

Policy Local Lettings Plans

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Printed paper copies of this procedure are **uncontrolled**.
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1		New policy	8.9.09 14.9.09	P Watts	C Sledge (SCP) A Murphy (SHA)

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1. Purpose

This policy applies to Signpost Housing Association and Signpost Care Partnerships' (the Associations) properties and any accommodation directly managed by the Associations and the communities within which the Associations work.

This policy has been developed to ensure the Associations comply with current legislation, Tenant Services Authority Standards, Housing Corporation guidance and best practice. This policy contributes towards local authority statutory duties, Supporting People Strategies and Crime Reduction Partnerships.

This policy underpins the Allocations and Lettings Policy and identifies when the Associations may use Local Lettings Plans and how these will be developed and approved.

The Associations strive to achieve the Spectrum Group mission:

'To be recognised and respected for providing quality homes and services. Empowering people, supporting active communities and building better futures'.

This policy supports the Associations' overarching plans and strategies to deliver quality services and ensure accessibility to these services for all the Associations' customers.

2. Definitions

2.1 Local Lettings Plans

Local Lettings Plans are agreed local plans for the allocation and letting of properties. Local Letting Plans may be used within in certain defined geographical areas, and can be used to make adjustments to the main allocations and lettings policy to meet specific local issues. For example a Local Lettings Plan may include:

- criteria to give a mix of household sizes, often in new developments, to give a balanced community
- criteria that aims to reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour in areas that have existing high levels of anti-social behaviour
- criteria that gives greater priority to local people in rural areas

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- Local Lettings Plans will vary in content, processes and outcomes according to the issue that they are intended to address.

2.2 CORE

CORE is the COntinuous REcording system which collects housing association and local authority information for each property that is let in England and includes information regarding the tenant for example:

- reasons for moving
- household type
- economic status.

3. Legislative, Regulatory and Good Practice Requirements

This policy complies with, and aims to support:

- Audit Commission Key Line of Enquiry (7) Allocations and Lettings
- Chartered Institute of Housing, Good Practice Brief : Equality, Diversity and Good Relations in Housing (April 09)
- Housing Acts 1985 and 1996
- Housing Corporation circular (April 02/07) Tenancy management, eligibility and evictions
- Housing Corporation Good Practice note (12) Choice Based Lettings
- Housing Corporation Regulatory Code and Guidance 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework
- Commission for Race Equality Code of Practice
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Housing Corporation Information Sharing Protocol, Access to Housing
- Housing Corporation Good Practice Note 16, working with local authorities.

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3.1 Relationship with other Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Spectrum Housing Group (SHG), Signpost Housing Association (SHA), Signpost Care Partnerships (SCP) policies and procedures.

- Access & Customer Care Strategy (SHA/SCP)
- Allocations and Lettings Policy and Procedure (SHA/ SCP)
- Appeals Procedure (SHA/SCP)
- Application, Assessment, and Support Plan Procedure (SCP)
- Confidentiality, Privacy and Data Protection Policy (SHG)
- Community Involvement Strategy (SHA/ SCP)
- Customer Feedback Policy and Procedure (SHA/ SCP)
- Eligibility for Independent Living and Peace of Mind Support Service in Dorset Policy (SHA)
- Estate Management and Neighbourhood Policy and procedure (SHA/SCP)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (SHG)
- Financial Inclusion Strategy (SHA/SCP)
- Homelessness Policy (SHA/SCP)
- Health and Safety Policy (SHG)
- Housing Support Service Policy (SCP)
- Starter Tenancy Policy and Procedure (SHA)
- Support Planning and Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure (SHA/SCP)
- Value for Money Strategy (SHA/SCP).

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4. Local Lettings Plans

4.1 The use of Local Lettings Plans

The Associations are committed to ensuring that where a Local Lettings Plan is developed it will be flexible, non-discriminatory and responsive to demand and will give reasonable preference to those in priority need.

The Associations will consider the use of Local Lettings Plans in a variety of circumstances which may include:

- as part of a community strategy on new or modernised estates
- to sustain the balance of existing communities
- new developments
- to address management problems on existing estates, including combating anti-social behaviour, excluding potentially disruptive tenants and reducing crime
- to deal with difficult to let estates, including those on the verge of decline
- tackling low demand to reduce void levels
- as part of the arrangements for selection, allocation and referral to supported housing schemes, or as part of, Service Level Agreements with partner agencies.

4.1.1 Community sustainability

Local Lettings Plans can be used to help deliver community sustainability. The Local Lettings Plan can avoid high concentrations of groups with particular needs, which can lead to significant management problems; social exclusion; high turnover of stock; and high demand for transfers. Local Lettings Plans may include:

- restrictions on child densities
- specific allocations to some scheme to overcome management problems (e.g. to not offer a property to someone with any known history of drug abuse, in a scheme in which a drug problem is being experienced and dealt with).

Where support needs or risk is identified this will be dealt with in accordance with the Support Planning and Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure.

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4.1.2 New Developments

Local Letting Plans can be introduced to prevent problems arising on new developments through the use of targets or benchmarks for the level of child densities, child age profiles, more economically active households and households with local connections.

The Associations will consider the introduction of a Local Lettings Plan for all new developments of over ten units.

4.1.3 Housing Management and Local Lettings Plans

Where a Local Lettings Plan is developed to tackle housing management problems on existing estates this will be developed as part of a wider strategy for tackling the identified issues. The Associations will take a multi-agency approach when dealing with issues relating to estates. The wider strategy may also require a revised approach to housing management or, to the physical aspects of the homes, or estate in question.

4.2 Consultation and approval

Local Letting Plans will be developed in consultation with interested parties and will include:

- consultation with residents, the Residents Forums, or local Resident Associations or groups
- consultation with the relevant local authority, local community groups, and other agencies.

Local Lettings Plans will be approved by the relevant Service Manager.

Local Letting Plans will not last for more than 3 years unless further approval is obtained from the Divisional Director Housing Services, Signpost Housing Association, and the Divisional Director Support Services, Signpost Care Partnerships.

4.3 Monitoring

Local Lettings Plans will be monitored and reported to the Associations' Boards on an annual basis and will be monitored on the criteria stated within the individual local lettings plan. This may include:

- whether the estate is now more popular, i.e. monitor it against the original housing management indicators of the defined problems, such as void levels, number of transfer-out requests, turnover rate, refusal rates, occurrences of vandalism and graffiti

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- resident satisfaction
- economic status of households against targets and local registered social landlord (RSL) averages, using CORE returns.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This policy has been developed to support the Associations' commitment to equality of access and quality of service delivery and includes:

- ensuring that no customer is disadvantaged irrespective of their race, gender (including gender reassignment), religion or belief, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, or social position in accordance with Spectrum Housing Group's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- ensuring specific communication or support requirements and equal access to the service is available
- identifying and addressing any inequality of access to the service.

4.5 Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has had an equality impact assessment and has concluded this policy does not discriminate either directly or indirectly and does not disadvantage any individual or group.

4.6 Responsible Officers

The Divisional Director Housing Services, Signpost Housing Association, and the Divisional Director Support Services, Signpost Care Partnerships will be responsible for monitoring and implementing this policy.

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