

COMMON HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY



June 2015

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy has been developed collectively by a partnership of providers together with Newport City Council. The partnership consists of:
- Aelwyd Housing Association
 - Charter Housing
 - Derwen Cymru
 - Elim Housing Association
 - Seren Living
 - Hafod Housing Association
 - Linc Cymru
 - Melin Homes
 - Newport City Council
 - Newport City Homes
 - United Welsh Group
- 1.2 The partnership is committed to providing a high quality service that is responsive to the needs of applicants whilst ensuring that the housing stock available is allocated equitably, offering choice to individuals as well as also ensuring that the housing stock is used most effectively to meet the changing needs within the city.
- 1.3 This policy sets out the principles by which the partnership will prioritise applicants and allocate accommodation that is available within the city through all partners.
- 1.4 The policy is framed in order to encourage applicants to take an active part in the re-housing process which is emphasised by the ability for applicants to express an interest in the vacancies that are advertised through Home Options.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Properties owned and/or managed by the partner Housing Associations are intended for people whose needs are not presently being met by their current accommodation and for whom the accommodation provides an affordable solution to their housing difficulties. The partnership is committed to providing choice, equality and accessibility in the delivery of the scheme and will work to develop an approach that:
- Is easily understood by applicants;
 - Treats all customers in a fair and transparent way;
 - Assesses priority on the basis of need;
 - Works to create and maintain sustainable tenancies in stable and balanced communities;
 - Reflects the principles of maximising choice wherever possible; and
 - Complies with all statutory and regulatory requirements.
- 2.2 The partnership will operate a needs based banding system where applicants will be placed into one of four bands broadly based upon the circumstances of the applicant and their household. The banding system and criteria is based upon a composite assessment of individual need.
- 2.3 This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure compatibility with legal frameworks and that it is meeting the needs of the intended recipients. Copies of this policy document are available in alternative formats upon request.

3. Who Can Apply for Housing?

3.1 Applications for housing are accepted from anyone over the age of 16. All applications are assessed in order to verify compliance with the requirements of registration and whether an applicant is eligible to be registered. Applicants who are accepted onto the Common Housing Register are informed in writing and advised:

- Of their registration number and date of registration;
- Of their banding;
- That acceptance onto the Common Housing Register **does not** imply automatic re-housing;
- That some accepted applications can be removed following further investigations or disclosures; and
- That should they refuse **two** reasonable offers of accommodation then their application will be withdrawn from the Common Housing Register. Details of what constitutes a reasonable offer of accommodation can be found in section 14.3 of this document.

3.2 Applicants who are found to be ineligible to register will also be notified of the reasons in writing and advised of their right to appeal against this decision. Details of the eligibility and appeal criteria are set out within sections 15 and 24 of this document.

3.3 Individual applicants will be able to submit applications in a range of formats in order to suit their particular preferences. These are as follows:

- Through completing a telephone application;
- Through completing an on-line application form;
- Through completing a paper application; and
- In person at any of the partnerships offices.

Reasonable checks will be made to ascertain an applicant's circumstances in order to provide accurate assessments and to ensure that any advice provided is individually tailored to the needs of each applicant.

3.4 Where applicants are currently tenants of one of the partner organisations then applications will need to be made to their particular landlord. This will enable an assessment to be undertaken quickly and effectively by the landlord concerned. Applicants who have a Starter Tenancy with one of the partner organisations will generally only be offered alternative accommodation in exceptional circumstances which must be agreed by the Assessment Panel.

- 3.5 Applicants who have been awarded additional priority will be made **one** reasonable offer of accommodation. Should an applicant refuse a reasonable offer of accommodation, then their application will be assessed solely on their occupation circumstances and they will therefore be placed into the band that reflects these circumstances. This offer will also count towards any further offers of accommodation made in the future. Applicants will be able to re-apply for additional priority where their circumstances change.
- 3.6 Applicants found to have either knowingly or wilfully provided false information or to have withheld information will have their circumstances fully investigated and, after due and careful consideration, may have their application removed from the Common Housing Register for up to one year. Legal proceedings may also be initiated and a person found guilty may be liable to a substantial fine of up to £5,000.

4. The Banding System

4.1 In order to accurately assess the needs of each applicant and to prioritise the allocation of housing, a four tiered banding system has been created that broadly outlines applicant circumstances. The banding system is outlined below:

Band A

| Need Group | Assessment Criteria | Points |
|--|---|---------------|
| Urgent Welfare Grounds - Health | Applicants who are currently in hospital and are unable to return home (bed blocking) or are unable to gain access to their home due to their social care or mobility issues. Band date commences on date of decision. | 10 |
| Urgent Welfare Grounds - Safety | Exceptional cases where an applicant has significant and unreasonable difficulties in their present home that would leave them at immediate risk if they were to remain in occupation. Band date commences on date of decision. | 10 |
| Urgent Welfare Grounds - Social | Exceptional cases where an applicant has significant and unreasonable difficulties in sustaining their accommodation and the difficulties are deemed to place them at immediate risk. This could also include where an applicant's property has been deemed to contain serious category 1 hazards for overcrowding and the overcrowding is exceptional given the prevailing housing circumstances within the area. Band date commences on date of decision. | 10 |
| Property Conditions | An applicant's current property has been assessed by the Council's Environmental Health Team as containing serious category 1 hazards which has subsequently resulted in the issuing of a Prohibition Order, Emergency Prohibition Order or where a notice for defective heating has been served under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Band date commences on the date of the Notice or Order issued. | 10 |
| Statutory Homeless | An applicant owed a full housing duty (found to be homeless, in priority need and not homeless intentionally) by Newport City Council. Band date commences on the date of the notification letter issued by the Council. | 10 |
| Children in Need | To enable fostering/supported lodgings where agreement has been reached to provide permanent accommodation. Band date commences on the date of Social Services recommendation/request. | 10 |

Band B

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| <p>Welfare Grounds 1 - Health</p> | <p>Applicants who have substantive social care/health/disability problems that are being seriously affected by their current housing. This will only be granted in exceptional cases where the applicant has either a condition that cannot be addressed by their present accommodation or their present accommodation places them at risk of serious harm. Band date commences on date of decision.</p> | <p>10</p> |
| <p>Homeless</p> | <p>Applicants who are determined as being homeless and are either being assisted by the Council to relieve their homelessness under Section 73 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 or have been issued with a decision to indicate that no further duty is owed by the Council. Band date commences on the date of the Section 73 duty commencing.</p> | <p>10</p> |
| <p>Welfare Grounds 1 - Safety</p> | <p>Exceptional cases where an applicant has significant and unreasonable difficulties in their present home that would leave them at risk if they were to remain in occupation. This will include instances where applicants occupy accommodation that has been assessed by the Council's Environmental Health Team as having Category 1 hazards (A – C) or multiple Category 2 hazards that in the opinion of the Officer pose a significant risk to the occupants. Band date commences on date of decision.</p> | <p>10</p> |
| <p>Welfare Grounds 1 - Social</p> | <p>Exceptional cases where an applicant has difficulties in sustaining their accommodation and these difficulties are deemed serious. This could include, but is not limited to, where the property occupied has been served with an Improvement Notice by the Council's Environmental Health Team and that this Notice has not then been complied with. Band date commences on date of decision.</p> | <p>10</p> |
| <p>Under – Occupation (Existing Social Housing Tenants only)</p> | <p>Applicants willing to move from a high demand property owned by a partner RSL that has at least 1 bedroom in excess of their need. Agreement must be provided by the RSL's nominated officer. Band date commences on the date of the decision.</p> | <p>10</p> |
| <p>Overcrowding 1</p> | <p>Applicants who currently occupy accommodation that: Forces a child to share a bedroom with an adult and it is deemed to be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the child; or</p> | <p>10</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>Has been assessed by the Council's Environmental Health Team as having a Category 1 overcrowding space hazard (Band A – C); or</p> <p>Applicants who lack 2 bedrooms or more based upon the following minimum provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Person – 1 bedroom (including studio flats) • Co-habiting couples – 1 bedroom • Each independent adult (21 years+) – 1 bedroom • Children of the opposite sex where one child is aged over 10 should not have to share a bedroom • Two children of the same sex – 1 bedroom (unless one or both children are aged over 16) Children under the age of one are not considered as part of this assessment. <p>Band date commences on the date of when the overcrowding started or the date of application (whichever is later).</p> | |
|--|--|--|

