

Policy title	Allocation Policy
Directorate	Customer & Communities
Author	Adele Pettecrew Lettings Manager
Date First Approved	January 2019
Latest Date of Approval	November 2022
Next Review Date	April 2024
Policy Scope/Users	MSV Aims to provide good quality affordable homes to rent. The Lettings Team will be responsible for implementing the Policy in all Local Authority Areas we work with. The Older Persons Team responsible for implementing the policy for our specialist Older Persons Accommodation. Any specialist Supported Accommodation managed by MSV will not be allocated under this Policy.
Date EIA done	November 2022

1 Introduction/policy purpose

- 1.1 MSV aims to provide good quality affordable homes to rent through various tenures including Social Rent, Affordable Rent, Intermediate Rent and Rent to Buy properties.
- 1.2 As a Registered Provider this Policy aims to allocate properties in a fair and consistent manner. Working in partnership with Local Authorities and other partners to provide nominations or participate in the Choice Based Lettings scheme where this is appropriate.
- 1.3 The Policy aims to ensure that we market our properties in various ways to build strong and sustainable communities which reflects the neighbourhoods where we work.
- 1.4 This Policy will apply to all our general needs and sheltered properties. It does not apply to supported housing, shared ownership, local lettings policies or where a scheme is managed under a management agreement by another provider.
- 1.5 The policy aims to contribute towards the achievement of MSV's objectives and the wider Neighbourhood Strategy.
- 1.6 We aim to provide a full range of housing options to customers in overcoming their housing problems. This will include providing options for new customers and existing tenants with other solutions such as mutual exchange and downsizing.

2 Description of the Policy

- 2.1 MSV have agreed to the following nominations or choice based lettings schemes as part of this Allocation Policy. Where choice based lettings has replaced nominations agreements all lets are treated as nominations by the Local Authority.
 - Bolton Choice Based Lettings 50% of lets
 - Manchester Move Choice Based Lettings 100% of lets
 - Salford Choice Based Lettings 50% of lets
 - Trafford Choice Based Lettings 60% of lets
 - Bury 50% Nominations
 - Rochdale Choice Based Lettings 50% of lets
 - Ribble Valley 50% Nominations. 100% on new builds including relets
 - Calderdale 50% Nominations
 - Stockport 50%

In Addition to Choice Based Lettings, MSV Housing will market and allocate properties outside choice based lettings. We will use various marketing

websites including Rightmove and MSV Housing Website. Allocations made outside Choice Based Lettings may be allocated on a first come first served basis. However all applicants must meet the property size and criteria to be eligible unless otherwise stated as explained in 2.12.

2.2 Eligibility

Applicants must be eligible under the Right to Rent Legislation and this must be checked by Lettings Officers prior to Allocation of any property. This will be checked through the Government Website.

Properties will not be allocated to persons who are a person from abroad who are ineligible for allocation under s.160ZA of the 1996 Act. The two categories for the purpose of z160ZA:

- A person subject to immigration control – have no “leave to remain”
- A person from abroad other than a person subject to immigration control but has restrictions made by the Secretary of State

For further Eligibility Criteria see 2.11. Where we are allocating through Choice Based Lettings or Nominations applicants may need to meet additional criteria of the Allocation scheme they are applying to.

2.3 Under 18 years of Age

Applications from people aged 16-17 will be accepted where there is a need i.e.:-

- Leaving care
- Teenage parents and expectant mothers under 18

When rehousing young people under 18 MSV Housing will use equitable tenancies. At the age of 18 or after the first 12 months, they will become full Assured tenants or will remain a starter tenant until they have completed 12 months of their tenancy- providing there are no issues with the tenancy.

MSV recognises that young people who have not had a tenancy before may be vulnerable and will encourage them to take up tenancy support in the first 12 months to ensure they can sustain their tenancy successfully.

2.4 Older Person Accommodation

We define this as accommodation specifically aimed at people over the age of 55 or people with a disability which means they require additional support. Some older persons accommodation provides a Scheme Manager on site

providing support for elderly and vulnerable tenants. Applicants may be referred by other agencies such as medical professionals, support workers or Local Authority. We also accept direct applications from applicants as well as marketing these properties through CBL, Rightmove and various older people websites. As these properties can be difficult to let, allocations may be made outside the normal Allocation Policy although applicants will be required to meet the criteria of the scheme.

2.5 Vulnerable Applicants

Other applicants who may be vulnerable such as people with mental health issues, drug or alcohol dependency etc. will be encouraged to continue with any current support or to engage with tenancy support services to help them sustain their tenancy. This will be discussed with applicants and any support workers before a final offer is made.

