



Allocations and lettings policy

1.0 Purpose and scope

This policy outlines the different ways in which we allocate and let our social housing homes. Our aims are to:

- Meet local housing need and prevent homelessness by working in partnership with local authorities where we have legal or contractual commitments.
- Enhance mobility and choice for residents, ensuring they have suitable warm, safe, comfortable homes by facilitating transfers, including those between supported housing and general needs.
- Create sustainable tenures and contribute to the development of stable communities by effectively and responsibly letting homes.
- Ensure the allocations process is as transparent as possible.

This is a high-level policy statement. Letting arrangements relating to specific contract arrangements or resident groups are not detailed in this document. The letting of this accommodation will be subject to criteria set out in specific contracts with our partners.

We are committed to meeting customer needs and therefore this policy may be applied slightly differently in exceptional circumstances.

This policy applies to our social residents, which includes supported housing residents. There is a small number of residents who fall outside of the scope of this policy, such as those in re-ablement accommodation where we provide accommodation and support on a short-term basis for respite or similar needs.

2.0 Definitions

Allocation refers to how we decide the suitability of a home for an applicant.

Letting refers to the process whereby we let a home.

Social housing refers to decent, secure housing let at a social or affordable rent.

Strategic asset management refers to the way we plan, manage, and make decisions about the homes and assets we own. It helps us make sure our assets are used in the best possible way, supporting our goal to improve all homes to a contemporary standard by 2030 through using resources wisely.

Housing need refers to the circumstances by which a household is prioritised for social housing for those who are in the highest need for housing that wouldn't be adequately served by the private housing sector.

Poorly performing home refers to a home which NHG believes delivers a poor experience in one or more of the areas:

- Energy efficiency – cannot reach EPC C by 2030 or too costly to do so
- Risk of flooding which cannot be addressed or is too costly to do so when balanced against income
- Layout – unresolvable layout issues which pose a health and safety risk or there are considerable issues delivering a poor living experience
- Repair issues which cannot be rectified or are too costly when balanced against income
- Management issues which cannot be resolved or are too costly when balanced against income
- Net Present Value of zero or below

Further information can be found in our Disposals policy

Net Present Value (NPV) is a measure of an asset's value in terms of cashflow

Offset home refers to a poorly performing home which is only allocated to transfer applicants awarded a band A2 because they occupy a poorly performing home.

Move-on scheme refers to moves from supported housing to general needs.

Household members scheme refers to a Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) scheme that aims to relieve overcrowding by:

- Rehousing an adult member of an overcrowded household into a one-bedroom home or
- Incentivising the release of family sized properties by offering separate smaller properties to the tenancy holder(s) and any adult household members.

Social sector size criteria refer to Government rules for the size of accommodation that Housing Benefit will cover.

3.0 Access to accommodation

Access to housing will largely be through referral arrangements by named partners where there are legal or contractual commitments or through transfers for existing NHG residents using choice-based lettings (CBL), or direct offers.

Our annual lettings plan sets out how many properties will be allocated through the access routes outlined below

3.1 Nominations Agreements and Contractual Commitments

Nominations agreements allow homes to be allocated to applicants proposed by another body, such as a local authority, for the purpose of an offer of housing. We will provide homes to applicants using this route where we hold a contractual commitment which must be fulfilled, such as a Section 106 agreement, except for supported housing applicants, where we may seek nominations at our discretion.

3.2 Transfers

Properties, not subject to contractual arrangements, will be used to accommodate transfers for existing NHG residents with a recognised housing need according to our banding system. We will advertise available homes through a Choice Based Lettings scheme (Locata), allowing NHG residents to bid for suitable homes.

3.3 Direct Offers

In addition to choice-based lettings, NHG may at its discretion make direct offers to enable moves that relieve acute need or which will free up a home that is otherwise needed or which cannot be invested in according to our strategic asset management principles. In these cases, direct offers will be centrally managed and considered with reference to the banding system to promote transparency and fairness.

3.4 Discretionary tenancies

We may grant a discretionary tenancy in line with our [Succession Policy](#).

3.5 Referral arrangements with specialist agencies

We may seek applicants from both voluntary and statutory agencies to help residents with particular needs to secure housing and sustain their tenancy. Agencies include homeless charities, domestic abuse support programmes, local health authorities, social services, adult social care and the police.

3.6 Reciprocal arrangements

In exceptional circumstances, where we are unable to allocate a suitable home for a direct offer, we seek a reciprocal agreement with a local authority or another housing association. These arrangements are made outside of nomination agreements.