Band C

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| Welfare Grounds 2 - Health | Applicants who are living in accommodation that is having a proven adverse impact on their health and wellbeing and it is shown that there is a particular need to move to alternative accommodation to address this. This may also include instances where individuals need to move to either provide or receive support. Band date commences on date of decision. | 10 |
| Potentially Homeless Households | Applicants who are at risk of being made homeless within 56 days and whom the Council are assisting under Section 66 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. To be awarded this priority, confirmation will be provided by the Council's designated officer and will commence from the date of the housing application being submitted. | 10 |
| Private Rented Tenants | Applicants currently renting accommodation on an Assured Short-Hold Tenancy from a private landlord. This also includes applicants who have been given notice to vacate their tied accommodation. Band date commences on the date of application. | 10 |
| Children | Applicant has dependent children under the age of 10 | 10 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|----|
| Living in Flats | and lives in a flat above ground floor. This priority will only be awarded to applicants who have a local connection with Newport. Band date commences on the date of birth of the child or the date of application (whichever is later). | |
| Living in Shared Accommodation | Applicants currently residing in shared accommodation such as with friends or family, hostels, temporary accommodation or supported housing. Band date commences on the date of application. | 10 |
| Housing Conditions | <p>Applicants who currently occupy accommodation that:-</p> <p>Has been assessed by the Council's Environmental Health Team as having Category 2 (D-J) hazards and that the Environmental Health Officer considers these to be serious and/or the Landlord has failed to comply with requests made to remedy the hazards.</p> <p>Band date commences on date of decision.</p> | 10 |
| Overcrowding 2 | <p>Applicants who currently occupy accommodation that:</p> <p>Has been assessed by the Council's Environmental Health Team as having a Category 2 (band D-J) overcrowding and space hazard present. Children under the age of 1 years are counted in this assessment; or</p> <p>Applicants who do not have the following minimum provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Person – 1 bedroom (including studio flats) • Co-habiting couples – 1 bedroom • Each independent adult (21 years+) – 1 bedroom • Children of the opposite sex where one child is aged over 10 should not have to share a bedroom • Two children of the same sex – 1 bedroom (unless one or both children are aged over 16) <p>Children under the age of one are not considered as part of this assessment.</p> <p>Band date commences on the date of when the overcrowding started or the date of application (whichever is later)</p> | 10 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----|
| Owner Occupier Incentive | Owner Occupiers over the age of 55 who have agreed to lease their property to one of the partner RSL's for a minimum period of 5 years in order to obtain alternative accommodation. Band date commences on the date on which an agreement was reached with the RSL. | 10 |
|---------------------------------|--|----|

Band D

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|----|
| All other applicants | Applicant's who are currently in secure accommodation that is deemed suitable for their needs and that no other criteria apply from the higher bands. This includes owner occupiers, RSL tenants, Assured Tenants in the private sector and Tied Tenants. | 10 |
|-----------------------------|---|----|

- 4.2 Each applicant will be assessed to determine the needs that they have in line with banding scheme. Applicants with one need from within a band will be allocated 10 points with further points to be allocated in the event of additional needs from within the same band being identified under the assessment. Preference will therefore be provided to applicants who have multiple needs from within each band.
- 4.3 Applicants who do not have a local connection with Newport will be placed in Band D unless there are urgent housing issues as reflected in Band A or Band B. An applicant will have a local connection if they can provide evidence to show that:
- they have been resident within the Newport for at least 12 out of the last 24 months. Residence must have been of the applicants own choice;
 - they have permanent employment within the area; or
 - if they have parents, children, step children, adopted children or siblings living in Newport who have been resident within Newport for at least 5 years; or
 - if they have in the past resided in Newport for a substantial period of time.
- 4.4 Applicants who deliberately worsen their housing circumstances will not benefit from their actions either by obtaining additional priority on the housing register or by becoming eligible to express interest in advertised vacancies. In the event of the partners becoming aware of an applicant deliberately worsening their circumstances a referral will be made to the Assessment Panel in order for the application to be assessed in line with eligibility criteria. Applications may be withdrawn from the housing register following this assessment.

- 4.5 Where an applicant with dependent children under the age of 10 has been awarded additional preference under the scheme for living in flats above ground floor (when they already reside in a tenancy managed by one of the partner housing associations), any bids submitted on accommodation advertised through the scheme that would not subsequently remove them from living above ground floor will not be considered.
- 4.6 Households who have been awarded additional preference due to lacking either one or more bedrooms under this policy will be allowed to bid on any accommodation that is advertised through the scheme that meets their needs. However, the additional preference awarded will only be considered when larger accommodation is applied for through the scheme.
- 4.7 Owner occupiers will normally be registered in Band D. However, consideration will be given to applications where an applicant is unable to occupy the property that they own a legal interest in. An example of this may be where an applicant's property is presently unfit for occupation and this is not due to any deliberate action or lack of action on their part. Decisions will be based upon individual circumstances and will be at the discretion of the Scheme Manager. Section 17 provides additional information in relation to owner occupiers and criteria that will be applied.
- 4.7 Applicants who are awarded additional preference will have their preference reviewed on a regular basis. This will be to ensure that applicants are selecting suitable accommodation on a regular basis in order to facilitate their move to more appropriate accommodation. Reviews will take place every 8 weeks (this may be varied depending on stock turnover). Where applicants have not selected a suitable range of accommodation then they may:
- Have selections made on their behalf;
 - Be made a direct offer of accommodation;
 - Have their level of preference reduced; or
 - Given additional assistance in order to complete selections.

5. Property Entitlement

5.1 In order to make the best use of the limited affordable housing stock available, applicants will be only entitled to apply for vacancies for which they are eligible for. The general framework is outlined below:

| Household Type | Property Type |
|---|--|
| Single person under 55 | Bedsit/Studio, 1/2 Bed Flat/Maisonette |
| Single person over 55 | Bedsit/Studio, Bungalow, 1/2 Bed Flat/Maisonette |
| Couple or single person (with overnight access to at least 1 child) | 1/2 Bed Flat or Maisonette |
| Couple or single person who is pregnant | 2 Bed Flat/House/Maisonette |
| Couple (both under 55) | 1 Bed Flat, 2/3 Bed Flat/Maisonette |
| Couple (one or both over 55) | 1 Bed Flat, 2/3 Bed Bungalow/Flat/Maisonette |
| Two adults (not a couple both under 55) | 2 or 3 Bed Flat/Maisonette |
| Two adults (not a couple one or both over 55) | 2/3 Bed Bungalow/Flat/Maisonette |
| Single person with 1 dependent child | 2/3 Bed Flat/Maisonette/House |
| Single person with 2 dependent children (same sex) | 2/3/4 Bed Flat/Maisonette/House |
| Single person with 2 dependent children (opposite sex) | 3/4 Bed Flat/Maisonette/House |
| Single person with 3 dependent children | 3/4 Bed Flat/Maisonette/House |
| Single person with 4 or more dependent children | 3/4 Bed House |
| Couple with 1 dependent child | 2/3 Bed Flat/Maisonette/House |
| Couple with 2 dependent children (same sex) | 2/3/4 Bed Flat/Maisonette/House |
| Couple with 2 dependent children (opposite sex) | 3/4 Bed Flat/Maisonette/House |
| Couple with 3 dependent children | 3/4 Bed Flat/Maisonette/House |
| Couple with 4 or more dependent children | 3/4 Bed House |