If an applicant refuses to engage with support services and MSV feels this would have a detrimental effect on them being able to successfully sustain a tenancy. MSV may withdraw any offers. Applicants would be able to appeal against this through the complaints policy.

2.6 Domestic Abuse

If an applicant has been a victim of domestic abuse (DA), a full assessment will be carried out to ensure sufficient support and adequate protection is in place for the whole moving group. This is to ensure the safety of any victims, other residents and wider community. We therefore may not rehouse DA victims within 3 miles of the victim's previous address, and/or where the incidents have taken place where necessary. This will be assessed on a case by case basis and will be guided by the evidence and support services involved. We will liaise with victim support workers, police, social services and or other agencies to ensure that lets are suitable in order to prevent any further risk to victims, children, other residents or the wider community.

Applicants will be expected to continue to engage with any support services already in place and engage with any support services they are referred to as discussed and agreed to help sustain their tenancy This will be discussed with applicants and any support workers before a final offer is made.

2.7 Children in Apartments

Applicants with children under the age of 10 will generally not be rehoused in upstairs apartments within communal blocks, however there may be some discretion applied on a scheme by scheme basis.

We will on certain schemes let apartments to applicants with children under 10 years old where there is ground floor flat access to the property. This does not apply to schemes which are age restricted.

2.8 Pets

Pets are permitted in our properties including some of our flats. When considering an applicant with a pet it will be assessed whether the pet is suitable for the scheme they are being considered for and will be assessed on a case by case basis. Where permission is granted the applicant will be expected to sign the Pet Agreement.

2.10 Owner Occupiers

Owner Occupiers will be considered where the following applies

- There is a medical need supported by relevant professionals
- There is financial hardship and could result in homelessness
- There is a relationship breakdown including fleeing domestic abuse
- There is a housing need or they meet the criteria for supported or Older Persons accommodation

Where there is no housing need MSV will require proof that the applicant is selling or has sold their existing property. They must not own another property or be renting out any existing property they own.

2.11 Local Lettings Policies

MSV Housing may set Local Lettings Policies on some schemes for the purpose of building sustainable communities. These are set out in our Local Lettings Policy and are agreed in partnership with the Local Authorities and other agencies.

2.12 PROPERTY SIZE CRITERIA

All MSV properties have a preferred occupancy figure agreed for them (a preferred number of people that can live/occupy a property), to ensure the best use of our housing stock and also ensure we are not overcrowding our properties. When considering the best use of a property, the following are considered as needing a bedroom space:

- The applicant and their partner;
- Additional adults (although siblings and couples would be expected to share);
- 2 children of the same sex, irrespective of age;

- 2 children of different sexes, if both are under 10 years old;
- Any single child not paired as above.

Single people or couples who only have access to children will be considered for two bedroom flats or maisonettes/houses (providing they can afford the full rent or any Benefit shortfall). Additionally where an applicant is pregnant, this will be taken into account where the baby would result in an extra bedroom being required.

As houses are in exceptionally short supply, they are restricted to applicants who have children aged under 18, reflecting the need to make best use of family type accommodation. Discretion and flexibility will be applied where for example a parlour type property may be suitable to use a downstairs room as a bedroom where there may be medical or other needs. We will however ensure that this does not create a statutory overcrowding situation.

Other restrictions on properties include where there is an age restriction in place, where they are adapted for people with a disability or where specific local lettings policies are in place. Where the accommodation applied for would not meet the needs of the applicant and could pose a health and safety risk to them we would not be able to consider them. We will try to take into consideration the applicants views where possible, but where there is any supporting evidence such as Occupational Therapist Assessment this would be considered to assess the risk.

Where applicants are working full time and paying full rent we will be flexible with under occupancy of two bedroom flats. (However applicants must be able to demonstrate they have been working in their current job for a minimum of 6 months and provide evidence of this).

2.13 Background Checks and Refusals

All applicants will be expected to provide the following information in order to check suitability for an offer of accommodation:

- Three years address history
- Proof of their right to rent including immigration status
- Landlord reference if they have a current or previous tenancy
- Details of any unspent convictions
- Details of any support agencies which will assist applicants to sustain their tenancy
- Proof of all Income.

In addition to this all applicants income and expenditure will be assessed to ensure they are able to successfully sustain a tenancy. Where necessary the Customer Support Team will carry out an affordability assessment.

2.14 Rehousing Employee's

All employees who apply for rehousing will be subject to the same check's, as any other applicant. Approval will be sought from Executive Director of Neighbourhoods & Wellbeing before final offer of accommodation.

