



## Home Move (Allocations) Policy

### 1. Aim

- 1.1 One of our key corporate objectives is to ‘Provide safe, affordable, good quality homes and services’. In support of this objective, the Home Move Policy aims to ensure we use our homes to help meet housing need.
- 1.2 This policy sets out our approach to allocating our general needs (social and affordable rent) and 50 plus homes. Our aim is to ensure that we:
  - make the best use of our empty homes
  - meet housing needs while building sustainable communities
  - support local authority partners in reducing homelessness
  - minimise financial hardship because of the bedroom tax and other welfare benefit changes
  - let our homes in a fair and equitable way
  - maximise rental income and minimise empty home rent loss
  - provide an excellent customer experience

### 2. How we will allocate our empty homes

2.1 We will allocate our homes in the following ways:

#### Local authority nominations

We have agreements in place with local authorities to offer homes to people they refer (nominated) to Irwell Valley Homes (IVH). At least 50% of our empty homes will be allocated to customers who are referred to us by local authority partners, in line with the nomination’s agreement reached with each council. For new build properties, the nomination details for first and future lets will be agreed with the Local Authority on a scheme by scheme basis and some new schemes may be subject to a Section 106 Agreement for affordable housing if requested through the planning process.

Applicants who are nominated to IVH are prioritised for rehousing using the local authorities’ own allocations policies.

The decision to accept a nomination from a local authority for a person who poses a risk/an ongoing risk to whether children (Schedule 1 offender) or other customers will be made following the completion of a risk assessment. The decision will depend on:

- the circumstances of the applicant
- the information provided by the nominating local authority
- the level of risk that the nominee presents, and the mitigations offered in terms of support to be provided or controls to be put in place
- the location of the empty home and the profile of existing customers in the locality

<b>TITLE OF THE POLICY / PROCEDURE</b> HOME MOVE (ALLOCATIONS) POLICY	<b>AUTHOR:</b> CUSTOMER & COMMUNITIES DIRECTOR	<b>PAGE</b> 1 <b>OF</b> 8
<b>APPROVED BY/WHEN:</b> LEADERSHIP TEAM 27.04.2022	<b>NEXT REVIEW:</b> DECEMBER 2024	

### Choice based lettings schemes

We participate in the following local authorities' choice based lettings (CBL) schemes:

- Manchester Move
- HOST (Trafford area)
- Homes for Bolton
- Salford Home Search
- Be with Us (Pendle, Briarfield, Burnley areas)
- Bury Home Options

We will advertise 80% of our empty properties through the above CBL schemes. We will receive nominations from Manchester, Trafford, Bolton, Bury and Salford Councils through these CBL schemes. We will advise applicants and IVH customers about how they can apply to the CBL schemes.

### Direct lets

We will keep a waiting list for empty homes at our 50 Plus schemes. We will use a point's based system to assess who is most in need of housing. In addition, we will directly let to applicants who want to live the Haughton Green area and are not eligible to join Tameside Council's housing waiting list, as the local authority does not have a CBL scheme. IVH will priorities these applicants in accordance with its own banding/points based system.

### Transfers

Existing IVH customers who want to move to another IVH home will be advised to apply to the choice based lettings scheme for the area they require. However, IVH will maintain a waiting list for, and directly rehouse, customers in the following circumstances only:

- Customers who are experiencing financial hardship because of under occupying an IVH home (except customers in Bolton who will continue to apply via Homes for Bolton)
- Customers who are living in overcrowded accommodation deemed so by the relevant local authority's policy definition of overcrowding (except customers in Bolton who will continue to apply via Homes for Bolton)
- Customers living in the Bolton area who have medical rehousing needs

IVH will hold a waiting list for the above limited transfer requests and will use a points system to assess housing need and therefore priority order for home moves.

To qualify for a housing transfer from one IVH home to another, customers must have lived at their current home for at least 12 months and have no current tenancy breaches relating to anti-social behaviour (ASB), property damage or rent arrears.

