

Extra Care Housing Allocations Procedure January 2020

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1.0 APPLICATION

To apply for a tenancy in an Extra-Care scheme an extra care housing application form must be completed and sent to the relevant Registered Social Landlord of the extra-care housing scheme identified. All applications will then be entered onto a waiting list and forwarded to the Housing Association Manager in that scheme, who will file them in date order.

2.0 ALLOCATION

Denbighshire Extra Care schemes have been developed in partnerships with Denbighshire County Council (DCC) and Registered Social Landlords (RSL). DCC and the relevant RSL will consider applicants who have been assessed and it is recommended that Extra Care would be suitable. These applications will be brought to the Screening and Allocations Panels.

In order that existing tenants are not disadvantaged in accessing Extra Care accommodation, up to 10% of net lettings per year may be allocated to transfer requests, provided that they meet the Extra Care allocations and eligibility criteria. Where there is a 'tie' between applicants in terms of their assessed needs and their need for housing-related support, the earlier date of application will be taken as the deciding factor. If agreement still cannot be reached, the matter should be referred to the Head of Extra Care at the relevant RSL and the Team Manager, Provider Services at DCC to resolve together. Should the waiting list become exhausted, the RSL will review the allocations and eligibility criteria, or make allocations to qualifying transfer applicants. The allocations and eligibility criteria will be reviewed by the RSL and DCC annually.

3.0 SCREENING PANEL

Screening Panel will meet approximately every 6 weeks. All referrals will be discussed at this Screening Panel meeting to identify which applicants currently qualify for Extra-Care and which do not.

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The multi-agency Screening Panel will consider new applications to the Extra-Care scheme and applicants who have had full assessments. The Screening Panel will consist of the following people:

- Housing Association Manager
- Extra Care and Support Manager
- Locality Management Team Representative
- Health Representative
- RSL Housing Officer

Other professionals or representatives may also be invited to meetings of the Allocations Panel, e.g. Social Workers, Community Psychiatric Nurses etc. as appropriate.

The Screening Panel will not take place unless the Housing Association Manager and the Extra Care and Support Manager, or their representatives are present. In addition, the Locality Team Manager or representative must also be present. Every effort will be made to include a representative from Health in the panel, although in exceptional circumstances the Housing Association Manager and the Extra Care and Support Manager can ask the District Nursing staff to comment separately on the nursing needs of applicants. This will take place prior to the Allocations Panel meeting.

The Screening Panel will consider:

- Is the information held for each applicant accurate and up-to-date?
- Can Extra-Care meet the assessed needs of the applicant?

The Housing Association Manager and the Extra Care and Support Manager will be responsible for ensuring that minutes of the meeting are kept to record attendance and decisions made in the Screening Panel meetings. This will include whether DCC or the RSL has nominated each applicant. A copy of the minutes will be made available to all panel members and will be held on file.

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A Tenant Assessment Matrix (Appendix 2) will be completed to record decisions made by the panel. The original record will be kept with the minutes of the meeting and a copy attached to each application form which has been considered.

Applications will be discussed to establish whether they meet the Stage 1 and 2 eligibility criteria. Applications that fulfil stage 1 criteria will be entered onto an initial waiting list. Those applicants who apply to a specific RSL and do not meet the Stage 1 criteria will be informed in writing by that RSL.

Where applicants meet Stage 1 criteria, the Extra Care & Support Manager will contact the Single Point of Access (SPoA) Team Manager at DCC. Names and addresses of applicants will be collated by the Extra Care & Support Manager and sent to the SPoA Manager who will liaise with the relevant teams to co-ordinate or update Assessments Documents and Care and Support Plans for each applicant. Risk assessments may also be required where relevant. As part of the assessment, allocated Social Workers will also obtain a District Nursing Assessment and any other professional who has been involved in the assessment such as Occupational Therapist, Community Psychiatric Nurse, Speech Therapist etc. for each applicant where this is indicated in the Unified Assessment process. Assessments should be completed within 28 days to avoid unnecessary delays.

The Housing Association Manager and Extra Care and Support Manager will visit each applicant. The purpose of this will be to identify the applicant's housing and care needs, assess how the applicant's assessed needs can be appropriately met in the scheme and to ensure that the applicant wishes to be considered for a vacancy.

Once this visit has been completed the application will be discussed at the next Screening Panel to ascertain whether they meet the Stage 2 Criteria. The relevant RSL will write to those who have met the Stage 2 criteria and invite them to visit the scheme.

Those who do not currently qualify for Extra-Care at the time may be placed on a waiting list. The relevant RSL will inform these applicants in writing that their application is not currently being considered for vacancies and that they should contact them should their circumstances change. Where an applicant has contacted the RSL with a relevant change of circumstances, their application will be treated as a new application.

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The RSL will write to applicants every six months to ensure that they still wish to be considered for a vacancy and to ask for any relevant information should the applicant's circumstances have changed.