4.0 Eligible applicants

We seek to ensure our residents have safe, warm and comfortable homes. Our aim is to ensure our residents have homes which meet their needs. All applicants must meet our eligibility criteria set out below.

4.1 Eligibility criteria for existing NHG residents

A transfer or direct offer applicant (including household members) must:

- Have a housing need
- Be able to demonstrate that they can sustain a tenancy in the new home, with support where required, including being able to afford to the rent (see Section 9.0)
- Have no outstanding debts to NHG, including rent, court costs or charges
- Be an assured, secure or fixed term tenant
- Have maintained the property in good condition
- Have complied with the terms of their tenancy
- Apply for the appropriate size property that they are eligible for using our bedroom standard.

4.2 Eligibility criteria for new residents.

Applicants must:

- Have a housing need
- Be over 18 years of age (however we will house 16- or 17-year olds where they have a guarantor in place or the service is contracted to work with them)
- (if they are a non-UK national) either have leave to remain in the UK, have recourse to public funds and not be subject to immigration control, or be a European Economic Area (EEA) national exercising their treaty rights
- Not hold another tenancy elsewhere
- Not currently be serving a custodial sentence
- Be able to demonstrate that they can sustain a tenancy and manage risk, with support where required from internal or external agencies, including being able to afford the rent
- Be nominated, or bid, for the appropriate size property that they are eligible for using our bedroom standard.

In addition to the above eligibility criteria applicants must:

- Not own their home or their own residential accommodation elsewhere
- Have not been previously evicted from an NHG property due to a breach of tenancy, including anti-social behaviour, non-payment of rent or charges, tenancy fraud or misrepresentation.
- Not known to have or members of their household are known to have caused serious anti-social behaviour, for example e.g. if they have been evicted or convicted due to anti-social behaviour.
- Not have outstanding debts to NHG as a result of failure to pay rent, court costs, rechargeable repairs or any other debt.

Where the resident has a supported housing need and receives adequate support or care planning, subject to individual assessment, some exceptions may be made.

In exceptional cases, we will consider requests to transfer and direct offers where a resident does not fulfil the criteria set out here.

4.3 Sensitive lets

Where there has previously been a housing management issue at a property, we may decide to treat the letting of that property as a sensitive let. This is where further eligibility criteria are set before the property is advertised to ensure that the property is suitable for the applicant. For example, we may not let a property to someone whose support needs would be disproportionately affected by the property.

Sensitive lets are not used to decide whether it is appropriate to house a serious offender. These decisions are made in line with our [Serious Offender Policy](#).

4.4 Local lettings plan

We introduce local lettings plans, a specific plan for certain areas, to address housing management issues and to help develop a sustainable community in a specific area. We adopt specific eligibility criteria for these lets, which considers

the needs of the specified area to create a balanced and sustainable community, rather than concentrating on meeting housing needs alone.

We consult our partner organisations when adopting a local lettings plan to ensure that the plan reasonably balances the competing demands of local housing need and the aim to address specific issues in the locality. Local lettings plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the initial aims.

5.0 Transfers

We consider transfer requests for NHG households who meet the eligibility criteria set out in section 4.1 and whose current home is no longer suitable for their needs. Some residents do not have the right to transfer, including licenses and assured-shorthold tenants.

5.1 Priority banding

Households who are registered for a transfer will be awarded a priority banding based on how their housing affects their circumstances. Priority for homes will be awarded by banding, highest to lowest, assessed using the criteria set out below. Priority within a band will be awarded chronologically using the Priority date; the date the banding was given; from the oldest to the most recent.

A summary of the different bands is set out in the table below.