- 5.2 The above framework outlines the property entitlement criteria for applicants applying for housing. However, each partner organisation reserves the right to alter the criteria from time to time in order to take account of local needs and issues. This will be clearly outlined within each advert. In addition, applicants who apply for vacancies where there will be under-occupation will be considered for these vacancies. However, each Housing Association will carry out an affordability assessment prior to any formal offer of accommodation and if this identifies affordability issues as a result of the under occupation then the Housing Association may choose to withdraw the offer. This will not be held against the applicant concerned.
- 5.3 Designated sheltered accommodation will be for applicants aged 55 or over. Applicants who are disabled as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act and where this has subsequently been verified by the Scheme Administrator may also be considered for sheltered accommodation. This will generally be for disabled applicants over the age of 30 although partner organisations may, at their discretion, amend this based on individual circumstances.
- 5.4 Applicants who have children over the age of 21 residing with them will have their children considered as being dependent where their child has always resided at home. Consideration may also be given where children over the age of 21 have returned home although this will be assessed on an individual basis. Applicants will be required to provide proof to support any claim and the entitlement will only be granted where the Scheme Administrator is satisfied that this is the case.
- 5.5 Preference will be given to applicants who have been awarded additional preference on medical grounds (for suitable ground floor accommodation) in the letting of ground floor flats and bungalows. Criteria for the allocation of bungalows owned by Derwen Cymru will generally be outside of this policy.
- 5.6 The allocation of 2, 3 and 4 bed houses will be reserved for those applicants who have dependent children residing with them on a permanent basis, or where there is a clear identified need for the accommodation. For example, where an individual applicant or household member is pregnant.

6. Property Advertisement System

6.1 All vacant properties will be allocated in line with the published Common Allocations Policy. Vacant properties will be advertised between the four bands as follows:

- Band A – 30%
- Band B – 30%
- Band C – 30%
- Band D – 5%

Applicants will be considered for the vacancies that have been advertised for the band that they are allocated to. In the event of no suitable applicants applying for vacancies within the band in which they have been advertised, then other applicants can then be considered should they have selected the property concerned. This will be done with the priority order of the bands.

6.2 The remaining 5% of vacancies will be set aside for supported housing projects within the city in line with the move on arrangements contained within Section 22 of this policy document. This will enable individuals who are ready to move on to permanent accommodation to do so in a planned and effective manner making best use of the limited resources available within the City.

6.3 Partners will be responsible for ensuring that there is an equitable split of property types and areas in order to provide applicants from within each band sufficient choice and opportunity to secure alternative accommodation.

6.4 New build properties will be subject to separate arrangements for the initial letting process. All new build properties will therefore be advertised between the four bands as follows:

- Band A – 5%
- Band B – 30%
- Band C – 30%
- Band D – 30%

The remaining 5% of properties will be set aside for move on accommodation.

6.5 The levels will be reviewed on a six monthly basis to ensure that the system is effectively meeting housing need within the city.

7. Advertising Process

7.1 Vacant properties will be advertised by partner agencies on a weekly cycle. Adverts will be available in a range of locations across the city as well as being available on the internet via any of the partner's web pages. The sites are listed in Section 28 of this policy document. Properties will be labelled in order to show:

- the landlord;
- the rent and any associated service charges;
- the type and size of the property;
- the applicants that are able to bid for the property;
- any particular features the property has (ie: adaptations, lift etc); and
- relevant local information.

7.2 In order to allow applicants to make informed choices partner agencies will ensure that information relating to the properties advertised will be as accurate and informative as possible.

7.3 In exceptional circumstances, certain properties may be advertised with additional criteria attached to them, such as age criteria where the particular age profile of existing tenants needs to be recognised in the future letting. This may also include where there are presently significant ongoing management issues within the immediate vicinity of the property concerned. Any additional criteria will need to be approved in line with this policy document.

8. Selection Process

8.1 Applicants are able to select up to 4 properties from each advertisement published that they are interested in. Selections can be made by:

- Telephone;
- Text;
- Through the web pages; and
- In person at one of the partners offices.

- 8.2 Where applicants have either particular difficulties in making their selections or where they simply wish to opt out of the selection process they are able to do so, as the system will make appropriate selections on their behalf based on their pre-registered requirements. In addition, where applicants have support workers then the selection process can be delegated to them with the consent of the applicant. This would need to be completed by the Support Worker so that bids submitted by the Support Worker can be clearly identified.
- 8.3 Applicants who have been placed in either Band A or Band B and who do not either make selections on a regular basis or fail to make appropriate selections may be allocated accommodation directly. Appropriate selections are those which applicants are eligible for and within the areas in which they have been advised that they should consider based upon the assessment made. Applicants placed in Band A and Band B who consistently fail to bid will be contacted in order to offer assistance and advice on the process.

9. Offers of Accommodation

- 9.1 Following the closing date of the advert, the eligible selections made by all applicants for each property advertised will be prioritised within the band for which it was advertised. A shortlist of applicants will then be pulled together from within that band, in points order and then date order.
- 9.2 Where more than one applicant has the same total of points, a further shortlist will be completed and the eligible applicant who has been registered for the longest period of time will be offered the tenancy of the property.
- 9.3 Any offer of accommodation made will be subject to individual verification checks by the partner organisation concerned. This will cover the details provided by the applicant in their housing application and subsequent submissions relating to their application.
- 9.4 Where an applicant has an association with any of the partner agencies concerned either through being an employee, a relative of an employee, an elected member or board member then any application made will be assessed in line with this policy document. In addition, the application will be verified by a senior officer of an appropriate level with the respective organisation prior to any offer of accommodation being made. This will focus upon the details provided within the application, the banding awarded and any subsequent short-listing process that has been undertaken. Where an offer of accommodation is potentially being made to a Board Member of one of the partner

Housing Associations then approval will be required from the Welsh Assembly Government prior to any offer of accommodation.

- 9.5 The successful eligible applicant will be contacted and will be invited to a verification meeting, with this constituting a provisional offer of accommodation. Should an applicant decline an offer of accommodation either prior to the verification meeting, during the verification meeting or prior to a formal offer being made then this will be considered as a refusal. Applicants will be advised of the implications of refusing an offer of accommodation and that this may, if the offer is considered reasonable, result in any additional priority being removed.
- 9.6 Partner organisations may on occasions, and at their discretion, arrange multiple viewings with applicants where properties are immediately available for re-letting.
- 9.7 In the event of the applicant refusing an offer, the next eligible applicant will then be invited to view and accept an offer of the property.
- 9.8 Applicants will be allowed a reasonable amount of time to consider the offer of accommodation made to them. This will usually be 1 working day.
- 9.9 In the event of an applicant refusing **two** reasonable offers of accommodation their application will be removed from the housing register. Individuals will be able to re-apply but the level of preference awarded will generally not exceed Band C.
- 9.10 Where applicants refuse accommodation and the refusal is considered unreasonable then the level of preference awarded may be re-considered. This may result in the level of preference being reduced, particularly for applicants in Band A and Band B. The level of preference awarded will be dependant upon the circumstances and needs of the applicant concerned but this will never fall below Band C. Applicants will be restricted from re-applying for the same level of priority that has been removed unless there has been a change in the applicant's circumstances that would warrant their individual circumstances being re-considered.
- 9.11 Applicants who fail to respond to an offer of accommodation within 3 working days of receipt of a formal offer will be considered to have refused the offer of accommodation made to them. The offer will be considered to be a reasonable offer.

