop a tailored plan to mitigate these risks.
- c. All applicants will be required to undergo a thorough assessment process to enable a full consideration of their suitability for the property. This includes an affordability assessment, which considers an applicant's economic and financial status, support needs, and other factors that may determine suitability.

- d. The assessment process will take into account any benefit restrictions that may be in place, as well as any future changes to benefits. Landlord references will be sought for all former tenancies held by the applicant for the previous five years. Applicants may also be asked to provide permission for a credit check to be conducted.
- e. Tuntum will attempt to identify customers who will require support at the point of application or at the pre-tenancy assessment before they sign up for a property. Where support needs are identified, the Housing management team will provide advice and support and/or refer the applicant to a more suitable support agency for ongoing support.

#### 4.3.6. Social Rents

4.3.7. For most social rent property allocations, an initial income assessment, including benefits, will be performed. However, a comprehensive affordability assessment will be conducted in specific circumstances where potential unaffordability is indicated.

- a) These circumstances include when an applicant/nominee is considered for a property too large, potentially affecting housing benefit eligibility, particularly for foster carers without permanently resident children, or when household size subjects them to overall benefit caps under Universal Credit, in which case we will collaborate with local authorities for support, or when age may impact housing cost entitlement.
- b) The affordability assessment will evaluate the applicant's capacity to consistently meet rental obligations and associated housing costs, ensuring sustainable tenancies.

#### 4.3.8. Affordable Rents

- a. We are committed to providing clear information about housing options available to customers.
- b. Where a property is to be let at an affordable rent, we will ensure that this is specified in the advertisement. The type of tenancy to be issued will be confirmed at the point of offer.
- c. We will also ensure that customers receive appropriate advice and assistance on affordable rents and the importance of checking the affordability of such properties.
- d. For affordable rent properties, we will assess the applicant's monthly income against the property's monthly rent. If the rent and service charges exceed 45% of the household income, we deem the applicant unsuitable.

- e. If an applicant fails our affordability test, we may agree to grant a tenancy if they can demonstrate that moving to our home would result in a reduction of their housing costs.
- f. A separate policy covers Affordability Assessments & Rent in Advance in more detail

#### 4.4. How We Determine Best Use of Stock

- a) The Housing Association is committed to maximising the efficient use of its housing stock. To this end, we will actively address instances of both overcrowding and under-occupation.
- b) Where a tenant is identified as under-occupying their current property and expresses a desire to relocate, we will provide comprehensive advice and assistance regarding available housing options within their preferred area. This support will include guidance on applying to the relevant Local Authority housing registers, utilising mutual exchange platforms such as Homeswapper, and facilitating direct mutual exchanges.
- c) Furthermore, the Housing Association will collaborate closely with local authorities to encourage and support tenants residing in under-occupied properties to transition to more appropriately sized, smaller accommodations, thereby freeing up larger properties for households in greater need.

##### 4.4.1. Under occupation and Overcrowding

- a. Tenants who are under-occupying their current accommodation will receive priority transfer status and will be given advice and assistance to help them move to a more suitable property, either through transfer, mutual exchange, or via their local CBL scheme.
- b. We will provide support to current tenants who are overcrowded. Where we do not have available properties within our own stock to transfer, we will support them in applying rehousing through the local authority's choice-based lettings scheme. We will also support this application with a request for priority rehousing.

##### 4.4.2. Appropriate Property Size and Type

- a. For social housing, we will allocate the size of property the household needs although for very large households (needing a home of four beds or larger) we may allow the household to over-occupy by one room (i.e. to move into a house that is smaller than they need – but larger than where they are now).

- b. We may let properties in areas where supply exceeds demand to applicants with one bedroom more than they are assessed as needing, provided they are employed and our affordability check indicates that they can afford to pay the rent on a long-term basis. The full criteria on who is eligible to apply for these specific properties will be set out in our property adverts.
- c. For housing designated for older people, we will consider a single person or couple for a 2-bedroom property if it is affordable for them.

