

Allocations Policy

Implemented 14 January 2016

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 One Manchester Housing Group Allocations Policy will be used by City South Manchester Housing Trust and Eastlands Homes Partnership for the allocation of housing stock in their ownership and management. The Group's policy on the way in which it allocates its homes seeks to balance the needs of customers, obligations to our partners and the regulatory conditions in place for housing associations and our aim to sustain and improve our neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 The Group provides good quality housing services for residents and prospective tenants by seeking to offer a choice of home as far as possible, prioritising housing need and the use of allocations policies that are fair, transparent and reflect the diversity and requirements of our customer groups.
- 1.3 The Group monitors demand for its properties and ensures that all applicants can register for our properties easily and that all applicants are fairly and consistently assessed.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 This policy aims to clearly set out guidelines on how anyone looking for a home with One Manchester Housing Group will be considered and how our properties are allocated and let.
- 2.2 Our policy aims to be fair, simple to understand and is based primarily on a need to move, how long the applicant has been waiting, supports applicants in employment, supports families with children in primary school education, incentivises the release of under-occupied homes, tackles overcrowding and rewards those who contribute to their neighbourhoods or have a specific connection to a neighbourhood. The Group' aims to be flexible while ensuring the best use of its stock.

3 Scope

- 3.1 The Group will allocate 50% of its vacancies to applicants who are prioritised according to the rules set out in this policy.
- 3.2 The Group also works with the local authority to enable it to fulfil its statutory obligations and our regulatory requirements by a Nominations Agreement. The Group offers the other 50% of its vacancies to the local authority for nominations of applicants who are prioritised according to the policy of Manchester City Council.
- 3.3 Regardless of which policy is used to prioritise applications, the rules of property type and size entitlement set out in this policy will apply.

4 Equal Opportunities

4.1 The Group is committed to providing its residents and stakeholders with a service which is fair and equitable, so that not one person making contact with One Manchester Housing Group Housing Group' is excluded directly or indirectly from the high quality service they expect and deserve. In order to fulfil our commitment to provide a fair and equal service the Group' undertakes to do the following:-

- to put the customer first regardless of race, ethnicity or nationality, religion or belief, age, disability, gender, sexuality, gender reassignment, marriage or civil union, pregnancy or maternity and socio-economic status
- to make sure that all our customers feel confident that the Group will provide them with a service whenever possible which is tailored to individual or group needs
- to put in place provisions so our services are accessible to all including the provision of information for people with sight loss, translations in the main community languages, provision of interpreter services whenever possible and provision of loop systems and BSL signers for customers with hearing loss. The Group's offices are compliant with the regulations in the Disability Discrimination Act and the Group' will endeavour to ensure the best possible service to people with restricted physical mobility
- To be flexible in our service delivery wherever reasonable and possible. This includes home visits after usual office opening times and flexible office appointment times
- to communicate with our customers in every media possible whether in person, in writing, by text, social media or via the internet so that our customers know we are there for their convenience
- to recognise that groups and individuals have differing needs and to be sensitive to those needs as long as they do not inhibit service delivery to others or are in conflict with the Group's commitment to Equality and Diversity
- Provide a front-line service which ensures that our residents enjoy their homes and communities peacefully and securely. Every effort, within the law and in terms of our policies, will be made to work with our partners including the police, education and social services, community services and voluntary groups, including tenants and residents associations, to tackle anti-social behaviour and hate crime whether perpetrated by groups of individuals or persons acting alone
- to help protect and support victims of Domestic Violence, child and elder abuse and to assist the victim and support services by taking action against the perpetrators by excluding them from the home

4.2 Staff members administering applications and allocations understand their responsibilities for allocations in equal opportunities terms. When applying this policy we will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities. If consistent and deliberate discriminatory actions are found, the necessary action, including disciplinary action, will be taken.

4.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy.

APPLICATIONS

5 How to apply for a One Manchester tenancy

- 5.1 The Group is a member of Manchester Move – a common housing register shared by a number of not-for-profit landlords.
- 5.2 All who wish to apply for a home with One Manchester Housing Group are required to complete an online application through the web at **manchestermove.co.uk**. They will need to provide details of those moving with them, their current circumstances, their requirements, and any other issues or problems relating to their application.
- 5.3 At the end of the online registration process applicants will be notified which partner landlord holds their application and what supporting evidence they are required to supply to them.
- 5.4 The Group will consider applications from people who are over 16 years of age. All 16 and 17 year olds will be offered an Equitable Tenancy.

6 Validation of applications

- 6.1 In registering on Manchester Move applicants will have to provide the following for their application to be validated:
- two forms of identification for every adult in the moving group, of which one must include their National Insurance Number
 - proof of address for every adult in the moving group
 - proof of child benefit for every child in the moving group, in the name of one of the adults in the moving group
 - if overcrowded, the same evidence as above for all other members of the household
 - if a member of the household is pregnant, the MATB1 maternity certificate
 - full and accurate responses to any supplementary requests for information
- 6.2 Applications where no documents have been submitted within 31 days of registration will be removed.

7 Applications from Board members, One Manchester staff or close relatives

- 7.1 Applicants will need to declare on their application if they are or related to Board or staff members of the Group or housing register partners. Applicants will be asked again at the time any offer is made. The term relative includes: anyone living with the applicant as a partner or member of their household; natural/adoptive/step parents; grandparents; aunts; uncles; sisters; brothers; children; daughter and son in laws; estranged spouses or partners regardless of whether they live as part of the applicant's household.
- 7.2 Board members must declare any interests in a rehousing case in the Group's Declaration of Interests Log.
- 7.3 Staff and Board Members of the Group must be aware that undue canvassing of members of staff responsible for the allocation of homes might be considered as improper or as harassment.

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7.4 Staff and Board Members of the Group' and their relatives are as entitled as anyone else to apply to appear on the housing register and should apply/be treated in the same way as any other applicant. However, in terms of process and to ensure that it is seen to be clear and fair, staff should follow the guidelines below:

- a) staff members should not deal with their own applications for rehousing nor those of their partners or relatives
- b) staff members seeking rehousing services must ensure that they exercise proper professional discretion in dealing with the member of staff handling their application

7.5 Under the Group rules staff and Board members cannot receive any non-contractual benefits as a result of their association with the company. Staff and Board members are required to declare any potential conflict of interest and staff members are also required to complete a notification form when granting a tenancy to an applicant who is or related to a member of staff or Board member.

7.6 Staff making allocations in such instances must evidence the Band and queue position of the applicant and seek the written authorisation of the Chief Executive, or the Director of Communities in their absence.

7.7 Any staff member found to have deliberately and improperly advanced their own or their relative's application ahead of qualifying applicants will be considered to have committed gross misconduct.