- 9.12 Applicants who accept an offer of accommodation and subsequently become a tenant of one of the partner organisations will have their housing register application cancelled. A new housing register application must be completed if the applicant wishes to be considered for re-housing in the future but this will generally only be considered once the applicant becomes an assured tenant, unless there are exceptional circumstances that would need to be considered.
- 9.13 Where applicants fail to respond to correspondence sent to them regarding their application, then their application will be reviewed in line with the process outlined within section 27 of this document.

10. Homeless Applicants

- 10.1 Applicants to whom Newport City Council owe a homelessness duty to assist under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, will be placed within the appropriate band based on the duty owed from the date on which they receive their notification letter. Applicants will be expected to select accommodation that meets their needs and requirements from this date from the Home Options scheme properties that are advertised each week. This will allow applicants to have a choice of properties, subject to the criteria set out within this policy document.
- 10.2 Where homeless applicants have not been successful in receiving an offer of accommodation within **two** months, their circumstances will be reviewed and the following actions may then be taken:
- Where an applicant is placed within Band A and has been selecting a range of suitable properties that have been advertised but has subsequently been unsuccessful in securing an offer of accommodation, their banding status will be extended for a further period of **two** months.
 - Where an applicant who has been awarded additional preference and placed into Band A but has subsequently failed to select a range of suitable properties that have been advertised, their banding status will be retained but the applicant will be notified that a direct offer of accommodation may be made to them. The Council will consider this a final offer of accommodation.
 - In instances where an applicant is owed a duty under Section 66 or Section 75 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 then the level of preference under either Band C or Band B will be retained for the duration of the period the duty is owed.
 - Where an applicant has been issued with a decision to indicate that they do not have a priority need then their application will be placed into Band B in accordance with this policy.

- 10.3 In the event of a homeless applicant refusing a reasonable offer of accommodation, either through choice or through a direct offer, the Council will consider that it has discharged its duties and obligations owed to the applicant under the relevant legislation and the applicant will therefore be removed from the previously allocated band and advised by the Council in writing that it considers it's duty to have been fulfilled. The applicant will also be advised that their application will be placed into one of the other bands to reflect their general housing requirements.
- 10.4 Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision to discharge the duty owed by the Council. Reviews must be submitted within 21 days of receiving the formal written notification. Applicants may also accept the offer of accommodation made to them and have the right to request a review of the suitability of the accommodation. Applicants will be encouraged to take up the offer of accommodation and request a review if they dispute the suitability of the accommodation in order to ensure that they have accommodation available to them. Applicants who accept the offer of accommodation will become a tenant of the organisation concerned.

11. Feedback

- 11.1 Feedback on the administration of the Policy will be provided on a monthly basis. This will be available from partner organisation web pages, offices and other appropriate public offices where the Home Options leaflets are located.
- 11.2 Information will be provided on the properties that have been advertised through the Home Options Scheme only and will provide:
- the band the property was allocated to
 - the points level within the band
 - the band effective date
 - the number of bids received
- 11.3 More detailed information will be provided to enable applicants to see what properties were available within specific areas and how popular those properties were. This will help applicants to assess how long it may be before they are successful in their selection for a property within their chosen area.

12. Assessment Panel

- 12.1 The Assessment Panel will meet on a monthly basis to discuss and make decisions on specific applications, the level of priority that should be afforded to them or whether the application should be allowed onto the housing register. In addition, the panel will also be able to use its discretion to waive policy on former or current rent arrears in exceptional circumstances.
- 12.2 In order to make a decision, at least four officers need to be present with at least 3 agencies represented. Membership will be made up of the following:
- Housing Services – Newport City Council
 - Children Services (Social Services) – Newport City Council
 - Adult Services (Social Services) – Newport City Council
 - Newport City Homes
 - Partner RSL's
 - Probation Service
 - Local Health Board
 - Voluntary Sector
- 12.3 The panel will be chaired and administered by the Scheme Manager and individual cases will be presented in report format with the report author or their representative being able to present this report if they so wish. Decisions will be recorded and subsequently communicated to all relevant parties within 5 working days of the decision being made.
- 12.4 In addition, the panel will also undertake reviews of decisions where the nominated reviewing officer feels that additional expertise and knowledge is required in order to make a decision.
- 12.5 The Assessment Panel will also have the ability to consider the practical application of the policy document and will therefore be able to make recommendations on amending the policy document and provide direction to frontline staff on its interpretation and practical application.

13. Health and Welfare Needs Assessments

- 13.1 Applicants who have social care, disabilities or illnesses that are being adversely affected by their current housing situation will be referred to the Scheme Management Team. An application form will be required for this assessment to be undertaken. Additional opinion may be sought from Now Medical in order to inform the process. This will be done on a case by case basis and will depend upon the individual application made and upon the applicants circumstances.
- 13.2 Officers will conduct initial assessments based upon the information provided and where it is clear that the health and wellbeing of an applicant or a member of their household is being adversely affected then an Officer may award additional priority for Band C. Where Officers feel that additional professional opinion is required, the application may be passed to the Health and Welfare Needs Assessment Panel. Where officers consider that the health and wellbeing of an applicant or member of their household is not being adversely affected, applicants will be notified in writing that their application has been refused. Full reasons will be provided and applicants will be entitled to request a review of the decision as indicated below.
- 13.3 Assessments are made as to the effect of the applicants present housing on the health and wellbeing of either themselves or a member of their household. If there is an adverse effect, then the Health and Welfare Needs Assessment Panel will consider whether the overall effect is sufficiently severe to warrant the award of additional preference. The Health and Welfare Needs Assessment Panel consists of:
- Scheme Manager
 - Medical Advisor
 - Occupational Therapist

Other relevant professionals may be involved in the assessment process. This will be dependant upon the application being considered and the need for further additional input. For example, where an application is made on the grounds of mental health issues, then a Mental Health Social Worker, Community Psychiatric Nurse or other similar professional may be invited to the panel

- 13.4 In each case, the recommendation is based on a judgement of need and applicants will be placed into one of three bands as indicated within Section 5 of this policy document. Where the applicant or a member of the applicant's household health and wellbeing is not shown to be adversely affected by their present housing then no

additional priority will be awarded. However, consideration will be given to cases where individuals have a need to move to a certain locality to either give or receive support and landlords will have the discretion to recommend this in relation to their respective tenants. In all instances, applicants have the right to request a review of this decision. Where decisions are taken by an officer then this will be reviewed by the Health and Welfare Needs Assessment Panel. Where decisions are taken by the Health and Welfare Needs Assessment Panel, the review will be considered in line with the appeal procedures set out in section 24 of this policy document.