Employee's will also be subject to the conditions contained within the Employee Tenancy Policy.

MSV may refuse applicants based on the table below.

Refusal reason	Criteria	Discretion
Previous MSV Tenant evicted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A former MSV tenant evicted based on one of the grounds of possession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All costs in relation to the eviction have been paid. <input type="checkbox"/> The applicant can evidence that the behaviour that caused the eviction has permanently changed.
Rent Arrears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has whole tenancy debt of £100 or greater (arrears include court costs and recharges) <input type="checkbox"/> Applies to any debt the applicant has with any current or previous landlord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A payment plan is in place and maintained without fail for a minimum period of 6 months. <input type="checkbox"/> The debt was solely the result of applicant fleeing for example DA or hate crime. <input type="checkbox"/> Where Welfare reform or other factors may have contributed to the debt this will be assessed on a case by case basis.
Tenancy Breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has breached current or previous tenancy conditions and has received a formal warning for this breach <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has breached current or previous tenancy conditions and has received a legal notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Breach was older than 3 years for which a legal notice was received. <input type="checkbox"/> Breach was older than 1 year for which a formal warning was issued. <input type="checkbox"/> The same breach has not been consistently committed. <input type="checkbox"/> Does the reference show that the applicant has changed their behaviour?
Threats & violence to staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant or member of their household has threatened or been violent towards a member of staff, agent or contractor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Event was older than 3 years. <input type="checkbox"/> Injunctions are no longer in force. <input type="checkbox"/> Does the reference show that the applicant

Refusal reason	Criteria	Discretion
		has changed their behaviour?
ASB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Where the applicant or a member of their household has caused anti social behaviour in the property, immediate area or in the vicinity/ surrounding areas of the property. <input type="checkbox"/> Where the applicant or a member of their household has been issued with warnings on more than one occasion. <input type="checkbox"/> Where the applicant or a member of their household has been the subject of legal action. <input type="checkbox"/> Where the applicant or a member of their household has been the subject of a behaviour contract. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Event was older than 3 years. <input type="checkbox"/> How serious was the event? <input type="checkbox"/> Was it criminal? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the reference show that the applicant has changed their behaviour? <input type="checkbox"/> Any other exceptional circumstances.
Obtaining accommodation by deception or fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect accommodation history <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect household details <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to declare convictions <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to declare former tenancy debts <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to declare historical tenancy breaches <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to declare historical ASB they have caused or allowed to be caused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Depends upon the level of the deception and the evidence provided.
Spent & unspent convictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal act committed involving violence away from the property. <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal act committed at the property. <input type="checkbox"/> Was the criminal act committed in the area they wish to move to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant engaging with agencies such probation, ex-offender management teams. <input type="checkbox"/> Agrees to be subject to a compliance tenancy if required.

Refusal reason	Criteria	Discretion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are their victims living in the area they wish to move to. <input type="checkbox"/> Civil act committed affecting wider community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Re-housing would not de-stabilise a community. <input type="checkbox"/> The victim's wishes are paramount.
Failure at sign up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Refuses to pay contractually required in-advance rent payment at sign up <input type="checkbox"/> Refuses to make regular payments on agreed cycle in lieu of contractually required in advance rent payment at sign up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is fleeing violence for example. <input type="checkbox"/> Requires emergency housing as a result of fire, flood. <input type="checkbox"/> Has a benefit sanction in place reducing their income <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Note: when affordability is an issue, applicants will be required to make a minimum weekly payment plan which will bring the rent account to the required level of credit over a period of time.</i>
Transfer Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Homes that are in a very poor condition <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant has any arrears (see Management Move & Transfer Policy) <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant has breached any other condition of the tenancy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a suitable property maintained in a suitable condition for a period of 3 months. Condition will be checked with arranged and adhoc visits.
Restricted Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Working Households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Working households are defined as households where at least one adult member is in employment or has been employed for 9 out of the last 12 months and be working for a minimum of 16 hours per week for a single person or disabled person or 24 hours for a couple. For the purposes of this

Refusal reason	Criteria	Discretion
		Allocations Scheme employment is described as having a permanent contract, working as a temporary member of staff or being self-employed
Immigration Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Immigration Act 2014	<input type="checkbox"/> Applicants must prove they have a 'right to rent' If the applicant cannot prove their immigration status includes the right to rent. The application will be refused.
Affordability	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to afford the ongoing weekly or monthly rent based on Affordability Assessment carried out by Customer Support Team	<input type="checkbox"/> If support can be offered and income maximised we may considering offering. <input type="checkbox"/> Where it is deemed they may be entitled to some benefits which they are not currently claiming for.