#### 4.4.3. Calculating Property Requirements

We will consider a property to be an appropriate size by allowing one bedroom for each of the following

- a) the applicant and their spouse or partner
- b) each person in their household aged 16 or older (adult children, grandparents and others, but not lodgers)
- c) every pair of children under 16 of the same sex
- d) every pair of children less than 10 years old, regardless of their sex
- e) any other child aged under 16. Babies will only be taken into account once they are born.
- f) a resident or non-resident carer, if they require overnight care, which can be confirmed through a social care assessment.
- g) This means that a single parent or a couple with two daughters (or two sons) aged under 16 is entitled to a 2-bedroom home, but a family with one son and one daughter is eligible for a 3-bedroom home once the eldest child reaches ten years old.
- h) Where parents live separately and share care of their children, the children will be counted as part of the household that provides their main home. If a child spends equal amounts of time in both parental households or there is a question about who they usually live with, they will be treated as living with the person who is receiving child benefit on their behalf.
- i) We may make exceptions and allow an extra bedroom in specific circumstances. For example, we may consider allowing an additional room on medical or disability grounds, such as for a person with a disability who requires large equipment or needs nighttime care and cannot, therefore, share a bedroom.
- j) In assessing the number of bedrooms in a house, a living room can be counted as a (downstairs) bedroom if there are two separate living rooms.

Tuntum will determine the number of bedrooms in a property as part of the allocations process, and this will be indicated on the tenancy agreement.

#### 4.4.4. Adapted Properties

- a. We will try to let our properties that have been purpose-built or specially adapted for wheelchair users for people with mobility issues, including any household members.
- b. Where we advertise through local authority choice-based letting schemes and nominations from the local authority, we will stipulate that priority will be given to applicants who are wheelchair users or who have the relevant mobility needs.
- c. We may also advertise such properties with adult social care services and relevant voluntary sector or charitable organisations.
- d. Purpose-built properties can be offered to nominees and applicants without mobility needs only where other avenues for potential applicants have been exhausted and will be on the basis that the adaptations remain in place throughout their tenancy.

#### 4.5. How We Support Vulnerable Applicants

##### 4.5.1. Disabled applicants

- a) If a tenant or a member of a tenant's household has a disability, Tuntum will offer help as follows:
  - 1) We may be able to adapt a property, subject to funding being available, to better meet the person's disabilities. This may involve fitting special equipment to help with mobility issues and other works to ensure that the tenant can use the fixtures and fittings at the property.
  - 2) If the tenant's existing home cannot reasonably be adapted to meet the needs arising from the disability, they may be considered for a transfer to a more suitable property where they will be given priority under the transfer policy or given assistance and support with other housing options.
- b) Properties that have been adapted will be flagged in the IT system to enable appropriate re-let.
- c) Further information on how we deal with Adaptations can be found in our Aids and Adaptations Policy.

#### 4.6. Management Transfers

Tuntum recognises that exceptional circumstances may necessitate urgent tenant relocation, and in such instances, priority may be granted; these management transfers, however, will only be approved upon the provision of compelling written evidence, which may include reports from the Police, supporting documentation from other agencies such as local authority environmental health officers, or detailed medical evidence substantiating the urgency of the move.

4.6.1. A management transfer will be considered in the following circumstances:

- a. as a result of a serious risk or threat to the tenant or a member of their households safety due to serious anti-social behaviour, harassment or domestic abuse; or where they have been a victim of a serious crime that is putting or is likely to put their life at risk if they continue to live at the property.
- b. where Tuntum decides that given the exceptional circumstances, it is in the tenant's or Tuntum's interest to transfer the tenant to alternative accommodation. The Housing Services Manager must approve this.
- c. Tuntum Housing's ability to assist tenants with relocation is contingent upon the availability of properties within areas where we hold direct allocation rights; in regions where local authorities exercise 100% nomination rights, we will, regrettably, be unable to facilitate a direct transfer and will instead refer the tenant to their respective local Council's Homeless Persons Unit for appropriate assistance.
- d. While Tuntum Housing will endeavor to consider tenants' preferred areas for rehousing, the paramount objective is to secure a safe and immediate relocation away from any imminent threat or risk to their life; specifically, in cases involving harassment, alternative accommodation will be offered outside the affected locality and distanced from areas where there is an identified risk of further harassment, including locations frequented or associated with the perpetrator(s).

4.6.2. Conditions applying to a Management Transfer

4.6.3. The following conditions apply to all management transfers:

- a) They are with the tenants' agreement and will be permanent.
- b) Where we are unable to assist immediately, we will consider additional security at the property if that is appropriate or refer them to their local council's homeless person's unit or department.
- c) If the tenant has to move immediately to emergency temporary housing, this will not affect their priority for a permanent management transfer.
- d) We will generally offer the first suitable property that meets the household requirements, as the priority is to move the tenant.
- e) Only two offers of a 'like for like' property will be made unless they are under occupying. In such cases, we will consider the availability of suitable properties,

the tenants' ability to pay, and whether they have maintained a clear rent account when deciding whether to offer a smaller property.