13.5 Where applicants are awarded additional preference on health and welfare grounds they will have their preference reviewed on a regular basis. This will be to ensure that applicants are selecting suitable accommodation on a regular basis in order to facilitate their move to more appropriate accommodation. Reviews will take place every 12 weeks. Where applicants have not selected a suitable range of accommodation then they may:

- Have selections made on their behalf;
- Be made a direct offer of accommodation;
- Have their level of preference reduced; or
- Be given additional assistance in order to complete selections

14. Exceptions to the General Process

14.1 In certain circumstances, partners may use their discretion to allocate properties directly. These include, but are not limited to:

- Special circumstances. These may include MAPPA cases or particular instances where there is a severe risk of harm to an individual applicant;
- Band A applicants who have failed to exercise appropriate choice by bidding for properties that they are eligible for or where there is a specific need to make an offer of accommodation;
- Under-occupiers of extremely desirable properties, who have highly specific requirements;
- Decant accommodation for applicants who are required to vacate their home for essential major works to be carried out;
- Where a similar property has been advertised within the preceding 4 weeks then the previous shortlist could be used to minimise void levels;
- Where a similar specialist property has been advertised within the preceding 12 weeks then the previous shortlist could be used to minimise void levels given the specific nature of the client group that could be considered for this type of property;
- Where a ground floor vacancy becomes available within a sheltered housing scheme and a resident in an upper floor property is identified by the RSL as requiring ground floor accommodation;
- If properties are ready to let but the deadline for the advert has been missed. Properties in this instance will be short-listed on the most recent best matched property type that has been advertised;
- Where there is an adapted property and the adaptations are extensive and an applicant is known to require the property concerned given the adaptations present or likely to be present;
- Where properties have been advertised previously and have subsequently failed to have been allocated due to a low level of interest;
- Where an applicant is left in occupation of a property and there is an agreement by the RSL concerned to rehouse the applicant;
- Where there have been exceptional difficulties in or within the immediate vicinity of the property available for letting. This will be subject to an individual assessment process;
- Where an applicant has been deemed to be ineligible to register due to their immigration status and they are in need of accommodation due to exceptional circumstances as outlined in Band A. Applicants would need to be able to pay the rent legally due and the partner organisation concerned would have to be satisfied that this would be possible given their income.

- 14.2 A refusal of a reasonable offer made will result in the level of preference being removed where additional preference has been awarded and any relevant duties or obligations being discharged in full. Applicants will, however, have the right to request a review of the decision as outlined within section 24 of this policy document.
- 14.3 A reasonable offer of accommodation is defined for this purpose as being an offer which, as far as reasonably practicable, is located within an area which the applicant has chosen and matches the size and type of property that they are eligible for.

15. Eligibility Criteria

- 15.1 All applicants (with the exception of refugees) are required to be habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland) at time of their application to join Common Housing Register. Prior to being accepted onto the Register applications are screened to ensure eligibility for affordable housing and suitability to be a tenant of one of the partner organisations.
- 15.2 Applicants wishing to purchase a share of a property will also be financially assessed in order to verify that they will be able to afford the mortgage costs. The assessment will look at the household income and all outgoings e.g. outstanding loans, card debt etc; in order to ensure that applicants would be able to qualify for a mortgage from a bank or building society. If an applicant can afford to meet their home ownership needs on the open market they will not be eligible for assistance. All applicants passing the financial assessment will have their eligibility validated at the interview stage. Employment references will only be sought for successful applicants who have identified a property to purchase

15.3 All applicants will be asked to provide proof of identity at some stage during the process. Other information about current circumstances may be requested such as proof of:

- Address;
- Tenure type;
- Marital status;
- Custody or care of children;
- Pregnancy;
- Sale of property;
- Occupation and income;
- Behaviour; and
- Birth certificates and/or passports.

In addition, partner Housing Associations may also request a photograph for file records upon signing for any tenancy.

15.4 Applications are not registered whilst enquiries into eligibility are undertaken. Investigations will be carried out in accordance with the Eligibility Procedures and will take account of the applicant's circumstances at the time of application. In addition, assessments into an applicant's eligibility may also be applied at any time after an application has been registered and the same process and procedure will then apply.

15.5 If an applicant or member of their household has debt of £1,000 or above from previous or current tenancies and/or is a proven perpetrator of unacceptable behaviour (sufficient enough to have enabled a partner organisation to secure outright possession if the applicant household had been a tenant of the organisation at the time) they will be assessed in line with the criteria below.

15.6 In order to determine eligibility, applications will be requested to supply information on their circumstances in order to assist in the investigations into their suitability to be a tenant. Investigations will then be conducted in order to inform this test and this will focus upon 3 stages:

- Where there is evidence of unacceptable behaviour, was it serious enough to have entitled an authority to obtain a possession order?
- Was the behaviour serious enough to render the applicant or household member unsuitable to be a tenant?
- Is the behaviour unacceptable at the time of application?

- 15.7 Eligibility assessments will consider a range of factors including:
- All the circumstances of the applicant and their household;
 - The reasons for the behaviour. For example, in the case of rent arrears, why did the rent arrears accrue;
 - Whether the applicant has unmet support needs;
 - What advice and assistance had been offered to the applicant and what action they could have taken to amend their behaviour; and
 - The nature of the behaviour
- 15.8 The assessment will also examine the applicant's behaviour at the time of the application and will therefore take account of:
- The length of time that has elapsed since the unacceptable behaviour occurred;
 - Whether there has been an improvement in the behaviour. For example, has the applicant made an arrangement to pay rent arrears and has kept to this agreement for an acceptable period of time; and
 - Whether there are any mitigating circumstances that should be considered in making the decision
- 15.9 Ineligible applicants will be notified of the reasons for the decision in writing and informed of the right to request a review within 21 days of receiving the letter. In addition, advice will be provided on what steps could be taken by them to address the issues that have led to them being deemed ineligible. Applicants will not normally be allowed to re-apply until one year has elapsed from the date of the decision. However, should an applicant's circumstances change then consideration may be given to an earlier application.

16. Current or former tenant arrears

- 16.1 Applicants who have current or former tenancy arrears with any of the partner organisation, other social landlords, local authorities or private landlords will not be excluded from the Common Housing Register unless they fail the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 15 of this policy document. However, where a recoverable housing related debt is owed as indicated above, applicants will be required to make a clear commitment to clear the debt owed and to have subsequently maintained payments for an agreed period of time.
- 16.2 In the event of an applicant owing arrears as indicated above then a repayment agreement must be made and sufficient payments made in order to show a sustained commitment to address the debt. Applicants will have their level of preference adjusted to Band D until they have made a commitment to make regular and consistent payments. The general period of time suggested to demonstrate a commitment to pay is **12 weeks**, although this may be varied depending upon the circumstances of the applicant concerned. Applicants must also demonstrate a continued commitment to repay the debt after any agreed period of time as failure to do so may affect their application being amended as indicated above. Where sufficient payments have been made, the level of preference will be re-adjusted to the correct band.
- 16.3 Where an applicant has debt over £1,000 and has been placed onto the register, they will be considered for properties that they subsequently apply for. However, if the re-payments are not maintained sufficiently then their application will be suspended pending further enquiries by the Assessment Panel over their eligibility to be placed on the register.
- 16.4 Applicants who are deemed to have exceptional circumstances may have the above criteria relaxed for **one** offer of suitable accommodation. The decision to relax the criteria will be made by the Assessment Panel and will be based on a composite assessment of each individual applicants case and circumstances.