### Urgent transfers

There will be occasions when emergency or urgent rehousing is required, for example, if a customer is fleeing violence or the threat of violence, or if a customer needs to move temporarily whilst major works are completed at their home. In these circumstances, IVH will support the customer to move to another IVH home.

### Local Lettings Policies

IVH will develop local lettings policies to encourage sustainability in our communities, when there is an identified and evidenced need to address a particular issue such as

TITLE OF THE POLICY / PROCEDURE HOME MOVE (ALLOCATIONS) POLICY	AUTHOR: CUSTOMER & COMMUNITIES DIRECTOR	PAGE 2 OF 8
APPROVED BY/WHEN: LEADERSHIP TEAM 27.04.2022	NEXT REVIEW: DECEMBER 2024	

ASB or to ensure a balanced community is created (e.g. when we let new homes) or maintained. This may result in specific criteria being applied when letting homes covered by a local lettings policy. IVH will be open and transparent about the areas or schemes where a local lettings policy applies and will ensure any specific eligibility criteria is clearly specified when advertising empty homes.

Local lettings policies will be developed in consultation with local authority partners and relevant agencies and will require approval from the Head of Communities and the local authority prior to implementation. An annual review of local lettings policies will be completed to assess whether to continue with their use. Continued use will be dependent on the needs of customers living in the area or scheme to which the policies apply.

### 3. Tenure

- 3.1 In most instances, new customers moving into a home will be given a Starter Tenancy, which will then be converted into a full Assured Tenancy after a customer has successfully completed a minimum 12-month probationary period. However, there are some exceptions; any new customer moving from another Registered Provider or local authority with a current Assured or Secure Tenancy (dated on or before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012) will immediately sign up to a full Assured Tenancy with the Association.
- 3.2 In addition to Starter and Assured Tenancies, the Association will, in certain circumstances use Licence Agreements and Assured Shorthold Tenancies.

### 4. Eligibility

- 4.1 Eligibility is set in accordance with any current and future relevant legislation.
- 4.2 Any customer of 18 years and over who has the right to reside in the United Kingdom may apply for housing.
- 4.3 In certain circumstances, the Association may choose to re-house customers who are under 18 e.g. within some of our specialist supported schemes.
- 4.4 When assessing whether a customer(s) is/are eligible for housing, the Association may decide that the customer(s) should be treated as ineligible for housing if it is satisfied or proven that the:
  - Customer(s), or a member of their household, has been found guilty of unacceptable behaviour which the Association deems to make them unsuitable for a tenancy. An example of unacceptable behaviour may include anti social behaviour;
  - Gross household income is £60k or more per annum.
  - Customer is a home owner;
  - Customer(s) has been previously evicted;
  - Customer(s) has arrears/debt relating to a current or former tenancy or a known debt outstanding, which will include former tenant arrears (Customers with arrears of £100 or less can make an application for housing however this arrear would need to be cleared before an offer of accommodation could be made).

TITLE OF THE POLICY / PROCEDURE HOME MOVE (ALLOCATIONS) POLICY	AUTHOR: CUSTOMER & COMMUNITIES DIRECTOR	PAGE 3 OF 8
APPROVED BY/WHEN: LEADERSHIP TEAM 27.04.2022	NEXT REVIEW: DECEMBER 2024	

## 5. Mutual Exchanges

- 5.1 The Association will facilitate a mutual exchange between its customers and customers holding tenancies with other Register Providers and Local Authorities. IVH subscribes to House Exchange, to provide Irwell Valley customers with the facility to register free to find a home match to exchange with.
- 5.2 Customers who wish to move via a mutual exchange will need to provide written permission from their landlord and will be required to complete a mutual exchange application to start the process.
- 5.3 The Association has the right to refuse any mutual exchange should any of the following apply:
- The tenancy is subject to a court order for possession.
  - The tenancy is subject to a current notice seeking possession.
  - Legal action has been taken against the tenant because of anti-social behaviour or the matter is waiting to be heard before the Courts.
  - The property is larger than necessary for either party.
  - The property is not big enough and would create overcrowding.
  - The landlord is a charitable trust or Registered Provider and the exchange conflicts with the purpose of the trust or Registered Provider.
  - The dwelling has been adapted for a disabled person and the new customer has no need for specialist housing
- 5.4 If there are current or former rent arrears for either party in the exchange moving group the Association may set out additional conditions which need to be met before the exchange can take place.
- 5.5 If works are required to be completed by the customer (rechargeable repairs) in order to ensure the property is fit to let, the Association may approve in principle and set out additional conditions that need to be met before the exchange can take place.