NHG – An applicant/household...
Band A
A1 - The move has been approved by the Tenancy Approval Panel (TAP) for general needs
Faces imminent personal risk which is life-threatening by remaining in their home.
Has a life-threatening medical condition, which includes mental health conditions that is seriously affected by their current housing.
Requires an adapted property or a property with wheelchair accessible features.
A2
Is required by us to temporarily or permanently relocate from their home.
Is releasing an adapted property, a property that has been majorly adapted or has wheelchair accessible features.
Is under-occupying their home.
Has been awarded a non-statutory succession on the condition that they move to a smaller home.
Is statutorily overcrowded and one of the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A child or adult who requires overnight care at least four nights a week from a non-resident carer.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child or adult who is unable to share a bedroom because of a disability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has been accepted as an adoptive or foster parent and requires an extra room at the time of assessment. • There is a court order and/or social services have deemed the child at risk, which means that the child needs to live with the tenant and the tenant requires a larger property.
Is currently occupying a home which is poorly performing as defined by NHG's Disposal policy.
Band B
Has a medical need (including mental health) which is adversely affected by their current housing.
Is statutorily overcrowded.
Faces potential risk of violence or harassment by remaining in their property, but the risk is not considered life-threatening.
Is moving-on from care or supported housing (short term).
Social hardship referral – an urgent need to move is agreed in liaison with social services, police, or another welfare agency.
Band C
Is overcrowded according to our bedroom standard.
Has a medical condition that is moderately affected by their current housing.
A need to move has been identified in a Social Services care plan or has been agreed with Social Services as a means of relieving social hardship.
Has been approved for a move to sheltered accommodation.
Needs to move for work or to relieve other non-urgent social or economic factors.
Band D
All other tenants who have a desire to move, but do not have an identified need to move, as defined in the categories above.

Once a household has moved following their transfer, their banding priority will be removed.

We reserve the right to review and amend awarded bands for residents if new information becomes available which changes housing need or priority.

Where a band is increased the priority date will be given as the date the higher banding is awarded. If a lower band is given, the priority date will remain as the date the original band was awarded.

5.2 Choice Based Lettings and Bidding for available homes

Applicants are expected to bid for properties they are eligible for using Locata. We may provide personalised assistance and guidance for those residents in most acute need (those with the highest bandings) to help identify suitable homes.

6.0 Direct offers

6.1 Offset Homes

Offset homes would need to be disposed of if the refurbishment was not funded by the sale of another poorly performing home. This means they are limited to eligible residents currently living in poorly performing homes.

Where multiple households are suitable for a direct offer for an offset home, priority will be given by banding and priority date. Should multiple households be eligible, priority will be given based on current tenancy length, with the longest tenancy being given highest priority.

6.2 Schemes

We will use direct offers to promote mobility schemes, increasing the number of potential homes available to existing NHG residents.

We use direct offers to accommodate households who are moving as part of the following mobility schemes:

- Move-on scheme
- Household Members Scheme

Residents will be made direct offers on homes which are like for like, unless this would maintain under-occupying or statutory overcrowding. In cases where, due to unavailability, this is not possible, we consider eligibility for a home according to our bedroom standard.

7.0 Personalised assistance to identify homes

NHG may select residents in higher bandings to receive personalised assistance to help support their move and identify suitable homes. Where residents are receiving assistance, we place limits on the number of homes which can be viewed or the length of time assistance is provided for, before assistance is withdrawn.

Residents receiving assistance to identify suitable homes may have support withdrawn after viewing a maximum of 6 suitable potential homes or after a 6-month period of support. Residents will retain their banding and can continue to bid directly for homes they may be interested in and are eligible for. Homes will be offered according to priority banding and priority date.

Residents with the highest banding and an urgent need to move for life-threatening reasons, may be offered accommodation in line with our Relocation Policy, alongside personalised assistance to bid for homes.

Any resident requiring additional support or signposting to support during the bidding process, as per our [Service Adjustments Policy](#), can make a formal request for assistance.

8.0 Nominations and referrals

We request and accept nominations and referrals from our partners, only where we hold legal contractual commitments, and at our discretion, considering the eligibility criteria set out in this policy. Each nomination is carefully considered before an offer of housing is made to ensure that the property is suitable for the proposed occupier. We may need to request additional information to support the nomination, which could include: medical evidence; a risk assessment; an occupational therapist report; tenancy record from the previous landlord; and eviction dates (for those facing homelessness).

We have a separate policy covering the housing of serious offenders. This seeks to ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to housing but also enables us to manage the potential risk posed by serious offenders, and hence protect resident and local communities from offences.

9.0 Property allocation

When allocating a property, we take into account the household size of the applicant, the households support needs and the type of property being let to determine whether the property is suitable for them. If a transfer or direct offer applicant is already under-occupying, they can still under-occupy, limited to 1 additional bedroom, as part of the transfer.

9.1 Bedroom size

When allocating homes, we observe part X of the Housing Act 1985 in relation to statutory overcrowding. We take account of the number and floor area of rooms available for sleeping and allocate properties to the appropriate sized household.

9.2 Bedroom standard

Our bedroom standard reflects the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) social sector size criteria, ensuring that households do not under-occupy their homes when they move in and risk facing housing benefit reductions.