8 Transfer applications from One Manchester tenants

8.1 Existing tenants of the Group can apply to move. They are known as transfer applicants and must meet the following criteria:

- not have housing related debt of more than £500 at the time of application or at any time after registration unless the exceptions criteria is met
- pass a property inspection – both internal and external
- not be subject to any current or impending legal action for rent arrears, anti-social behaviour or any other reason unless authorised by the relevant manager
- not be listed on the Rehousing Review List

8.2 If any of the above applies the application will either be placed in Band 6 or will be ineligible, other than at the discretion of the Group Director of Communities.

8.3 Starter tenants who have been a tenant for less than a year can apply for rehousing. However their application will have reduced priority and be placed in Band 6 unless there has been a serious change in their circumstances since they took up the tenancy which requires addressing e.g. fear of violence.

8.4 Equitable tenants, those who are under the age of 18, can also apply for rehousing but their application will have reduced priority and be placed in Band 6 unless there has been a change in their circumstances. Once they are eligible for an assured tenancy they will also be able to progress their application further.

9 Applicants who require supported housing

- 9.1 We know that some tenants and residents need help to manage their home. Tenants with support needs can approach us to apply for assistance. The Group works with the local authority's Housing Support Service to help vulnerable tenants to stay in their accommodation. The service is available to new and existing tenants who meet the services criteria. Referral to the service is via the Group, some voluntary and statutory sector agencies, e.g. health group, and the local authority's Adult Social Care and Homelessness Services. Support services are available to applicants or tenants with support needs; young people aged between 16 and 25 and homeless applicants. Specialist Housing Support is available for people who are over 60; from a black or ethnic minority community; and from the older lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender community.
- 9.2 The Housing Support Teams will assess the suitability of the applicant and allocate a Housing Support Worker where appropriate. The service is provided as a condition of the applicant's tenancy and they will need to sign a tenancy variation accepting the terms of the service. These include a weekly service charge which is eligible for Housing Benefit. All service users will receive an agreed support plan to help them towards living independently in their homes.
- 9.3 In certain circumstances, vulnerable applicants will not be considered for accommodation by the Group' if there is insufficient evidence of a satisfactory package of care and support or if such has been refused by the applicant. The applicant will have reduced priority and be placed in Band 6.

10 Change of Circumstances & Reviews

- 10.1 Applicants whose situation changes must complete an online change of circumstances form.
- 10.2 Applicants will have to routinely confirm their details are up to date and accurate via the Manchester Move website. Applicants failing to review their applications as and when requested will be removed from the waiting list after a three month period of inactivity.

11 Housing Options Advice

- 11.1 When looking for a place to live the option of waiting for a social housing tenancy may well not be practical or indeed the most appropriate option given someone's personal circumstances. By providing a comprehensive service covering all available options in the neighbourhoods that we manage - tenancies with other social landlords, licensed private rented property plus shared and low cost ownership - One Manchester Housing Group can give our customers accurate and realistic information and options for their housing requirements.
- 11.2 In discussing housing options we are also aware that this is one piece of a larger jigsaw. Applicants will also wish to know and understand what the options are in terms of work, training and education for them and their children as well as other facilities and opportunities in our neighbourhoods. The Group' will work with the local authority, other agencies and partners to give comprehensive advice and assistance which allows customers to make informed decisions about all their requirements.

ELIGIBILITY

12 Eligibility assessment

12.1 When an applicant submits their validation documents it must first be determined if they are eligible to join the waiting list. All applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria outlined in the table below.

| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Exceptions</i> |
|----|--|--|--|
| 13 | Persons From Abroad | Persons From Abroad will be assessed by the local authority to see if they qualify for social housing. Should their conditions for remaining in the UK include the ability to access social housing the local authority will make recommendations to the Group and we will consider an application for priority. If the person does not have sufficient authority to remain in the country the application will be ineligible. | None |
| 14 | Serious Offenders | Applicants who have been convicted of criminal offences will be assessed by a multi-agency Serious Offenders Panel consisting of representatives from the local authority, registered social landlords and other statutory agencies. The panel will make recommendations on housing of individuals to the Group' which may include the requirement for the applicant to sign a compliance tenancy (a tenancy agreement with conditions specific to the applicant and their offences). The applicant may be ineligible for rehousing as a result of their previous offence/s. | None |
| 15 | Rehousing Review List: Past behaviour | Ineligible where a member of the household has a live entry on the Rehousing Review List because of their previous behaviour. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anti-social behaviour - Breach of tenancy for which a possession order has/would have been granted - Damage to property | Life threatening circumstances Safeguarding Domestic Abuse Demolition Severe medical need Director Discretion |

| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Exceptions</i> |
|----|--|---|--|
| 16 | Rehousing Review List: Serious Housing Debt | <p>Ineligible if total housing debt outstanding is over £500, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Debt is between £500 and £1000 and a repayment plan has been agreed with the landlord and maintained for a minimum of 26 weeks OR b) Exceptional circumstances apply. These will be considered on a case by case basis by the Group Director of Communities. <p>Housing debt is defined as rent arrears and other housing related debt such as rechargeable repairs. It does not include mortgage arrears, statute-barred debt or debt acknowledged since it became statute-barred.</p> | <p>Life threatening circumstances Safeguarding Domestic Abuse Demolition Severe medical need Director Discretion</p> |
| 17 | Owner-occupiers | <p>Owner-occupiers will be ineligible except in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age over 55 and moving to Retirement Housing • Needs to move to an adapted home • Potentially homeless due to repossession for mortgage arrears • Other situations where they can not reasonably continue to live in the property. Examples include victims of domestic violence or joint-owners leaving the home following a relationship breakdown. These will be considered on a case by case basis. | <p>Director Discretion</p> |
| 18 | Tenants with a staying group | <p>One Manchester tenants will be ineligible for rehousing if there is anyone else living with them who does not intend to move with them, until all other occupants have left or have been rehoused.</p> | <p>Applicants awarded priority for domestic abuse and the staying group is the perpetrator of that abuse. Director Discretion</p> |
| 19 | Non-validated applications | <p>Applicants who have not provided satisfactory ID or evidence requested to confirm their application details.</p> <p>This includes applicants with expected children who have not provided their MATB1 certificate, except where the birth of the child will have no impact on property size/type eligibility</p> <p>This also covers situations where the applicant deliberately provides false or misleading information.</p> | <p>Exemptions in exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis</p> |

20 Our Priority System

20.1 Once an application is found to be eligible it will be placed in one of six Bands based on the information provided on the application and on any supplementary evidence provided. The Band will be reviewed when circumstances change.

20.2 The six Bands in the Group's priority system are:

Band 1 - Urgent Need to Move

Band 2 – Increased Priority Award & Need to Move

Band 3 – Need to Move

Band 4 – Increased Priority Award & No Need to Move

Band 5 – No Need to Move

Band 6 – Reduced Priority

20.3 The applicant's position within the band is based on the date of application or date of the priority award.

20.4 The details of the assessments which determine the Band an applicant will be placed in are given in the tables below.

20.5 In order to verify an applicant's circumstances certain evidence may be required to substantiate a priority award. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide the Group with all evidence requested.