3 Roles, Responsibility and Policy implementation

- 3.1 The Lettings Manager is responsible for implementing and reviewing this policy.
- 3.2 The Lettings Manager is responsible for developing partnerships with Local Authorities and other agencies.
- 3.3 The Lettings Manager is responsible for developing a robust procedure which meets the principles and purpose of this policy.
- 3.4 The Lettings Manager is responsible for managing day to day allocations of general needs properties through Officers and Administrators. The Older Persons Manager is responsible for managing the day to day allocations through officers and with the support of the Lettings Manager.
- 3.5 The Lettings Officers and Older Persons Officers are responsible for day to day allocations decisions.
- 3.6 Affordability assessments will be referred by the Lettings Officer to the Customer Support Team for completion.

4 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

4.1 The Following KPI's will be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.

- Void Loss
- Re-let times
- Voids at month end
- Voids over 6 months
- Tenancy Turnover
- %BME Lets
- % Nomination Lets

4.2 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or as required due to a change of legislation or regulatory requirement.

5 Related documents

5.1 *Management Move & Transfer Procedure*

5.2 *Nominations Agreements*

5.3 *Decant Procedure*

5.4 *Affordable Rent Policy*

5.5 *Tenancy termination Procedure*

5.6 *Starter Tenancy Procedure*

5.7 Mutual Exchange Policy

5.8 Local Lettings Policy

5.9 Allocation Procedure

5.10 Sensitive Let Policy

6 Appendix

	Equality Impact Assessment

Policy/Procedure being assessed:	Allocation Policy
Section:	Neighbourhood & Wellbeing
Date of assessment:	November 2022
Person (S) Responsible for assessment:	Adele Pettecrew
Is this a new or existing policy?	Existing

1. Briefly describe the function being assessed	Full review of the Allocation policy and procedure		
2. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the function?	Tenants, applicants, staff, partner agencies and Board.		
3. Who will be consulted as part of this EIA? What types of consultation will be carried out?	Staff, Customers, Board		
4. <u>Could</u> the function have a differential impact on racial groups ?	Yes ✓	No	
What evidence exists to support your analysis?	These groups may find it difficult to access our service due to language barrier. We have interpreter services in place to assist with this.		
5. <u>Could</u> the function have a differential impact due to gender ?	Yes	No ✓	
What evidence exists to support your analysis?			

6. <u>Could</u> the function have a differential impact on <u>disabled people</u> ?	Yes ✓	No				
What evidence exists to support your analysis?	Accessibility maybe an issue for those who are housebound or with severe disability. The Policy addresses these issue by the way of adapted properties being matched to those with disabilities.					
7. <u>Could</u> the function have a differential impact due to <u>age</u> ?	Yes ✓	No				
What evidence exists to support your analysis?	Properties that have an age restriction due to local letting policy could be challenged. But these are justified in clear Local Lettings Policies.					
8. <u>Could</u> the function have a differential impact due to <u>sexuality</u> ?	Yes	No ✓				
What evidence exists to support your analysis?						
9. <u>Could</u> the function have a differential impact due to <u>religion or belief</u> ?	Yes	No ✓				
What evidence exists to support your analysis?						
<p>If the answer is NO to <u>all</u> questions 4-9 and no differential treatment has been found there is no requirement for a full Equality Impact Assessment. Please go back regularly and review the cycle.</p> <p>If the answer is YES to any of the questions 4-9 please continue to question 10</p>						
10. In what areas could the differential impact identified in 4-9 be considered to be an adverse impact in this function? (Please tick if yes)	Race x	Gender x	Disability x	Age x	Sexuality	Religion /belief

<p>11. What solutions will be introduced to overcome these adverse impacts and /or create positive impacts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Front line staff who represent customer make up profile data? <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of language line to address translation issues, availability of translation service for people who cant read English and one to one translation for interviews and sign ups. <input type="checkbox"/> Pre Tenancy training for young people where possible <input type="checkbox"/> Regular review of local letting polices on age restricted areas to ensure they do not unduly discriminate against young people <input type="checkbox"/> Update of IT database to identify adapted properties to better inform customers of properties available. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure wide as possible accessibility options are available for people with disability or those with frailty, this is done by providing access through website, part of choice base lettings schemes, agile working so officers are able to go to the customers.
<p>12. Which Action Plans have these solutions/strategies been transferred into?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness action plan <input type="checkbox"/> Local lettings policy <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing <input type="checkbox"/> Agile working