- f) The new tenancy will be in line with the current Tenancy Policy.
- g) If the tenancy is still within their probationary period, they will restart the probationary period. If they have a starter tenancy, another 12-month starter tenancy will be offered.
- h) We will not generally rehouse tenants with debts higher than £250.00. Tuntum will only consider re-housing tenants with debts of £250 or less where there is evidence of vulnerability and/or where both a regular payment plan is in place and the debt is being reduced.
- i) In all other cases, we will refer the tenant to the local authority's homeless person's unit or department for assistance and continue with recovery and possession actions unless the arrears are cleared or significantly reduced through a repayment plan agreed upon.
- j) We reserve the right to refuse a management transfer despite the criteria being met where the tenant or a member of the household is actively involved in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, and we are concerned that the move will have a significant and adverse effect on the community the tenant/ household is moved to.
- k) If a suitable property is not readily available, the ongoing need for a management transfer will be reviewed regularly. Where it is assessed at a review stage that there is no on-going justification for the transfer, any priority or agreement to transfer may be withdrawn. In these cases, the resident will receive a written explanation of the reasons for the decision.
- l) If a tenant is approved for a management move, they will receive up to two reasonable offers, and the Management Move request will remain valid for up to six months.

#### 4.7. Independent Living Accommodation

- a. For Tuntum Housing general needs properties and sheltered housing schemes designated for older people, we will only accept nominations and applications from individuals of the specified age criteria.
- b. The age requirement varies between schemes, but it will be stated in the property advertisement.

##### 4.7.1. Specialist Housing

- a) We have several schemes, including those for refugees, young mothers, a women's refuge, and homeless young people. Applicants for these schemes require support and will undergo a separate assessment to determine their level of support.



#### 4.8. Voids management and lettable standard

- a) To relet properties as quickly and efficiently as possible, Tuntum has a void property management policy and an established set of procedures for dealing with empty properties.
- b) The Tuntum re-let procedure and lettable standard can be found within the Void Property Management Policy.
- c) For new-build developments, Tuntum Housing adheres to standard practice and Section 106 Agreements, wherein local authorities typically secure 100% nomination rights for the initial allocation of tenancies. This ensures that the local authority can meet its strategic housing objectives for the area at the commencement of the development.
- d) Following the initial tenancy period, the allocation process shifts to a shared arrangement, as outlined in our Choice Based Lettings (CBL) service level agreements. Most of all subsequent lettings, or re-lets, are allocated through the CBL scheme; however, we reserve some void properties for internal transfers. This reflects a balanced approach, allowing both the local authority and Tuntum to address housing needs within the community.

#### 4.9. Allocation to Tuntum Housing Employees, Board members and their relatives

- a) Tuntum will not accept direct applications from its employees, Board members, their relatives, or any individual with a significant personal relationship with an employee or Board member.
- b) For this policy, this is defined as a spouse or partner; mother, brother, sister, daughter, aunt, uncle, grandparent, son or daughter. Any application for social housing with Tuntum must be made through a local authority nomination scheme. It will be subject to a greater degree of scrutiny and approval.

##### 4.9.1. To ensure probity:

- a) all applicants must declare any such status or relationship; and
- b) the applicant/relative of the applicant must not influence the allocation process; and
- c) any allocation must be approved by a senior member of staff and the Chair of the Board

#### 4.10. Appeals against Tuntum Housing Decisions

- a) If a tenant or applicant believes that they have not been given the correct level of priority as outlined in this Policy, or if their application is refused, they can request a review of the decision.
- b) The request must be made by email at [housing@tuntum.co.uk](mailto:housing@tuntum.co.uk) or by letter and must be received by Tuntum within 14 days of the decision. It must clearly state the reason for the review.
- c) All appeals will be decided within 14 days, but properties will not be held while the appeal is being considered. The review will be conducted by a staff member more senior than the person who made the original decision.