17. Owner Occupiers

- 17.1 The housing situation within the city is such that the Council and its partners need to ensure that Social Housing within the city is allocated to applicants in the greatest need. Owner Occupiers will be considered for housing in line with this policy but this will generally be where exceptional need is demonstrated and that there is no prospect of resolving the accommodation issue in any other way. Applicants who have no additional needs will be placed within Band D and will be able to select properties that are advertised for this band. Individuals who have accommodation and assets over £200,000 will not generally be considered for offers of rented accommodation given that their financial situation would indicate that they could resolve their accommodation issues. However, where there is an identified need that cannot be met by using assets available to individuals or by making the necessary alterations to existing accommodation then individuals may be considered for suitable alternative housing.
- 17.2 However, applicants aged 55 or over who own their own property, may be allocated additional priority in order to assist them to access social housing. This will be done on the agreement that their property is leased to a partner RSL and then subsequently let to a household in housing need through the letting of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. The agreement will be for a **minimum** period of 5 years and will be reviewed thereafter. Applicants will receive a proportion of the rent accrued and this will then be able to assist them in ensuring that their rent is paid. Where the applicant agrees to the above arrangement then their application will be placed into Band C as outlined within Section 4 of this policy document.
- 17.3 Partner organisations have the discretion to re-consider the above based upon individual circumstances and the type of accommodation that an applicant is being considered for. For example, where a property is immediately available then the above agreement can be waived by the partner organisation concerned.
- 17.4 Owner occupiers who have an identified need to move to alternative accommodation may also be able to agree to the terms outlined in 17.2. However, this will be dependant upon the circumstances of the applicant concerned and will be at the discretion of the landlord concerned. In any case this may well be in the interest of the applicant concerned as this will provide them with some security in the event of their circumstances changing.
- 17.5 Applicants will be advised to seek independent advice in order to ensure that they are fully aware of the possible financial implications relating to their income.

18. Local Lettings Plans

- 18.1 Partner organisations may designate an area, estate or specific properties as exempt from the common policy framework in order to make best use of available stock and/or to contribute to the creation of a balanced and sustainable community.
- 18.2 Local Lettings Plans will override normal allocations arrangements and criteria will be approved individually, in consultation with residents and other relevant agencies such as partner RSL's, police and Newport City Council.
- 18.3 Local Lettings Plans will be considered for properties or estates where one or more of the following situations occur:
- There are units of particular low demand, for example bedsits in sheltered housing;
 - An area is unpopular, as demonstrated by turnover of tenancies, the number of refusals, and a difficulty in finding applicants who will consider the area;
 - There is a disproportionate number of a certain age group or type of household in the area which is contributing to ongoing problems or issues;
 - The area is subject to a major regeneration programme; or
 - Where new developments have been introduced and there is a requirement to meet certain criteria.
- 18.4 Local lettings plans will be for a defined geographical area or category of properties and will apply for a prescribed period of time. This can be reviewed and may be extended subject to a further agreement.

19. Extra Care Schemes

- 19.1 Extra Care Schemes are located throughout the city at a number of locations. These schemes are designated for applicants over the age of 60 who require additional care, security and support in order to live independently and maintain a tenancy. Each scheme has a range accommodation with communal facilities, services and activities for residents.
- 19.2 Applicants interested in this type of accommodation will be required to undertake an individual assessment focusing upon their health and social care needs. Assessments will be carried out by the accommodation provider concerned. Any vacancies will then be allocated based upon this assessment of need. Interest will be sought from applicants on the Common Housing Register in order to ensure that applicants have access to the full range of accommodation options open to them. This may be done through the actual advertisements or through applicants expressing their interest in this type of accommodation at anytime during the application process.

20. Low Cost Home Ownership and Neutral Tenure

- 20.1 A number of properties advertised will be available to part purchase through either low cost home ownership methods or through neutral tenure. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they can afford the ongoing costs should they be seeking to purchase a proportion of the accommodation.
- 20.2 Low cost home ownership (LCHO) allows applicants who would not be able to purchase on the open market to buy to a share of a property. Neutral tenure is a very similar scheme but offers the opportunity for individuals to alter their tenure type as their circumstances change over time. Typically, shares in accommodation are either 50%, 60% or 70% and households have the security of knowing that should their circumstances change and they are unable to afford to continue to purchase that their share can be sold back to the property owner and they would then revert to being a tenant of that particular organisation.
- 20.3 New build properties will be subject to separate arrangements for the initial letting process. All new build properties will therefore be advertised between the four bands as follows:
- Band A – 5%
 - Band B – 30%
 - Band C – 30%
 - Band D – 30%

The remaining 5% of properties will be set aside for move on accommodation.

- 20.4 For subsequent lettings on neutral tenure developments the above banding will not apply and lettings will be split between the four need bands as outlined in the property advertisement system.

21. Adapted Accommodation

21.1 Accommodation that has been specifically adapted for applicants with disabilities will be allocated to the applicant who is in the greatest need of the adaptations. Properties that have been adapted will be advertised through the Home Options Scheme. However, applicants will be assessed for the property in terms of their need for the adaptations present in order to make the best use of the accommodation. Subsequent offers of accommodation may not therefore be in strict accordance with this policy and may therefore be treated as a letting outside of the normal policy as indicated in section 14 of this policy document.

22. Move On Accommodation

22.1 There are a number of supported housing schemes within Newport and in order to ensure that these are used effectively for those residents who need the services offered within them, a proportion of the available housing is set aside for move on accommodation. This figure has been provisionally set at 5% of the available housing stock as outlined earlier within this policy document.

22.2 Move on accommodation will be used to re-settle individuals who are presently occupying supported housing where the support provider concerned has assisted individuals in developing the necessary life skills required in order to cope with independent living. Support providers will be able to request assistance with moving individuals onto more appropriate housing where there is a demonstrable need to move into more appropriate housing. Referrals will be administered by Support Providers involved within the Supported Housing Gateway system and will involve a monthly Move on Panel meeting chaired by either the Supported Gateway Co-ordinator or a nominated support provider involved in the Gateway Project. The Move on Panel will consist of:

- All Support Providers involved in the Gateway Project
- A Housing Association representative
- A Social Services representative
- A representative from the Housing Needs Unit
- Other relevant agencies that may be co-opted onto the Panel as required

- 22.3 The Move On -Panel will meet on a monthly basis to discuss and make decisions on specific requests made for move on from supported housing schemes within the city. Support Workers and the applicant concerned will be requested to present information to the Move On Panel as part of the process. However, applicants will not be invited to the panel and decisions will be recorded and subsequently communicated to all relevant parties within 5 working days of the decision being made. In order to make a decision, at least four officers need to be present with at least 3 agencies represented.
- 22.4 In addition, the Move On Panel will also consider applications from RSL's and the Council where tenants are experiencing difficulties in maintaining their present accommodation either through financial hardship or other tenancy related matters. This will enable individuals to be able to surrender their accommodation with an agreement to provide supported housing for a period of time to enable individuals to resolve the difficulties that they are experiencing in a planned manner with an undertaking that consideration to move back into accommodation will be considered in the event of the issues being addressed.

23. Assessment Criteria

- 23.1 Certain types of properties will be designated for specific applicants and these properties will be clearly highlighted within the advertisements. This will include, but are not limited to, sheltered accommodation and specific blocks of flats. Assessments will be conducted in order to ascertain an applicant's suitability for an offer of accommodation to the property that has been applied for with the purpose being to ensure that the applicant is matched to the most suitable type of accommodation for their needs and requirements.
- 23.2 Assessments will focus upon a range of issues surrounding an applicant's health and wellbeing, as well as any particular vulnerability that they may have. This will provide officers with an indication as to whether the applicant concerned will be able to cope in the accommodation without either causing harm to themselves or others. Anyone found to be unsuitable for certain types of accommodation will be notified by the officer conducting the assessment and alternative housing options will be discussed and explored with the applicant concerned at the earliest opportunity. Applicants will be entitled to request a review of this decision as outlined within section 24 of this policy document.