20.6 Applications reassessed following a change in circumstances that result in the applicant being placed in a lower band will retain their original waiting list date. Applications reassessed that result in the applicant being placed in a higher band; the date of the decision will be the new waiting list date.

20.7 The Group's tenants will not be awarded priority for poor property condition. The Group will ensure that all repairs not necessitating a decant are carried out in line with the Group's repairs policy.

21 Director Discretion

21.1 For any exceptional circumstances that may arise, which will be considered on a case by case basis, the Group Director of Communities has the discretion to:

- override the criteria which would make an applicant ineligible or have a reduced priority
- award priority under any Band or amend the Band award date
- approve direct offers of accommodation
- override the rules on property type and size entitlement

21.2 Examples of where Director Discretion may be used include, but is not limited to, where a personal tragedy has occurred in the home, or where an applicant with rent arrears resulting from welfare reform needs to downsize.

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22 URGENT NEED TO MOVE ASSESSMENTS – Band 1

- 22.1 Band 1 priority may subject specific conditions of the award such as suitable property types or excluded rehousing areas. Applicants will then be expected to bid if properties meeting these criteria are advertised.
- 22.2 The Band 1 award will be subject to a monthly review including number of bids, property type and area choice.
- 22.3 A time limit of 6 months applies to the award unless there are exceptional circumstances to be exempt.
- 22.4 If there are no agreed exceptional circumstances and the applicant has not been rehoused within 6 months the application will be placed in Band 3 (or Band 2 if applicable).
- 22.5 Applicants who are offered a suitable property and refuse it without good reason will be placed in Band 3 (or Band 2 if applicable).
- 22.6 Applicants who qualify for a Band 1 award but wish to wait for specific property types or areas of their choice may opt instead to be placed in Band 3 (or Band 2 if applicable).

| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Eligible applicants</i> |
|----|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 23 | Serious risk to a child | To prevent a child going into care/safeguarding on the recommendation of the Director of Children’s Services. | All applicants |
| 24 | Release adapted property | Moving out of a property with substantial adaptations, where no family member requires the property’s adaptations, to move into a non-adapted property. | One Manchester tenants only |
| 25 | High-risk domestic abuse | Applicants in immediate danger who are suffering threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, sexual, financial, physical or emotional) from a partner, ex-partner or family members regardless of gender. Also included are forced marriages. | All applicants |
| 26 | High-risk harassment /fear of violence | Applicants in immediate danger who are suffering from harassment (including racial, LGBT and private landlord harassment), anti-social behaviour, violence or threats of violence from outside the home that threatens their safety. This award will only be made where there is no legal remedy and rehousing has been assessed to be necessary. Area restrictions may apply. | All applicants |

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| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Eligible applicants</i> |
|----|--|---|--|
| 27 | Child in multi-storey | Applicants with children aged 10 and under living in a multi-storey flat (including ground floor accommodation) as a result of natural growth of the family after the start of the tenancy. For pregnancies this award is made from week 28 of the pregnancy. | One Manchester tenants only |
| 28 | Overcrowded by 2 or more bedrooms | One Manchester tenants who require 2 or more bedrooms more than they currently have, as a result of natural growth of the family since the tenancy started. | One Manchester tenants only |
| 29 | Severe medical need | Awarded by Manchester Move medical assessment panel. Customer will be restricted to property types deemed suitable to resolve the medical need and will be bypassed if bidding for unsuitable properties. | All applicants |
| 30 | Downsizing by 2 or more bedrooms | One Manchester tenants under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms moving to an appropriately sized property. | One Manchester tenants only |
| 31 | Downsizing due to welfare reform | One Manchester tenants who will suffer financial loss if they remain in their current home as a result of the under occupation charge | One Manchester tenants only |
| 32 | Demolition | One Manchester tenants who are losing their home on a permanent basis as a result of demolition. | One Manchester tenants only |
| 33 | Left in occupation | Applicants who have been left in occupation of a One Manchester tenancy without succession rights under certain circumstances which will be considered on a case by case basis. Consideration will be given to proven relationship to the previous tenant, proven length of time residing at the address and affordability. | Applicants left in occupation of a One Manchester property |

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| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Eligible applicants</i> |
|----|--|--|----------------------------|
| 34 | Hospital discharge | Those who have somewhere to live on leaving hospital but it is unsuitable for their medical needs and can not be made suitable through adaptations due to cost, structural difficulties or the property cannot be adapted within a reasonable amount of time. Where the impact is assessed as being severe the applicant may be awarded band 1. Those who have nowhere at all to live when they leave hospital may qualify for band 1 if the need to move is urgent and all other reasonable housing options have been explored. | All applicants |
| 35 | Approved carers/adopters suitable property foster without | Awarded to potential/foster carers and adopters who receive a deferred recommendation as suitable foster carers or adopters by the Manchester Family Placement Panel, subject only to their finding accommodation that meets the property size and health and safety conditions required by the Family Placement Panel. Offers to such applicants will be based on the applicant accepting an assured shorthold tenancy for year 1 migrating to a fixed term tenancy of five years subject to 6 monthly reviews of both tenancies. | All applicants |

36 NEED TO MOVE ASSESSMENTS – Band 3

36.1 These priority awards will be subject to ongoing and regular review to ensure they remain justified. If the reason for the priority award is no longer applicable the priority award will be removed from the application and the applicant placed in the relevant Band.

| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Eligible applicants</i> |
|----|---|---|---|
| 37 | Move-on from supported accommodation | Applicant who is leaving temporary supported accommodation to move on to independent living. Ongoing support must have been assessed and where appropriate a support plan put in place. | All applicants living in a Housing Related Support provider's accommodation in Manchester |
| 38 | Leaving care | Applicant leaving the care of Children's Services. Ongoing support must have been assessed and where appropriate a support plan put in place. | All applicants living in care |

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| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Eligible applicants</i> |
|----|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 39 | Homeless | <p>Applicants who are homeless or will be homeless within 28 days. This includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Statutory homeless applicants 2) Non-statutory homeless applicants as assessed by the local authority or by One Manchester 4) Private tenants where possession proceedings to enforce a s21 notice have commenced. 5) Tied tenancies where the job is ending. 6) Members of the armed forces with a discharge date. | All applicants |
| 40 | Hardship | Need to move to a One Manchester area where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or others. This would include, for example, a person who needs to move to a different locality in order to give or receive care, to access specialised medical treatment, or to take up a particular employment. | All applicants |
| 41 | Overcrowding | Applicants needing more bedrooms than they currently have. | All applicants |
| 42 | Downsizing | One Manchester tenants under-occupying by 1 bedroom moving to an appropriately sized property. | One Manchester tenants only |
| 43 | Medical need | <p>Applicants who have a medical need to move as assessed by Manchester Move.</p> <p>The award may be subject to restrictions on suitable property types or adaptations required.</p> | All applicants |
| 44 | Domestic abuse | Applicants who are suffering threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, sexual, financial, physical or emotional) from a partner, ex-partner or family members regardless of gender. Also included are forced marriages. | All applicants |

