

## **EastendHomes**

### **LETTINGS POLICY**

#### **1. Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 The Council will require all RSLs receiving stock through the Housing Choice process to be a full partner of the Council's choice based letting scheme.
- 1.2 We will actively publicise and explain the full range of letting options available to our residents. This will increase choice and enable our residents to consider the options available when making individual preferences, as well as ensuring that lettings are offered to those greatest in need.
- 1.3 We will ensure that properties are let speedily, minimising the length of time they remain empty and maximising opportunities to assist those in housing need.
- 1.4 We are committed to a lettings policy that will assist in developing and supporting well-balanced and sustainable communities.
- 1.5 We will actively support the aspirations of our residents, as a full partner of the Common Housing Register (CHR), with the Council and other Registered Social Landlords. Being a partner of the CHR enables us to:
  - provide more opportunities to reduce overcrowding
  - increase the choice of properties available, including types of property, bedroom sizes and meeting individual circumstances, such as health and disability needs
  - provide a greater choice of location available.
  - provide a wider pool of properties for transfers and mutual exchanges within the LBTH. This will also enable our residents to obtain a wider range of transfers and mutual exchanges opportunities with other boroughs.
- 1.6 Full details of the Common Housing Register (CHR) Lettings Policy are contained in the booklet of that name.

#### **2. Eligibility criteria for joining the Housing List**

- 2.1 Normally anyone can join the housing list unless they are:
  - under 18 years old;
  - a person who the Government say cannot be on the list. Currently this includes certain groups of people who are subject to immigration control; and,
  - unsuitable to be a tenant.

Every application will be considered on its own merits and EEH will consider all circumstances before making a final decision on eligibility for the housing list.

### **3. How homes will be let**

- 3.1 Properties that are available to let will have their details advertised in the local housing offices and other appropriate locations, such as the council's One Stop Shops, on the internet at *www.thhs.org.uk* and East End Life
- 3.2 Eligible residents, listed in paragraph 2.1 above, can apply for the homes being advertised. They will then be placed on the list for that home, the property will be offered to the applicant who has expressed an interest and has the highest priority.
- 3.3 Existing tenants will be expected to comply with the terms of their current tenancy agreement. Not following the terms of the current tenancy agreement may lead to an offer not being made. This will normally include tenants that are in arrears with rent payments and tenants where anti social behaviour action is taking place.
- 3.4 Applicants who are made an offer and then fail to view a property will normally have their priority reviewed or withdrawn. An exception includes those with an extenuating circumstance for their failure to view.
- 3.5 Applicants can ask for a review of any decision made about their application including the decision to exclude or suspend the application or what priority it should attract.

### **4. Priorities for letting**

- 4.1 The Lettings Policy has to meet statutory obligations that the law says must be considered. Each April, in partnership with all CHR partner landlords, we have to give 'reasonable preference' to the following groups:
- The homeless. *Applicants, who are accepted as homeless under Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, will be given one offer. If the offer is refused, the council is likely to end the provision of temporary accommodation and remove the applicant from the CHR*
  - People who are owed a duty by any housing authority under certain Housing Acts
  - Those occupying unsanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing
  - Those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds. *We will assist EEH tenants wishing to transfer for health reasons. Applicants will be assessed for priority of need by Housing Health Advisors employed by the Primary Care Trust. A Management Panel, of senior officers, will decide the welfare and social priority of CHR applicants including existing tenants of EEH wishing to transfer to another property.*
  - People who need to move to a specific area where failure to move would cause hardship to themselves or others.
- 4.2 Each April, priorities for letting available homes for the next 12 months will be agreed by the full CHR partner landlords. We will actively support the priorities of our residents. Priorities could include the following:
- Those whose homes are to be demolished for regeneration purposes
  - Those who want to move to smaller accommodation
  - Overcrowded families.
- 4.3 Each eligible applicant for housing will be placed in one of four groups depending on their priority.

- Group 1 is called Community Gain and this group includes all applications from:

*Anyone awarded an emergency priority to move; and*

*Council and partner landlord tenants who have to move because they live in a block that is being demolished or refurbished; and*

*Council and Registered Social Landlord tenants who are moving to a home with at least 1 bedroom less than their current home.*

- Group 2 is called Community Priority and this group includes all applicants from:

*Those with an assessed need to move because of extenuating social or health needs; and*

*Accepted applications from one of the quota groups; and*

*Those assessed by the Council as Homeless under the Housing Act, 1996 Part 7 and other Homeless households who have an assessed priority need; and*

*Council and RSL tenants with a need to move because of extenuating repair needs.*

- Group 3 is called Community Mobility and this group includes all applicants from all others on the housing list whose applications are not included in the groups 1, 2 or 4.

- Group 4 is called Community General and this group includes all applicants from:

*RSL tenants whose landlord is not a member of the Common Housing Register unless eligible to be included in Community Groups 1 or 2;*

*Applicants who own or part own a residential property;*

*Applicants without a local connection to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets;*

*A household that includes anyone whose behaviour was serious enough to have justified a possession order and means they are currently unsuitable to be a tenant.*

## **5 Maximising Choice**

5.1 We will be proactive in maximising choice in using the existing affordable housing stock and schemes available to increase choice and meet Housing need.

5.2 Under occupiers. A higher priority will be given to people that wish to move and will give up at least one bedroom. This step enables us to tackle overcrowding and make the best use of the existing stock.

5.3 On a wider and strategic level, we will publicise, assist and support residents in accessing the wider opportunities that are available. This will ensure that housing needs are met more speedily for our residents. This includes the following schemes:

- Transfers

- Mutual exchanges
- Homeswap
- Seaside and Country Homes
- the HOMES scheme

## **6. Decants**

- 6.1 We are mindful of the demands of redevelopment and regeneration programmes and any requirements to decant tenants whilst work is undertaken to their homes or their homes are demolished.
- 6.2 Any tenant who has been living at a property for at least 12 months before a decant is agreed, will be entitled to a statutory *Home Loss* payment. The amount of payment is adjusted on an annual basis. They will also receive reasonable removal expenses.