24. Private Rented Accommodation

- 24.1 A number of other accommodation options will be advertised through the Home Options Scheme such as private and intermediate rented accommodation. This accommodation will be allocated to applicants who meet the requirements of the schemes and can afford the accommodation on offer. Further details will be provided within the specific advertisements or through information available from partner organisations on the eligibility criteria that is attributed to each scheme.
- 24.2 Applicants will be able to apply for as many private rented properties advertised through the Home Options scheme. However, the partner RSL's, private landlords or letting agents concerned will not be held to this policy in the allocation of this accommodation, as separate assessments will be required in order to assess the suitability of applicants. The RSL partner, private landlord or letting agent will need to ensure that the accommodation is affordable for the applicant and suitable for their needs and requirements in terms of their financial and individual circumstances. Credit and reference checks will also be undertaken prior to any offer of accommodation made.
- 24.3 Where applicants accept private accommodation through this process, they will be allowed to retain their application registration date. However, as their circumstances will have changed their banding may be amended to reflect this. For example, applicants in Band B would have their band adjusted to Band C.
- 24.4 Additional schemes may be advertised in order to obtain interest from individual applicants who may wish to consider alternative accommodation options. This may include supported accommodation and other similar schemes aimed at promoting independent living.

25. Appeal Procedure

25.1 Applicants will be notified in writing of decisions made surrounding their applications. Any appeal must be submitted within 21 days of receiving the written decision. The review will then be carried out by a senior officer not involved in the original decision. The officer concerned will vary depending on the decision made and reviews will generally be completed within 56 days of receipt of the review request where reasonably practicable to do so.

25.2 Applicants will be advised appropriately where reviews are anticipated to exceed this limit. Reviews submitted outside the timescale may be considered where this is considered reasonable to do so. The list below indicates the main review requests that may be received in order to give some guidance as to who will be responsible for conducting reviews:

- Acceptance onto/removal from the Common Housing Register - Scheme Manager
- Level of Priority/Band awarded - Scheme Manager
- Suitability of offer of accommodation (Homelessness) – Newport City Council
- Suitability of offer of accommodation (other) – Scheme Manager & RSL manager

25.3 Where a review of a decision made by the Assessment Panel is received, then the review will be conducted by the Director of Housing within any of the partner organisations.

26. Annual Review of Applications

26.1 Applicants will receive an annual review letter on or around the anniversary of their application date. Applicants must update their Housing Application or confirm their circumstances have not changed in order for their application to remain active on the Common Housing Register.

26.2 In the event of no response being received within 21 days of the date of receipt of the annual review letter, the applicant will be written to again to advise them that they need to update their Housing Application or confirm their circumstances have not changed.. Where an applicant then fails to respond to the second letter within 21 days, their application will be closed and removed from the Common Housing Register.

27. Change of Circumstances

27.1 It is the responsibility of the applicant or their designated advocate to advise the Scheme Administrator of any change in their circumstances. This could include but are not limited to:

- A change in address;
- An addition to the family;
- A change in contact details;
- A person leaving the household; or
- A change in employment status

27.2 This process is to ensure that records are up to date and that the applicant is still eligible and assessed in the correct band based on their circumstances. It is particularly important that the correct contact details are provided as correspondence will only be sent to the last notified address. Failure to supply correct contact details could adversely affect an application.

28. Cancelled Applications

28.1 Applications will be cancelled/removed from the register when:

- The applicant has requested to cancel their application;
- The applicant does not respond to a review within the specified time period;
- The applicant is re-housed via the Common Housing Register;
- The applicant fails to provide information requested within a reasonable timescale;
- An applicant has succeeded to or has been assigned a secure tenancy or an assured tenancy of a Registered Social Landlord;
- An applicant has moved and has not informed the scheme administrator of a change of address;
- An applicant has knowingly and wilfully given false or misleading information, or has not disclosed relevant information, in connection with their application;
- An applicant under current immigration legislation, no longer has recourse to public funds and/or no longer has indefinite leave to remain in the UK and so is no longer entitled to be housed or be allowed to remain on the housing register; or
- The behaviour of the applicant or a member of their household results in them failing the eligibility test outlined in section 15.

28.2 Correspondence will be sent to applicants who are removed from the Common Housing Register where they have been found to be ineligible to register. This will outline the reasons why their application has been removed. Applicants will have a right to review this decision as indicated within section 24 of this policy document. Application records will be retained for a period of 12 months and will then be disposed of appropriately.

29. Policy Review and Amendments

29.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years unless there are any specific changes to legislation or practical issues that arise during day-to-day operation of the scheme. The Partnership will ensure that all relevant stakeholders are consulted fully in the event of substantial and fundamental changes being made to this policy document. However, where minor amendments are required in order to improve the operation of this policy then these changes can be implemented as necessary. Appropriate senior officers from the partnership will meet to discuss recommendations made by the Assessment Panel relating to minor alterations to the policy and as long as a quorum of 5 are present, those present can agree to change the policy and changes will subsequently take effect 28 days after the meetings date.

30. Contact Details

30.1 This section contains a list of all of the public offices and locations where further information can be obtained on the operation of the scheme. In addition, a list of sites where the advertisements can be viewed is also provided.

| Organisation | Contact Details |
|------------------------------|--|
| Aelwyd Housing Association | 56-58 Richmond Road Cardiff CF24 3ET Telephone: 02920 481203 E-Mail Address: enquiries@aelwyd.co.uk Web Page: www.aelwyd.co.uk |
| Charter Housing/Seren Living | The Old Post Office Exchange House High Street Newport City Council NP20 1AA Telephone: 01633 212375 E-Mail Address: lettings@charterhousing.co.uk Web Page: www.charterhousing.co.uk |
| Derwen Cymru | The Old Post Office Exchange House High Street Newport City Council NP20 1AA Telephone: 01633 261990 E-Mail Address: |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | <p>info@derwencymru.co.uk</p> <p>Web Page: www.derwencymru.co.uk/</p> |
| Elim Housing Association | <p>Elim Housing association Units 3 & 4 Pinkers Court Briarlands Office Park Gloucester Road Rudgeway South Gloucestershire BS35 3QH</p> <p>Telephone: 01454 411172</p> <p>E-Mail Address: info@elimhousing.co.uk</p> <p>Web Page: www.elimhousing.co.uk</p> |
| Hafod Housing Association | <p>First Floor St Hilary Court Cophorne way Cardiff CF5 6ES</p> <p>Telephone: 02920 675800</p> <p>E-Mail Address: enquiries@hafod.org.uk</p> <p>Web Page: www.hafod.org.uk</p> |
| Linc Cymru Housing Association | <p>387 Newport Road Cardiff CF24 1GG</p> <p>Telephone: Freephone 0800 072 0966 or 02920 473767</p> <p>E-Mail Address: contactcentre@linc-cymru.co.uk</p> |

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|----------------------|--|
| | <p>Web Page: www.linc-cymru.co.uk</p> |
| Melin Homes | <p>Ty'r Efail Lower Mill Field Pontypool Torfaen NP4 0XJ</p> <p>Telephone: 08453 101102</p> <p>E-Mail Address: enquiries@melinhomes.co.uk</p> <p>Web Page: www.melinhomes.co.uk</p> |
| Newport City Council | <p>Information Station Station Buildings Newport NP20 4AX</p> <p>Telephone: 01633 656656</p> <p>E-Mail Address: home.options@newport.gov.uk</p> <p>Web Page: www.newport.gov.uk</p> |
| Newport City Homes | <p>Nexus House Mission Court Newport NP20 2DW</p> <p>Telephone: 01633 381111</p> <p>E-Mail Address: enquiries@newportcityhomes.com</p> <p>Web Page: www.newportcityhomes.com</p> |

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| United Welsh Group | <p>Y Borth 13 Beddau Way Caerphilly CF83 2AX</p> <p>Telephone: 0800 294 0195</p> <p>Email Address: tellmemore@unitedwelsh.com</p> <p>Web Page: www.unitedwelsh.com</p> |
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31. Glossary of Terms

31.1 This section contains a broad explanation of the terms used within this document in order to provide a greater understanding. The terms used are listed below in alphabetical order for ease of reference.