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| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Eligible applicants</i> |
|----|---|--|---|
| 45 | Harassment/ASB/Fear of violence | Applicants who are suffering from harassment (including racial, LGBT and private landlord harassment), anti-social behaviour, violence or threats of violence from outside the home that threatens their safety. This award will only be made where there is no legal remedy and rehousing has been assessed to be necessary. Area restrictions may apply. | All applicants |
| 46 | Prevent a child going into care/safeguarding | Families where their circumstances may lead to a child/children being taken into care if alternative accommodation is not secured. Any circumstance which presents a risk to a child not qualifying for Band 1. | All applicants |
| 47 | Leaving Hospital | Applicant is currently a long-term resident of a hospital or institution. Ongoing support must have been assessed and where appropriate a support plan put in place. Awarded by Manchester Move. | All applicants |
| 48 | Child at Height | Applicants with children aged 10 and under living in a flat or maisonette above the ground floor without a garden as a result of natural growth of the family after the start of the tenancy. | One Manchester tenants only |
| 49 | Private property condition | Applicants whose property has been deemed to be in serious disrepair and for which a Prohibition Order or Suspended Prohibition Order has been served | Private tenants or owner occupiers only |

50 INCREASED PRIORITY ASSESSMENTS - Band 2/4

50.1 Applicants who qualify for any of the increased priority awards will move up one Band from the date they qualify for the increased priority award.

| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Eligible applicants</i> |
|----|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 51 | Working Household | Where a member of the household is in employment, or is self-employed, and has worked for at least 9 of the last 12 months for a minimum of 16 hours per week. | All applicants |

51.1 The Working Household award applies across all One Manchester areas. 50% of One Manchester properties will be allocated to applicants who meet the criteria for this award.

52 Area Connection Awards

52.1 All area connection awards a positive residence/tenancy history for any tenancies held during the last three years, in addition to any other requirements of the award.

52.2 The definition of a positive residence/ tenancy history is that the applicant (or parent/legal guardian in the case of the second generation award) has:

- No active Group or partner organisation Rehousing Review List entry. Overridden rehousing review list entries must be reviewed when assessing eligibility for an area connection award
- no ongoing involvement in anti-social behaviour or criminal activity
- not breached any tenancy agreement within the last 3 years
- no outstanding debt to the Group' of over £100
- No outstanding assessment under the Serious Offenders Policy and has not been refused rehousing by the Serious Offenders Panel

| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Eligible applicants</i> |
|----|--|---|---|
| 53 | Own positive tenancy | Where the applicant has been a tenant in the area for at least the last three years and can provide landlord reference(s) to demonstrate a positive tenancy history | All current tenants (any landlord) |
| 54 | Own positive tenancy in the past | Where the applicant has been a tenant in the area for at least three years in the past and can provide landlord reference(s) to cover that period which demonstrate a positive tenancy history | All applicants who have held a tenancy or tenancies in the past (any landlord) in a One Manchester area for at least 3 years. |
| 55 | Community Contribution - Voluntary work | Local community service provided through voluntary activities. Evidence is required of involvement in voluntary work of over 6 months from the project leader. Volunteering must be for a minimum of 10 hours per month | All applicants |

| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Eligible applicants</i> |
|----|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 56 | Child in local primary school | <p>Where the applicant has a child/children aged under 11 (at 1 September of that school year) currently attending a primary school in a One Manchester neighbourhood for a minimum period of one term with at least 94% attendance (discretion may be used for exceptional circumstances),</p> <p>Evidence is required from the school that one full term has been achieved and there have been no suspensions.</p> | All applicants |
| 57 | Second generation | Where the applicant has a parent/legal guardian living in a One Manchester tenancy in the area for at least three years up to the date of application who can demonstrate their positive residency history and who support the application. | Applicants with a parent/legal guardian who is a One Manchester tenant |
| 58 | Young Persons Qualification | Where an applicant aged 16-25 has completed an accredited pre-tenancy skills course recognised by One Manchester. Applicants select their preferred cluster area with the course provider on completion. | Applicants aged 16-25 seeking their first tenancy. |

59 Cluster Areas

59.1 Applicants in Band 2 or 4 with area connection awards (36 to 41) can only be considered for properties within their specific 'cluster area'. This comprises of the rehousing area the connection belongs to and adjacent rehousing areas. If they wish to move outside of this cluster area they can request the area connection priority to be removed. However this will move their application down by one Band.

60 REDUCED PRIORITY ASSESSMENTS – BAND 6

| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Exceptions</i> |
|----|--|---|---|
| 61 | No local connection | Applicants without a local connection to Manchester. Local connection is awarded if a member of the moving group meets one of the following conditions: a) Currently resident in Manchester b) Past residence in Manchester for at least 6 of the last 12 months. c) Past residence in Manchester for at least 3 of the last 5 years. d) Has a close relative (parent, sibling, child) currently resident in Manchester and who has lived in the city for at least the last 5 years. e) Currently employed in Manchester. f) Exceptional circumstances apply. | All applicants |
| 62 | Deliberately worsening housing circumstances | Applicants who have been assessed to have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances, for example by moving into a property which is unsuitable for their needs without good reason. . | All applicants |
| 63 | Refusal of 3 reasonable offers | Applicants who have refused 3 offers made after successfully bidding for properties on Manchester Move where the properties meet their housing needs and have been advertised accurately. (Reduced priority applies for 6 months after the 3rd refusal, after which time they are reinstated to their original band and award date) | All applicants |
| 64 | Breach of tenancy | Where the applicant has been a tenant, now or in the past, and breached their conditions of tenancy. This includes where their property has failed a property inspection. | All applicants |
| 65 | Housing debt | Housing debt outstanding between £100 and £500 with no agreed payment plan in place. Housing debt is defined as rent arrears and other housing related debt such as rechargeable repairs. It does not include mortgage arrears, statute-barred debt or debt acknowledged since it became statute-barred. | All applicants |
| 66 | Not ready to move on from supported accommodation | Applicant who is living in temporary supported accommodation but has not been assessed to be ready to move on. | All applicants living in a Housing Related Support provider's accommodation in Manchester |
| 67 | Household Income | Applicants with sufficient household income | Director Discretion |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 68 | Capital assets | Applicants with sufficient financial resources (savings, assets, capital gain from equity after mortgage settlement) The value of assets/property disposed of free of charge is included in this assessment. | Director Discretion |
|----|-----------------------|---|---------------------|