## 6. Rent

- 6.1 The Association offers the majority of its existing homes on a social rent basis, however, a small proportion of homes are offered on a Market Rent and/or Affordable Rent basis in line with the rent setting policy.
- 6.2 To ensure all properties are let at the earliest opportunity, the Association requires that new customers applying for housing are “rent ready”. All customers will be reminded that it is their responsibility to be ready and prepared to move once an offer of accommodation is made as failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of an offer. The Association also reserves the right to complete affordability/credit checks in respect of new customers and in certain circumstances will ask customers to provide proof of income and/or may undertake an affordability assessment in order for the Association to establish that the customer can afford the rent and sustain their tenancy.

<b>TITLE OF THE POLICY / PROCEDURE</b> HOME MOVE (ALLOCATIONS) POLICY	<b>AUTHOR:</b> CUSTOMER & COMMUNITIES DIRECTOR	<b>PAGE</b> 4 <b>OF</b> 8
<b>APPROVED BY/WHEN:</b> LEADERSHIP TEAM 27.04.2022	<b>NEXT REVIEW:</b> DECEMBER 2024	

## 7. Offers, Refusals and Rejections

- 7.1 When a home is available, a customer will be provided with a written offer of accommodation.
- 7.2 IVH will hold a reserve list of customers for every empty home available and under offer.
- 7.3 IVH also manages and allocates housing services that are provided for particular client groups and/or age ranges (predominately 50 plus schemes); as such these services have specific allocation criteria reflecting the particular type of service provided.
- 7.4 If a customer chooses to refuse an offer they will be required to inform IVH of the reasons.
- 7.5 IVH reserves the right to remove a customer from it's limited waiting list should they refuse what we consider to be 3 reasonable offers. Removal will be for a period of six months and after such time a customer will be eligible to reapply.
- 7.6 Any customer, who knowingly gives false information or withholds relevant information to increase their chances of housing, will have their application suspended from receiving offers for 1 year and any offer of housing cancelled. If a tenancy is granted before the deception is revealed the Association will take action to recover possession of the property.

## 8. Withdrawing Offers

- 8.1 A customer will receive an offer of accommodation by the Association at the earliest opportunity. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for IVH to withdraw an offer of accommodation for example:
- Failure to provide one week/months rent in advance (if eligible)
  - Non-attendance at the agreed time and date of viewing and/or sign up.
  - If the property the offer was made against is no longer available e.g. if the current customer retracts their notice. If this should happen, IVH will seek a suitable alternative offer for the applicant or customer.

## 9. Terminating a Tenancy

- 9.1 A customer must submit their intention to terminate their tenancy in writing either by post or email. The notice period is 4 weeks and customers are required to return the keys for their property by 10am on the final day of their tenancy.
- 9.2 A joint tenant can terminate a tenancy on behalf of both tenants.

## 10. Relet Standard

- 10.1 Customers expect their new home to be clean and tidy and have had all necessary health and safety checks completed. At the discretion of the Association and where deemed appropriate, decoration vouchers may be granted to new customers.

<b>TITLE OF THE POLICY / PROCEDURE</b> HOME MOVE (ALLOCATIONS) POLICY	<b>AUTHOR:</b> CUSTOMER & COMMUNITIES DIRECTOR	<b>PAGE</b> 5 <b>OF</b> 8
<b>APPROVED BY/WHEN:</b> LEADERSHIP TEAM 27.04.2022	<b>NEXT REVIEW:</b> DECEMBER 2024	

## 11. Complaints

- 11.1 If a customer is not satisfied with any aspect of the allocation process then they should, in the first instance refer the matter to the Home Move Team Leader. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved then any potential failures in service will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's complaints procedure.