- **Adapted Accommodation** – This term is used to describe accommodation that has been altered to meet an individuals mobility and health issues
- **Additional Preference** – This term is used to describe where applicants are provided with a greater amount of priority owing to their circumstances in order to assist them in securing alternative housing at the earliest opportunity.
- **Adult** – This term refers to an individual who is over the age of 16 and who can apply to for housing in their own right and may then be considered for an offer of accommodation in their own right should they qualify for an offer under the policy.
- **Applicants** – This term is used to describe all households who have applied for housing.
- **Assessment Panel** – An officer panel that has the ability to agree exceptions to policy and to award additional preference to applicants in urgent need of housing.
- **Assured Short-Hold Tenancy** – A standard form of tenancy within the private rented sector that is usually granted for an initial term of 6 months.

- **Assured Tenancy** – This term refers to the standard tenancy agreement that is granted to Housing Association tenants following the completion of the Starter tenancy. Assured Tenancies can also be granted within the private rented sector.
- **Banding System** – This term is used to describe the system used to distinguish between different housing and social circumstances faced by applicants in order to prioritise applications.
- **Board Member** – This term refers to individuals who are appointed to the Board of a Housing Association in order to direct the business of the Housing association in accordance with its objectives and rules.
- **Common Housing Register** – This term is used to describe a list of all applicants who are seeking re-housing.
- **Composite Assessment** – An assessment based on all the issues faced by an applicant that could cover health, wellbeing, safety and housing.
- **Decant Accommodation** – Accommodation used for a short period of time to allow for essential works to be carried out to an individual's main home.
- **Dependent Children** - This term includes an applicant's own children, adopted children and certain other children who depend on an applicant financially. They must normally be under 17, but can be as old as 23 if they carry on in full time education. The term can even cover some adult children who cannot work because of a particular disability.
- **Direct Offer** – An offer of accommodation made to an applicant outside of the general process. Applicants have limited choice in this process.
- **Disability Discrimination Act** – The Disability Discrimination Act is a piece of legislation that promotes rights for disabled people and protects them from discrimination.
- **Eligible Applicant** – This term is used to describe an applicant who is eligible for the type of property advertised or offered.
- **Exceptional Circumstances/Case** – This term is used to describe an applicant's circumstances that are outside the general provisions of the Allocations Policy. An example would be where the police recommend that an applicant be moved for their own

safety. In assessing such cases, consideration will be given to how an applicant's current accommodation affects the situation and whether a change of accommodation is necessary to improve the situation.

- **Extra Care Schemes** – Specialist accommodation for elderly applicants who require additional services in order to maintain their independence.
- **Final Offer of Accommodation** – An offer of accommodation made to applicants who are homeless and owed a duty by the Council
- **Health and Welfare Needs Assessment Panel** - An officers panel that has the ability to award additional preference to applicants in urgent need of housing due to their particular social care issues
- **Housing Association** – Housing Associations are independent not-for-profit organisations that provide affordable homes (for rent or to purchase) for people in need.
- **Improvement Notice** – A notice served on a landlord where he has failed to comply with an initial informal letter requiring works to be undertaken to a property that would remedy hazards that had previously been identified.
- **Intermediate Rented Accommodation** –This term refers to accommodation that is let at rents above normal social housing rents but below rent levels in the private rented sector.
- **Key Worker** - This term refers to an individual who provides an essential public service such as health and personal care, education, emergency services, social services and other essential local authority staff where it has been proven to be problematic to recruit to the position given the skills shortage within the area.
- **Local Lettings Plan** – This term means that a certain area will have additional criteria in place for a pre-agreed amount of time in order to create more balanced communities and to address issues relating to low demand.
- **Low Demand** – This term is used to describe accommodation that has previously been advertised and is available for letting
- **Low Cost Home Ownership** - Low cost home ownership (LCHO), which is sometimes referred to as shared ownership (part-rent, part-buy) or purchase part of shared equity, offer people on a low

income the opportunity to their home and begin building their own equity

- **MAPPA** – This term stands for Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements. MAPPA are the statutory arrangements for managing sexual and violent offenders. MAPPA is not a statutory body in itself but is a mechanism through which agencies can better discharge their statutory responsibilities and protect the public in a co-ordinated manner. Police, Probation and the Prison Service take the lead in MAPPA
- **Move On Panel** – A panel of officers from the Statutory and Voluntary sectors that has the ability to recommend individual applicants for a direct offer of accommodation.
- **Neutral Tenure** – This term is used to describe certain accommodation that has been developed that can either be rented or can be part purchased. This can be varied according to the changing circumstances of the individual occupier of the accommodation.
- **New Build Properties** – This term describes properties that have been developed by Housing Associations and have not previously been occupied by a tenant.
- **Nominated Approver** – A Senior Officer from the RSL concerned who has the authority to award additional priority in certain cases.
- **Now Medical** – An organisation who specialise in the assessment of applicants medical circumstances linked to their housing.
- **Owner Occupiers** – Individuals who own their own home either through a mortgage, loan or outright.
- **Reasonable Offer** – A reasonable offer is an offer of accommodation made to an applicant that meets their particular needs and requirements that they have.
- **Recoverable Debt** – Debt that is legally owed by applicants seeking housing.
- **RSL** – This term is the abbreviated version of the term Registered Social Landlord. RSL's are effectively Housing Associations and the term is defined earlier in this section.
- **Scheme Manager** – This term refers to the partner organisation that is responsible for managing the Common Housing Register

- **Selection Process** – This is where applicants make their choice from the published adverts
- **Service Charges** – These are additional charges made on certain properties to cover additional services such as the cleaning of common areas, communal lighting, communal heating or maintenance.
- **Sheltered Accommodation** – This term is used to describe accommodation that is designated, in the first instance, for applicants over the age of 55.
- **Shortlist** – A list of applicants that have been selected for final consideration for a property that has been advertised, based upon the criteria set out within the advertisement.
- **Starter Tenancy** – This is the type of tenancy that will be offered to applicants over the age of 18 who are becoming tenants of one of the partner Housing Associations for the first time. Starter tenancies are generally granted for the initial 12 months of the tenancy subject to the satisfactory conduct of the tenant.
- **Supported Housing** – This is specific accommodation where additional services are provided for individuals who require assistance to maintain independent living.
- **Temporary Housing** – This term refers to accommodation provided by either the Council or another recognised provider used by the Council for households who are currently homeless.
- **The Partnership** - This term refers to the Housing Associations and Council involved in administering this register and process.
- **Tied Tenancy** – This term is used to describe where an individual has accommodation that is provided to them by their employer.
- **Verification Process** – This term refers to the checks that are made on each individual applicant in order to confirm their circumstances.