PROPERTY ENTITLEMENT

69 Property Entitlement

- 69.1 The Group aims to make the best use of available stock whilst responding to local need when letting properties. It also looks to take into account the affordability of the offer made in terms of size entitlement and qualification for Housing Benefit. This can include restrictions on certain property types including restrictions on age and family composition. Properties with special features, equipment and adaptations will be matched with applicants needing such features. Applicants with children under the age of 16 will usually be considered for houses or ground floor maisonettes or ground floor flats (but not multi-storey flats). However, applicants with children under the age of 16 can be considered for accommodation on 1st and 2nd floors (not multi-storey flat accommodation) at their request.
- 69.2 Applicants with access to children will not be considered for offers of ground floor accommodation with more than one bedroom. Such applicants can be considered for larger accommodation above the ground floor where it exists in the Group’s stock. Applicants’ ability to afford such accommodation will be assessed.
- 69.3 Applications from all adult moving groups will not be considered for offers of houses unless they are a family.
- 69.4 The Group’s guidelines on property type and household criteria are as below. The bedroom entitlement is based on the Group’s bedroom standard as defined in Bedroom Need Calculation (70). Exceptions to property type entitlement are as defined in the Incentive to Move Scheme (75). Overcrowding is permitted where the size of property needed is rarely available or does not exist within the Group’s stock.
- 69.5 The table below identifies the type and size of household composition that is eligible for the stated property type. Working households may underoccupy non family type property by one bedroom only and subject to an affordability assessment. These are marked by *.

| Property Type | Permitted Household Composition |
|---|---|
| Studio flat | Single person |
| 1 bed bungalow | Single person/couple aged 60+ or a person slightly younger with a disability. If no such applicant on the waiting list the property can be allocated to the oldest person on the list who will accept the offer to a minimum of aged 45 |
| 1 bed house-style flat ground and 1 st floor | Single person or couple |
| 1 bed house | Single person or couple |
| 1 bed multi-storey all floors | Single person or couple |
| 1 bed flat in a low block | Single person or couple |

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| | |
|--|--|
| all floors | |
| 2 bed house-style flat ground floor | Family, all adult group needing 2 bedroom, single person/couple needing carer, approved foster carer |
| 2 bed house-style flat 1st floor | Family, all adult group needing 2 bedrooms, applicant with access to child/children*, single person/couple needing carer, approved foster carer |
| 2 bed flat in a low block ground floor | Family, all adult group needing 2 bedroom, single person/couple needing carer, approved foster carer |
| 2 bed flat in a low block 1st or 2nd floor | Family, single person*, all adult group needing 2 bedrooms/applicant with access to child/children*/single person or couple needing carer, approved foster carer |
| 2 bed maisonette ground floor | Family, all adult group needing 2 bedrooms, single person/couple needing carer, approved foster carer |
| 2 bed maisonette 1st or 2nd floor | Family, single person*, all adult group needing 2 bedrooms/applicant with access to child/children*/single person or couple needing carer, approved foster carer |
| 2 bed multi-storey all floors | Single person*/all adult group needing 2 bedrooms/single person or couple needing carer |
| 2 bed house | Family needing 2 bedrooms or single person/couple needing carer, approved foster carer |
| 3 bed flat in a low block ground floor | Family or all adult group needing 2* or 3 bedrooms, approved foster carer needing 2*/3 bedrooms |
| 3 bed flat in a low block 1st or 2nd floor | Family or all adult group needing 2* or 3 bedrooms, approved foster carer needing 2*/ 3 bedrooms, applicant with access to children needing 2*/3 bedrooms |
| 3 bed multi-storey all floors | All adult group needing 2* or 3 bedrooms, all adult household requiring 2 bedrooms plus carer |
| 3 bed house | Family needing 3 bedrooms, approved foster carer needing 3 bedrooms |
| 3 bed house with parlour | Family needing 4 bedrooms or family needing 2*/ 3 or 4 bedrooms one of which must be on the ground floor for medical reasons |
| 4 bed house | Family needing 4 bedrooms, approved foster carer needing 4 bedrooms |
| 4 bed house with parlour | Family needing 5 bedrooms or family needing 4 or 5 bedrooms one of which must be on the ground floor for medical reasons |
| 5 bed house | Family needing 5 bedrooms, approved foster carer needing 5 bedrooms in total |
| 5 bed house with parlour | Family needing 6 bedrooms or family needing 5 or 6 bedrooms one of which must be on the ground floor for medical reasons |
| 6 bed house | Family needing 6 bedrooms, approved foster carer needing 6 bedrooms in total |
| 6 bed house with parlour | Family needing 7 bedrooms or family needing 6 or 7 bedrooms one of which must be on the ground floor for medical reasons |
| adapted properties | Allocated by the local authority |
| retirement housing | Single person or couple 60 years + or a person 50 years+ who has a disability |

70 Bedroom need calculation

70.1 This section explains how we calculate the number of bedrooms required by a household. This calculation is used for overcrowding assessments and to determine property size entitlement.

70.2 A separate bedroom shall be allocated to the following persons:

- every adult couple (married or unmarried)
- any other adult aged 16 or over
- any two children of the same sex under 16
- any two children aged under 10
- any other child (other than a foster child or child whose main home is elsewhere)
- a carer (or team of carers) who do not live within the home but provide the applicant or their partner with overnight care
- an approved foster carer (where either the applicant or their partner is caring for a foster child or who has been accepted as a foster carer but has no child living with them as long as the period without the child does not exceed 6 months)
- disabled children may be allowed a separate room to their siblings in certain circumstances
- parents of armed forces personnel who continue to live at home but who are deployed

70.3 An expected child is not included in the bedroom need calculation until the mother is 28 weeks pregnant and has provided proof of the pregnancy.

70.4 Affordability assessments will be completed for all applicants being considered for or provisionally offered a property of the Group'. Applicants can be bypassed if their application indicates they are unable to afford the rent/service charge or where it is established at pre and/or post offer stage that they are unable to afford the property. In such circumstances the offer will not be made or will be withdrawn.

71 How properties are allocated

71.1 The Group participates in Manchester Move, a shared housing register and Choice Based Lettings system, along with other partner organisations in Manchester.

71.2 Most of the Group's properties are advertised and allocated through Choice Based Lettings to the highest eligible bidder, based on the priority assessments explained in this policy.

71.3 Some properties, at the Group's discretion, will not be advertised and will be directly offered to eligible applicants.

71.4 Applicants can only bid for properties they are eligible for under the Group's lettings rules on size and property type e.g. a single person cannot bid for a three bedroom house. Applicants will be able to bid for a maximum of three properties, across all partner organisations, each week.

71.5 Adapted properties will be allocated to the highest eligible applicant who has been assessed to require the adaptations. Bids from applicants who do not need the adaptations will be bypassed. Offers will be made to qualifying applicants in band and date order.

71.6 50% of One Manchester Housing Group allocations will be made to economically active applicants (i.e. those who meet the criteria for the working household award). Some properties may be advertised for working households to ensure this target is met. Bids from applicants who do not have the working household award will be bypassed. This also applies to the 50% of empty

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properties identified through the Nominations Agreement with Manchester City Council. Offers will be made to qualifying applicants in band and date order.

