

Policy

TITLE		Allocations & Lettings Policy	
Policy ref:	R023P	Approval date	April 2024
Owner	Director of Customer Operations	Planned review date	April 2027
Department(s):			
Approved by	Executive Committee		

1. Background	As a provider of housing and care to older people, we have a duty to ensure that we are operating fairly and equitably towards all residents and potential residents. This policy ensures we take a balanced approach to allocating accommodation to those wishing to reside in an Abbeyfield property, and that we adhere to any legal or regulatory requirements as may apply on a case-by-case basis E.g. where a nominations or similar agreement applies to a property, and otherwise in accordance with our requirements to assist local authorities with the strategic housing needs. This policy sets out how we will let our social rent and Affordable Rent homes. It doesn't include market rent, shared ownership, or leasehold homes.
2. Objectives	The aims of this policy are to ensure that Abbeyfield: • Meets its legal and regulatory requirements under equality and other legislation • Offers high quality housing to those in need that qualify to live in an Abbeyfield property • Ensure properties are let to residents fairly, transparently, and quickly to reduce voids • Achieves Abbeyfield's charitable purposes within the communities it has properties • Ensures a consistent, fair and transparent approach to lettings across all Abbeyfield stock • Empowers staff, existing residents and applicants to know and trust the processes being followed
3. Scope	This policy applies to all staff in housing operations, existing residents, and new applicants for housing with Abbeyfield.

4. Policy	Abbeyfield allocates, lets and manages its housing in line with the required outcomes of the Regulatory Standards of the Regulator of Social Housing, and any other legal frameworks within which Abbeyfield operates. Who Abbeyfield housing is for Abbeyfield housing is normally let to individuals who: • Are 55 years old or more • Have a housing need • Are able to live reasonably independently with or without appropriate support • Who do or would have recourse to public funds, if needed • Any other person at the discretion of the Director of Housing so long as that person meets the generality of Abbeyfield's charitable objects • Who have a right to rent according to The Immigration Act 2014. Abbeyfield will confirm with an applicant that they meet the criteria. With regard to the Equality Act 2010, Abbeyfield has a duty to complete a fair and balanced assessment of the needs and eligibility of any potential residents wishing to reside in an Abbeyfield property, and for those existing residents wishing to transfer internally. Priority would normally be given to applicants with the highest level of housing need, such as those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, domestic violence, or other forms of abuse. If there are applicants who have the same level of housing need, priority would normally be given to the individual who applied first. Determination of eligibility and right to rent needs will need to be satisfied before Abbeyfield will offer accommodation. Choice-based lettings Where appropriate, Abbeyfield will participate in choice-based lettings schemes. The decision to participate will depend on: • Current demand and waiting lists • Any legal arrangements entered into with local authorities Concerns during the allocation process The method by which a decision is made to offer a vacant property to an applicant is based upon the criteria outlined above and on the outcomes of the assessment workbook, which takes into account a number of factors such as age (we do not provide housing to anyone under the age of 55); level of care needs, and financial capability. We aim for this process to be as open as
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Policy

	possible and are happy to explain the reasons why someone may not be offered a tenancy. Much of Abbeyfield housing involves communal living with private accommodation. Existing residents at Abbeyfield housing may have contact with an applicant during their visit(s) and, occasionally, may hold concerns about an applicant. However, raising concerns does not extend any right or responsibility for the selection of new residents to existing residents. Abbeyfield remains solely responsible for making decisions about offering a tenancy based on whether it can meet an applicant's needs, and the applicant's suitability to reside in the property in accordance with our policies. Applicants also have the right to raise concerns about any part of their experience with Abbeyfield - including the right of appeal if not offered housing – in accordance with the Complaints, Concerns and Compliments Policy (LG006P). Abbeyfield reserves its right to refuse applications from applicants where it is just, fair and equitable to do so in the circumstances. Abbeyfield will aim to be as transparent as possible concerning the reason for any refusal unless disclosing such information might prejudice the data protection rights of another person, or otherwise where doing so could prejudice another legitimate right or interest of Abbeyfield. Before offering a tenancy to an applicant, Abbeyfield staff must obtain the information set out in relevant SOPs to ensure that the applicant has the right to rent, the property will meet their needs, is affordable and any other criteria. Applicants must return all information requested, have signed their tenancy and Abbeyfield should have received an appropriate payment before being allowed to take up possession of the property. At all stages Abbeyfield staff should be mindful of the applicant's ability to understand relevant information concerning the tenancy, the property, their entitlement to external funding (e.g. benefits or other) and signpost applicants to relevant agencies for advice or support if required. Where the application process identifies any vulnerabilities or otherwise protected characteristics under the Equality Act (e.g. physical/mental disability, English not the applicant's first language) that might cause the applicant a disadvantage, Abbeyfield staff should consider any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to remove or minimise such disadvantage. Where Abbeyfield staff are not clear if an adjustment might be reasonable, advice should be sought from the Legal Department and/or senior management.
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Policy

5. Finance, Value for Money & Social Value	The consistent and efficient management of Abbeyfield lettings is crucial to Abbeyfield's financial strategy and VfM obligations.
6. Linked policies	• Tenancy Management (R017P) • Complaints, Concerns and Compliments (LG006P) • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (LG016P)
7. Relevant Legislation/ Regulation	RSH Regulatory Standards Equality Act 2010 Data Protection Act 2018 Various Housing Legislation
8. Guidance	RSH Guidance on Meetings Regulatory Standards Guidance on Interpretation and Application of the Equality Act Various Guidance on Housing Law
9. Review	Every 3 years, subject to any regulatory or legislative updates.
10. Procedure(s)	10.1 Assessment & Allocations (video)
11. Process Map(s)	None

Version	Purpose/change	Resident Panel Involvement	Author	Date
1.0	New policy		Theresa Wilson (Director of Housing), Jen Conway and Joe Lavery (Legal)	March 2024

Policy