4.10.1. We will consider requests to review decisions to:

- a) not accept applications because of insufficient housing need
- b) refuse an application or offer of housing on affordability grounds
- c) suspend or cancel an application because of a tenancy breach
- d) not award priority or grant a management transfer
- e) withdraw management transfer status if the tenant has refused a reasonable offer, or if a case is reassessed after some time and the justification and need for a management transfer are no longer applicable.
- f) If the customer is not satisfied with the outcome of the review, they can make a further appeal against the decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of being informed of the outcome, clearly stating why the decision should be changed.
- g) The Housing Services Manager will consider all documentation related to the original review. They are unable to consider new information and will only assess whether the decision was made in accordance with this policy. They will do this within 10 working days.
- h) If they find the initial review decision is in keeping with the policy, it will be upheld. If it is found not to be consistent with this policy, they may choose to revise the decision.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1. Housing Services Manager

- Oversees the tenancy management function and develops and implements tenancy policies and procedures, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

### 5.2. Housing Services Team

- Manage the entire tenancy lifecycle. They process applications, conduct viewings, allocate homes, and explain tenancy terms. They also respond to queries, monitor rent payments, enforce rules, address anti-social behaviour and support tenants.

### 5.3. Asset Management Team

- Conduct necessary inspections, repairs, and maintenance tasks. Ensure all work complies with safety standards and regulations.

### 5.4. Specialist Housing Team

- Manage complex cases involving licensees by providing tailored support, including licence management and interventions, and collaborate with external agencies to ensure the well-being of both the licensee and the community.

### 5.5. Customer Services Teams

- The first point of contact for customers, handling a wide range of inquiries, including rent payments, repairs, and tenancy issues. They provide advice, resolve complaints, and ensure customers receive timely and efficient service.

## 6. Monitoring, including audit and review

### 6.1. Policy Dissemination:

We will:-

- Make the Allocation Policy available to all stakeholders, including customers, staff, and contractors.
- Provide clear instructions on how to access and understand the policy.
- Ensure the policy is easily accessible on the housing association's website and intranet.

### 6.2. Review and Updates:

We will:-

- Establish a regular review process to assess the effectiveness of the Allocation Policy
- Identify areas for improvement and make necessary updates to ensure ongoing compliance and relevance.
- Seek feedback from residents, staff, and contractors to inform the review process.

### 6.3. Monitoring and Enforcement:

We will:-

- Implement a system for monitoring adherence to the Allocation Policy
- Take appropriate disciplinary action for any violations of the policy.
- Provide clear guidelines on key aspects of the policy

### 6.4. Evaluation and Reporting:

We will:-

- Conduct periodic evaluations to assess the effectiveness of policy implementation.
- Collect data on customer satisfaction.
- Prepare regular reports for the board of directors and senior management.
- By following this implementation strategy, Tuntum Housing will ensure the Allocation Policy is effectively implemented.

## 7. Procedure

7.1. The Allocations and Re-Lets Procedure is a separate internal document supporting this policy.

## 8. Equality Impact Assessment

Tuntum Housing Association is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will make reasonable adjustments to the policy to recognise, accommodate and support individual needs where needed. This Policy adheres to the Association's approach to Equality and Diversity. All staff members will take a proactive approach to ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against or treated differently as a direct or indirect result of this Policy.

## 9. References

RELATED EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	Link to reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landlord and Tenant Act 1985</li> <li>• Housing Act 1988, 1996</li> <li>• Localism Act 2011</li> <li>• Protection from Eviction Act 1977</li> <li>• Housing and Regeneration Act 2008</li> <li>• Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023</li> <li>• Equality Act 2010</li> <li>• Data Protection Act 2018</li> </ul>	
RELATED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	
Tenancy Agreements Tenancy Management Procedure ASB Policy Allocations and Relets Procedure Repairs and Maintenance Policy Void Properties Management Policy Abandonment Policy Assignment Policy Mutual Exchange Policy Succession Policy and Procedure Transfer Policy	

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## 10. Contacts

For any inquiries or concerns regarding this Allocation Policy or the tenancy agreement, please contact:

- General Housing Team [GeneralHousingTeam@Tuntum.co.uk](mailto:GeneralHousingTeam@Tuntum.co.uk)
- Asset Management [assetmanagement@Tuntum.co.uk](mailto:assetmanagement@Tuntum.co.uk)
- Customer Services Team [CustomerServicesTeam@Tuntum.co.uk](mailto:CustomerServicesTeam@Tuntum.co.uk)

**Internal control not for publication:**

Policy changes	
Policy version	Proposed changes
V.1	