71.7 All new build property will be let at affordable rents to economically active applicants.

72 Refusals

72.1 Applicants who refuse and/or do not respond to three reasonable offers from Manchester Move partners will have their application demoted to Band 6 for a period of 6 months. After this period the application will resume its original priority band and date subject to change of circumstances.

72.2 A reasonable offer is defined as one the applicant has placed a bid for, which was advertised accurately and meets their housing needs

73 Offer conditions

73.1 Where an applicant has a partner moving with them they are expected to sign as joint tenants.

73.2 All applicants who are not current tenants of One Manchester Housing Group will need to provide two references including one from their current or former landlord at the time of offer. References can be accepted from professional organisations/people and tenants of other partners in the Housing Register. The referee must have known the applicant for a minimum 12 month period and references remain valid for 6 months. We have the discretion to accept one or no references in exceptional circumstances.

73.3 Applicants offered a One Manchester Housing Group tenancy must have a bank account or equivalent in place.

73.4 Working applicants/applicants anticipated to have an amount of rent to pay each week must set up a direct debit for rent payments other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, and must as a minimum pay their first week of assessed payable rent when signing for the tenancy.

73.5 All applicants with children must provide proof of child benefit in the name of one of the adults in the moving group at the time of offer.

74 Rehousing Review List Policy

74.1 The Group, the local authority and partner organisations operate a rehousing review list. The list is a name and national insurance register of people who may not be eligible for accommodation with the partners of the Manchester Housing Register because of their previous behaviour. The rehousing review list will be checked at the time of registration, immediately prior to offer and at the let stage to make sure that the applicant and those moving with the applicant do not appear on the list and so are able to be offered a Group home. The Group will withdraw any offer if the applicant or any member of the moving group is entered on the rehousing review list.

74.2 The Group will make sure that:

- everyone on it is informed exactly why they are listed and exactly how to appeal to be removed from the list

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- there is a clear and easy way to get a review
- we review the policy's effect regularly

74.3 The Group will enter people on the rehousing review list in the following circumstances:

- where the applicant is former tenant of the Group where a possession order was secured for any reason who has not satisfied the Group that they will keep to the terms of a tenancy agreement in future
- where the applicant is a former tenant of the Group who owes a housing related debt e.g. rent arrears, court costs, rechargeable repairs, furniture charge or storage – of £100 or over
- current tenants of the Group in breach of the rehousing and housing related debt policy
- where the applicant is a former leaseholder of the Group who owes a debt of over £100 to the Group'
- anyone whose previous behaviour was proven to have spoilt the peaceful enjoyment of any residential dwelling and who has not yet satisfied the Group that they will keep to the terms of a tenancy agreement
- anyone who has been violent to or threatened staff, customers or agents of the Group or those employed by the applicant's previous landlord, and who has not yet satisfied the Group' that they will keep to the terms of a tenancy agreement
- anyone with an unspent conviction for a community offence or who is the subject of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order or other Civil Restraining Order and who the Serious Offenders Panel are satisfied poses a significant risk to the well-being of any resident of Manchester by re-offending or breaching a Civil Order
- anyone who intends to live with a person in one of these categories. Applicants must sign an undertaking if they subsequently decide not to live with a person in any of the above categories
- anyone abandoning a property of the Group (all costs including rent and other housing related debt included)
- anyone damaging a property of the Group (all costs of repair included)

74.4 Applicants will need to demonstrate at least two years good behaviour, pay off outstanding debt and sign a good behaviour undertaking before being considered again for housing with One Manchester Housing Group.

74.5 The Group will write to anyone they include on the rehousing review list informing them of the reasons for their exclusion and their right to request a review of that decision.

74.6 If someone applies for rehousing and their name is already on the rehousing review list, the Group' will inform them of their exclusion and whom they need to contact to request a review of the exclusion.

74.7 Any request to have a rehousing review list entry reviewed will be done by a staff member who was not involved in the original decision. The reviewing staff member will send a letter inviting the

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person to make comments by a certain date – the review date. They may also invite the person in for an interview. If no comments are received by the review date, the review will be carried out based on available information. A review is unlikely to succeed where a listed person fails to tell the Group why they disagree with our decision.

74.8 A solicitor, advice worker or someone else can write comments on a listed person's behalf, as long as the listed person signs their name on the comments to show they agree with them. A solicitor, advice worker or someone else may also attend a review interview with the listed person at the listed person's request.

75 Incentive to Move Scheme

74.1 The Group wishes to make best use of the limited amount of homes available. It also acknowledges that many long standing tenants no longer require larger homes but would welcome smaller suitable options. To give tenants choice in moving to smaller, more suitable properties and with the aim of increasing the number of larger sized homes becoming available each year, the Group offers an Incentive to Move scheme.

75.2 The scheme may include tenants of other social housing landlords and we are committed to working with partner organisations on relevant initiatives to address overcrowding and under-occupation.

75.3 Eligibility:

- 1) An Allocations Officer will carry out a home visit within 10 working days of receiving a request from a Group tenant to move using the Incentive to Move scheme to discuss the details of the request with the applicant and assess eligibility.
- 2) An appropriate Manager will approve each application to transfer using the scheme and will also approve all offers of accommodation made to residents using the scheme.
- 3) All transfer applicants who apply to move using the scheme will be considered providing the tenant meets each of the criteria below:
 - holds an assured tenancy
 - has no housing related debt at both application and offer stage other than agreed by the Director of Communities
 - the internal and external of the property is preferably of a 'same day let' standard. An appropriate manager has discretion to approve exceptions to this.
 - has not breached any conditions of tenancy other than agreed by the Group Director of Communities
 - must be willing to allow accompanied viewings by prospective tenants whilst still in occupation
 - must be willing to allow contractors of the Group access to carry out any necessary repairs to enable a 'same day' let

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75.4 Tenants will be offered a new property that is adequate for their household and we will, in certain circumstances and subject to an affordability assessment, offer a property with one more bedroom than the household needs if the property being released is of great value to the Group e.g. 4 bedroom or larger houses.

75.5 Tenants will be accepted onto the scheme and awarded Band 1 priority if they are downsizing by 2 or more bedrooms. The Group may assist tenants under-occupying their home to move to the new property where necessary by providing and/or reimbursing for the following standard costs upon receipt of proof of payment:

- removals (including packing for older or vulnerable tenants)
- disconnection and reconnection of domestic appliances
- redirection of mail for a 3 month period
- reasonable costs associated with telephone reconnection
- removal and refixing of curtains, blinds and curtain rails
- redecoration of part/all of the new home (paint only)
- any reasonable property enhancement/additional other costs as agreed by a manager on a case by case basis

75.6 On notification of a void property, the Allocations Officer will, in the first instance, establish if there are any Band 1 applicants accepted onto the scheme requesting that property type, size and area. If there is more than one such applicant, the highest placed applicant will be considered first.

75.7 At the same time and before the process proceeds further, the Allocations Officer establishes if there is demand from Band 1 overcrowded households for the applicant's property. If there is no demand for the applicant's property, the void property is allocated in line with the general allocations policy.