## 12. Responsibility and Performance

- 12.1 The Head of Communities is responsible for the effective implementation of this Policy. This Policy is applicable to all colleagues within the Communities Team, Independent and Community Living Team and all other teams with an involvement in the lettings process.
- 12.2 The Communities Manager (Home Move) will be responsible for monitoring IVH's adherence to local authority nomination agreements and CBL agreements.
- 12.3 The Communities Manager (Home Move) is responsible for the effective implementation and review of local lettings policies.
- 12.4 The Communities Manager (Home Move) and Head of Communities are responsible for setting targets and monitoring performance in relation to lettings performance. Key performance information relating to lettings is reported to Leadership Team (monthly) and Board (quarterly).

## 13. Performance Indicators

- 13.1 Key performance measures are identified in the Associations Corporate Plan to include:
- 20 days average relet time
  - 80% of lets made through nominations
  - 40% of lets made to customers who are homeless
- 13.2 The Leadership team will retain oversight of the performance measures on a monthly basis to identify any areas of concern and identify potential remedial actions.
- 13.3 The Board will be provided with an overview of performance on a quarterly and annual basis.

## 14. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

- 14.1 Irwell Valley Homes is committed to treating people with honesty, dignity, respect, and trust. This applies to colleagues, customers potential customers, contractors, and Board Members. At IVH:
- **Equality** is about ensuring that every individual has an opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.
  - **Diversity** is recognising difference and responding positively to those differences.
  - **Inclusion** is about creating an environment where our services and employment opportunities are accessible to all.

TITLE OF THE POLICY / PROCEDURE HOME MOVE (ALLOCATIONS) POLICY	AUTHOR: CUSTOMER & COMMUNITIES DIRECTOR	PAGE 6 OF 8
APPROVED BY/WHEN: LEADERSHIP TEAM 27.04.2022	NEXT REVIEW: DECEMBER 2024	

- 14.2 IVH will be mindful of the Equality Act 2010 in all its actions and will consider all the protected characteristics of the Act which are: Race, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Age, Marriage/Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity explicitly. Further to the protected characteristics, IVH will be mindful of socio-economic disadvantage and will do everything in its power to minimise this and other forms of disadvantage.
- 14.3 When applying this policy, we will seek to make appropriate adjustments throughout the process to meet customers needs.

**15. Cross Reference Documents/Good Practice**

- 15.1 Documents associated with this Policy are the:
- Lettings Procedure;
  - Income Management Policy;
  - Tenancy Policy;
  - E&D Policy;
  - Voids Policy and Procedures
  - GM Homelessness Strategies and Initiatives
  - Empty Homes Recharge Policy
  - Complaints Policy and Procedure
  - Nominations' agreements
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - ASB Policy
  - Domestic Abuse Policy
  - Sustainment and tailored services strategy
  - Housing Acts 1988, 1996, 2004
  - Housing and Planning Act 2016
  - Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
  - Regulatory Framework for Social Housing

All policies and procedures are available for customers to view upon request.

<b>TITLE OF THE POLICY / PROCEDURE</b> HOME MOVE (ALLOCATIONS) POLICY	<b>AUTHOR:</b> CUSTOMER & COMMUNITIES DIRECTOR	<b>PAGE</b> 7 <b>OF</b> 8
<b>APPROVED BY/WHEN:</b> LEADERSHIP TEAM 27.04.2022	<b>NEXT REVIEW:</b> DECEMBER 2024	

Bands and points scheme for lettings

<b>Band</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
A	Homeless or threatened with homelessness for reasons other than applicant's unreasonable acts or omissions	100
A	Under-occupying by 2 bedrooms or more	50
A	Severe overcrowding (lacking 2 bedrooms or more) or unsanitary conditions	50
A	Under threat of physical violence (including domestic and racial harassment)	50
A	Pregnant and requiring suitable accommodation	50
A	Significant medical needs (which is made worse by your current property)	50
B	Overcrowding (lacking 1 bedroom)	25
B	Under-occupying by 1 bedroom	25
B	Living with family/friends – need own accommodation	15