We allow one bedroom for each single adult or couple and an extra bedroom for:

- Any other person aged 16 years or over
- Two children who are under the age of 10 regardless of sex
- Two children of the same sex under the age of 16
- Any other child aged under 16

For example, three children of the same sex under the age of 16 will be entitled to two bedrooms.

An additional bedroom is allowed if:

- A child or adult requires overnight care 4 nights a week from a non-resident carer
- A child or adult is unable to share a bedroom because of a disability
- An applicant who has been accepted as an adoptive or foster parent and requires an extra room at the time of assessment

- There is a court order and/or social services have deemed the child at risk, which means that the child needs to live with the tenant and the tenant requires a larger property.

We will only allocate a property with less bedrooms than an applicant requires if the number of people and bedspaces of the allocated home match, or where this would relieve statutory overcrowding.

We verify household members, which includes requiring proof of residency for anyone over 18 or not listed on the original tenancy agreement.

To comply with the DWP's bedroom size criteria, we typically assign bedrooms based on the resident's sex. However, on a discretionary basis, we consider the gender the child identifies as and whether they need an extra room because of this. This discretionary decision could affect the resident's entitlement to Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, which should be taken into account.

9.3 Adapted properties

Where properties that have been adapted to be accessible for disabilities are made available NHG, wherever possible, look to allocate these properties to applicants with similar needs.

10.0 Creating sustainable tenancies

We aim to create sustainable tenancies and communities to avoid establishing tenancies that don't work for our residents. Our lettings are subject to verification of applicants' affordability assessment to ensure the tenancy will be sustainable.

We have a Tenancy Sustainment and Safeguarding Team who provide support for residents to maintain their tenancies. At sign up, our tenancy sustainment assessment is completed to outline the level of support the tenant would require.

We have a Tenancy Approval Panel (TAP) which is responsible for reviewing and approving specific general needs tenancies, such as assessing applications for Band A transfers.

On some occasions we may need to reject a transfer, direct offer or nomination. Grounds for rejection vary but may include: submission of inaccurate or insufficient information; unsuitability of property for the applicant's needs; statutory overcrowding; or the applicant's inability to demonstrate that they can sustain the tenure. We do not decide whether to accept or reject a letting based on perceptions of possible housing management difficulties.

Where we withdraw an offer of accommodation, we give clear reasons why and explain the next steps for the applicant.

Existing residents moving between NHG homes will retain their tenure type upon a move. Rents will be set in line with our [Residential Rents Policy](#).

11.0 Accommodation available for letting and letting standards

We only allocate empty properties that are physically fit for long term human habitation in accordance with our [Lettings Standard](#), which can be found on our website.

12.0 Appeals and complaints

An applicant can appeal a decision if they are dissatisfied with the way their application, selection, offer or allocation have been handled. Appeals are considered by the lettings panel.

The lettings panel is made up of colleagues from across the business and considers general needs appeals about the tenancy they have been granted or the transfer status they have been awarded. Applications are considered on a monthly basis, and the outcome of the application must be agreed on by all members of the panel.

An applicant can make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with a service received or a service failure by us. A tenant can contact us through different channels as outlined on our [website](#).

13.0 Our Approach

In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure that we are considering equality, diversity and inclusion. Our assessment did not indicate that any group had been adversely impacted by our approach to allocations and lettings.

To request a copy of the of these assessments, please contact policy@nhq.org.uk.

15.0 Reference

- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1996
- Local Government Act 2000
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Housing Act 2004
- Equalities Act 2010
- Housing Regulator's Tenancy Standard
- Localism Act 2011
- Welfare Reform Act 2012

Document control

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Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
27/10/2020	New Notting Hill Genesis policy	V1.0
23/11/2020	Clarified that a single child or any remaining children has right to a bedroom	V1.1
10/03/2021	Amended to allow some form of overcrowding	V1.2
02/09/2024	Cyclical policy review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renew Scheme • Household Members scheme • Creating Sustainable Tenancies section • Banding- A1 and A2 • Additional needs section • Banding review for direct offers 	V2.0
26/01/2026	Amended to reflect new Asset Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect change to transfers and direct offers as priority • Nominations only when contractual (excepting Supported Housing) • Additional definitions for strategic asset management, poorly performing home, and offset • Addition of poorly performing home as a criteria for Band A • Un-paused Household Members scheme • Specifies priority order • Limits on viewings and support periods • Integration of 'Renew' through offset as direct offer • Limits under occupation to 1 bedroom • Clarification on tenure and rent levels 	V3.0