75.8 If there is demand for the applicant's property from Band 1 overcrowded households an accompanied viewing of the void property will be arranged within 24 hours and a decision made as to the suitability of the property for the applicant. The Allocations Officer will ensure that all eligibility criteria are still met including a property inspection.

75.9 In instances where the offer proceeds, the applicant must allow members of staff of the Group' to carry out accompanied viewings with prospective tenants for their property whilst they remain in occupation. Also, they must allow contractors of the Group' access to carry out any necessary repairs to enable a 'same day' let of their property wherever possible.

75.10 Any subsequent void created by this process (the overcrowded applicant's property where a tenant of the Group will be allocated in line with the general allocations policy.

75.11 Tenants accepted onto the scheme will receive a maximum of two reasonable offers. An offer will not be made unless an accompanied viewing has been carried out and the applicant has expressed their willingness to accept the property.

75.12 The Group' will remove applicants from the scheme if one or more of the following apply:

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- the tenant requests it
- the tenant fails to respond to periodic review or communication from the Group'
- any legal action is commenced against the tenant for any reason
- any of the eligibility criteria ceases to be met
- two reasonable offers are refused

75.13 The Group will regularly review and monitor the scheme with residents and relevant agencies.

75.14 The number of incentive scheme moves will be subject to available budget each financial year.

75.15 Applicants will be awarded Band 2 or 3 if under-occupying by 1 bedroom. Such applicants will not be eligible to join the incentive scheme. Any allocation to a Band 2 or 3 under-occupier will be based entirely on their position in the waiting list. If the applicant is rehoused to a smaller property their property will be allocated in line with the general allocations policy.

76 Succession to Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenancies

76.1 There are two methods One Manchester Housing Group uses in accommodating relatives/partners who are left in occupation of a property following the death of a tenant.

76.2 Tenancy Succession is a term used to describe the process whereby a relative, partner – including same sex partners - or surviving spouse (husband or wife) inherits a tenancy following the death of the tenant. The person who inherits the tenancy enjoys the same rights as the previous tenant and is referred to as a 'successor'.

76.3 Succession can only occur once in law. This means, for example, that when a tenancy passes from a husband to his wife (following his death), a child who has lived in the family home for most of their life will not be able to inherit the tenancy and subsequently may have possession proceedings brought against them. A family only has one succession right which is used up when the tenancy passes from one to another as in the above example.

77 Succession Rights

77.1 On the death of a tenant and as long as the tenant is not a successor (as defined in 77.2) the following persons have a right to succeed to this tenancy:

- a) the tenant's spouse or a person living with the tenant as husband or wife provided that they occupied the premises as their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death under section 17 of the Housing Act 1998. This right occurs automatically.
- b) any surviving joint tenant(s) if they occupied the property as their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death. This will occur even if the tenant was already a successor.
- c) if the tenant has no surviving spouse or joint tenants, a member of their family (as defined in Section 113 Housing Act 1985) or a partner of the same sex may succeed as long as:
 - i. they occupied the premises as their only or principal home and

- ii. they lived with the tenant throughout the period of six months ending with the tenant's death (this condition does not apply to partners of the same sex) and
- iii. they satisfy the Group (acting reasonably) that they have a right to have the tenancy vested in them under the tenant's will or intestacy and
- iv. they notify the Group in writing of their claim to succeed within six months of the tenant's death (at its discretion the Group may allow a longer period) and
- v. they apply for a Grant of Probate and/or Letters of Administration and/or seek to have the tenancy vested in them under the tenant's will or intestacy within six months of the tenant's death (at its discretion the Group may allow a longer period).

77.2 A tenant is a 'successor' for the purposes of this procedure if they:

- a) are a person who was a joint tenant and have become a sole tenant or
- b) are a spouse in whom the Tenancy was vested under Section 17 Housing Act 1988 or
- c) fall within the definition of successor set out in Section 17(3) Housing Act 1988 or
- d) became the tenant under the will or on the intestacy of a former tenant of the premises or
- e) were granted the Tenancy under a right of succession granted by the Group under any Tenancy Agreement.
- f) became the tenant as a result of an assignment other than in the circumstances set out in items g) and h) below
- g) became the tenant as a result of a Court Order under Section 24 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 and the other party to the marriage was a successor; or
- h) became the tenant under the Right to Exchange and was a successor under a previous tenancy

78 Special Succession Rights

78.1 If the tenant is not a successor as defined in Section 77.2 of this policy and if on the tenant's death there is no person who is able to succeed under Section 77.2 (a) to (d), One Manchester Housing Group Housing agrees that if a person:

- is a member of the tenant's family (as that expression is defined in Section 113 of the Housing Act 1985) or a partner of the same sex; and
- lawfully occupied the premises as their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death and lawfully resided with the tenant throughout the period of six months ending with the tenant's death (this six month period does not apply to partners of the same sex); and

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- makes a claim in writing to One Manchester Housing Group within three months of the tenant's death or such longer time as One Manchester Housing Group shall, in its discretion, allow.

78.2 Then, One Manchester Housing Group will use Ground 7 to end this Tenancy and will enter into a new Tenancy with such person either of the premises or, at One Manchester Housing Group discretion, of other premises that One Manchester Housing Group considers to be more suitable.

78.3 This tenancy shall be upon such terms and conditions as One Manchester Housing Group considers appropriate provided that if more than one person makes a claim under this section, One Manchester Housing Group, in the absence of agreement between such claimants, will, in its absolute discretion, select the person who may pursue the claim.

79 Discretionary Tenancy Succession

79.1 Discretionary Tenancy Succession policy will allow two succession rights. Partners/relatives will be allowed to "succeed to a tenancy twice" by being granted new assured shorthold tenancies and be allowed to remain in the property. To qualify for this relatives/partners must:

- have lived in the property for a substantial period of time immediately preceding the death of the tenant (minimum 10 years)

79.2 Discretionary Tenancy Succession will also allow a full time live-in carer, as verified by MCC Adult Services/Benefits Agency, to be granted a new assured shorthold tenancy following the death of the tenant. To qualify for this the carer must:

- have occupied the tenancy as their principal home for two or more continuous years

In both above circumstances the relative, partner or carer must also:

- not be on the Group's or partner organisations rehousing review list
- have successfully completed a Serious Offender check
- not be under-occupying a larger property (property with 2 or more bedrooms than the household requires. For these purposes parlours are considered as a bedroom).
- not be occupying an adapted property they do not need
- not be occupying a retirement scheme property they are not eligible for
- not be occupying an age restricted property they are not eligible for

79.3 Applicants must provide official proof of residence for every year of residence claimed.

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- 79.4 Rent Liability - the successor tenant (person resident in the property seeking to become the tenant) is liable for rent from the date of the death of the tenant. In practice, this will be from the first Monday following the death of a tenant. Rent arrears from the former deceased tenant should be notified to the Income Recovery Officer who will ensure a correct former tenant's account is created.

80 Termination of a Joint Tenancy One Joint Tenant

- 80.1 When a relationship breaks down or one joint tenant leaves the property and one tenant terminates a joint tenancy, the Neighbourhood Manager may regrant the same property to the tenant remaining in occupation unless that tenant was the perpetrator of domestic abuse. However, the tenant will be advised to seek independent legal advice as there may be implications for their tenancy rights under any new tenancy agreement. In certain circumstances, and at the discretion of the Group Director of Communities, a tenancy will not be regranted but one direct offer of suitably sized accommodation will be made.

81 Applications to add a Joint Tenant to a Sole Tenancy

- 81.1 When a relationship is formed or when an adult child wishes to become a joint tenant with their parent, the Neighbourhood Officer will advise the tenant to seek independent legal advice as there may be implications for their tenancy rights under any new tenancy agreement. The tenancy can only be terminated – not transferred – by the existing tenant serving the Group with a notice to quit. Applications will not usually be approved unless there are exceptional circumstances.

82 Person left in occupation

- 82.1 Any person/s left in occupation of a property by the previous tenant will not generally be offered the tenancy of that property. However, the Group has the discretion to award band 1 rehousing priority and/or make one direct offer of suitably sized accommodation in certain circumstances. Consideration will be given to proven relationship to the previous tenant, proven length of time residing at the address and affordability.

83 Neighbourhood Lettings Plans

- 83.1 Neighbourhood lettings plans are used to enhance the sustainability of defined neighbourhoods by giving preference for offers of accommodation to particular customer groups. They may include applicants outside of the Group's prioritisation banding system. Neighbourhood lettings plans will be evidence based, time limited, have clear aims and objectives that have been agreed by the Board and be approved for particular properties in defined neighbourhood areas following consultation.
- 83.2 Where operating neighbourhood lettings plans, overall, priority for allocations will be given to applicants in housing need. Neighbourhood lettings plans will not discriminate unjustifiably, directly or indirectly on all equality grounds and will comply with all relevant legislation.
- 83.3 The decision to implement a neighbourhood lettings plan will be developed jointly with the local authority to ensure that the nominations received from the Council through the nomination agreement meet the particular conditions in place.
- 83.4 The following are examples of neighbourhood lettings plans that could be employed covering a neighbourhood:
- age restrictions.

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- transfer applicants with a positive tenancy history in respect of no rent arrears and exemplary behaviour.
- restrictions on lettings to vulnerable households where there are already a concentration of supported tenants/residents.
- lettings to childless households where there are high concentrations of children and young people living on a specific estate or scheme.

83.5 Monitoring, review and reporting systems must be in place.

84 Starter tenancies

84.1 A Starter Tenancy is a probationary tenancy. New tenants will be granted a starter tenancy except in the following circumstances where an Assured (non shorthold) Tenancy will be granted:

- Existing Assured tenants of One Manchester Housing Group
- Applicants who at the time of being made an offer of a One Manchester property hold an Assured (non shorthold) Tenancy with another housing association or local authority which began before 1st April 2012
- New tenancies arising due to statutory succession where the previous tenant was an assured tenant.

84.2 The Group will monitor all tenancies within the first 12 months for breaches of tenancy including anti-social behaviour. Towards the end of the starter tenancy a decision will be taken to either end the starter tenancy or allow it to automatically convert to an assured tenancy. This will be done in accordance with the Group's Starter Tenancy Policy.

85 Young Persons Equitable Tenancy

85.1 It is not legally possible for someone who is under 18 years old to hold a legal estate in land. This means that a minor cannot be a legal tenant in the same way an adult can.

85.2 A minor can hold an equitable tenancy. This is a legal form of property 'ownership' which involves the concept of a trust. A trust is simply a legal mechanism whereby one person – the trustee - technically 'owns' something, but holds it for the benefit of another person. An equitable tenancy is a trust in favour of the minor. The tenancy will be passed to the tenant on them attaining the age of eighteen. The minor would live in the property, be treated and be expected to act as any other tenant would.

85.3 When the tenant reaches their 18th birthday the tenancy will be made a standard assured tenancy or will continue as a standard assured shorthold tenancy in the name of the young person.

86 Mutual Exchanges

86.1 Any tenant of the Group who wishes to exchange their property with that of another tenant has the right to do so, on condition that:

- the person is another tenant of the Group, or another social landlord or local authority
- neither tenant has rent arrears other than at the discretion of the Director of Communities
- neither tenant owes their landlord any other housing related debt other than at the discretion of the Group Director of Communities

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- the tenants moving in would not be overcrowding or under-occupying the property. Manager discretion can be used to override this requirement in certain circumstances and subject to an affordability assessment.
- neither tenant's existing property is in a poor state of repair, decoration or cleanliness other than at the discretion of the Group Director of Communities
- retirement scheme/adapted and age restricted properties will only be used by people who require this accommodation
- there are no other reasons for refusing the exchange such as tenancy breaches or anti-social behaviour.

86.2 Mutual exchanges are carried out by deed of assignment. No tenant can go ahead with a mutual exchange without the permission of the Group. Any tenant who does so without permission may be required to move back to their previous home and recharged for any costs.

86.3 The Group is a member of Homeswapper. Homeswapper is for social housing tenants (in rented property) who want a property swap or a mutual exchange. The Group subscribes to the Homeswapper website and allows all tenants to access this service free of charge, to enable the tenant to find suitable matches.

86.4 All tenants finding suitable matches using the Homeswapper website (www.homeswapper.co.uk) will be required to submit the details to the Group who will assess the application under the agreed criteria.

87 Partnership with the Local Authority and other agencies

87.1 The Group works positively with the local authority, and is a partner of the Manchester Housing Register, along with other partner organisations. We will continue to support partners to develop policies and systems that deliver the most effective outcomes for customers and communities.

87.2 If any new properties are acquired or developed by the Group, we will work positively with our partners and with the local authority to ensure that nominations are appropriate for the climate, and that any national drivers are effectively considered. We may consider neighbourhood lettings plans for individual estates and these policies will be designed to support the sustainability of the community.

88 Statutory and Legislative Framework

88.1 Housing Act 1985
Housing Act 1988
Housing Act 1996
Tenants Services Authority Framework – Tenancy Standard April 2010

89 Training

89.1 The Group Head of Customer Service and Insight shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy and will ensure that all staff involved in allocations are trained.

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90 Consultation, Monitoring and Review

90.1 The Allocations Policy will be reviewed every two years.

90.2 We will monitor our performance as follows:

- nominations - % of lettings to nominations and % failed
- number/percentage of lettings by category
- number/percentage of properties let on 1st offer
- numbers of refusals by reason
- tenancy terminations by reason
- lettings to BAME and disabled applicants

91 Associated Policies

Anti-Social Behaviour, Domestic Abuse & Hate Crime Policy

Tenancy Policy

Equality & Diversity Policy

Repairs Policy

Income Recovery Policy

Former Tenants Arrears Policy