4.0 ALLOCATIONS PANEL

The Allocations Panel will have the same membership as the Screening Panel. The panel will meet each time a unit of accommodation becomes vacant or when it is anticipated that a unit of accommodation will become vacant in the near future. Meetings will be called by the Housing Association Manager and chaired by a Senior Representative from Social Services. For a meeting to proceed there must be applicants who have been assessed and are waiting for a vacancy.

The principle of maintaining a mixed community must be considered by the Allocations Panel when making decisions about applications. The Housing Association Manager and the Extra Care and Support Manager will bring information to the meeting regarding the current balance within the scheme and will consider:

- The current profile of tenants' needs and dependency within the Extra Care scheme.
- Does the applicant meet the eligibility criteria for Extra Care?
- How urgent is the need to move to Extra-Care in terms of losing independence?
- Can the scheme currently meet the needs of the applicant?
- Does the applicant meet the requirement to balance the community in the Extra Care scheme?
- The location of the property

The Allocations Panel will decide which applicant(s) should be offered a tenancy and draw up a reserve list in case offers are refused or vacancies arise, which will be held by the Housing Association Manager and the Extra Care and Support Manager. If agreement cannot be reached, the decision will be referred to the Head of Extra Care at the relevant RSL and the Team Manager, Provider Services at DCC.

The Housing Association Manager and the Extra Care and Support Manager will be responsible for ensuring that minutes of the meeting are kept to record attendance and

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decisions made in the Allocations Panel meetings. This will include whether DCC or the RSL has nominated each applicant. A copy of the minutes will be made available to all panel members and will be held on file.

The relevant RSL will inform applicants in writing if they do not meet the eligibility criteria giving reasons for this decision and advice on how to reapply should their circumstances change. The applicant will be advised of their right to appeal against the decision and the process for doing so. The Housing Association Manager and the Extra Care and Support Manager will amend the waiting list accordingly.

Prospective tenants will be invited to visit the Extra-Care scheme and given the opportunity to meet existing tenants.

5.0 APPEALS

The appeals process can be used when an applicant disagrees with a decision. Since the RSLs will have offered a tenancy based on the decisions made by the Allocations Panel, any appeal can only consider an applicant's suitability for future vacancies. The appeals process is as follows:

- The applicant or their representative will submit in writing the reasons why they disagree with the decision within 14 days of receiving the decision in writing.
- The appeal will be considered by the Head of Service at DCC.
- A panel meeting will be convened if necessary.
- A decision will be reached.
- The person making the appeal will be informed in writing of the decision.
- A complaint may be made directly to either the RSL or DCC using established procedures. The Housing Association Manager or the Extra Care and Support Manager will be able to advise applicants about where to address their complaint. DCC and relevant RSL will consult with each other as appropriate over complaints that have been made.

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6.0 MUTUAL EXCHANGES

Due to the provisions of the Housing Act 1988, Assured Tenants have a right to mutually exchange their tenancies by way of assignment, with the approval of their Landlord. Due to the nature of Extra Care that approval will only be given where the assignee meets the Eligibility Criteria of the scheme. This is clearly essential to maintain the ethos of the scheme and to protect potentially vulnerable tenants.

7.0 SUCCESSION

The Housing Act 1988 also confers rights of Succession to certain persons upon the death of the Assured Tenant. A tenancy in an Extra Care scheme may therefore transfer to a person entitled to Succeed to the tenancy. Where such a person does not meet the eligibility criteria of the scheme, the Association will make an alternative offer of accommodation to that person elsewhere, in order to maintain the appropriate balance of care needs within the Extra Care scheme.

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Appendix 1 - Extra-Care eligibility criteria

Stage 1: Initial screening

Applicants should normally be over 60 years of age and preference will be given to applicants from within the Denbighshire County Council Area. This applies to both parties where a joint application is made and to people who will be living in the Extra-Care Scheme with the main applicant.

Applicants must have been assessed/reviewed by a DCC officer under the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) assessment criteria, and be unable, or be likely to become unable, to continue to live independently in their current home.

Applicants must be eligible for inclusion in accordance with the relevant RSLs policies and procedures. Persons who cannot apply include:

- Persons subject to immigration control as defined under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1996. Those who do not have Asylum Status nor right of leave to remain are subject to Home Office Control, and are not entitled to social housing.
- Applicants or members of their household whose past behaviour was an unacceptable standard, and continues to be so at the time of application to be serious enough to be unsuitable to become a tenant of the schemes. Each case will be considered on its own merits, and in deciding, the Association will consider suspending the application. The statutory definition of 'unacceptable behaviour' as defined in the Housing Act 1996 S160A (8) breaks down into three constituent questions each of which we need to address in succession:
 - a. Is one, or are more than one of the relevant grounds for possession made out by the circumstances of the past behaviour?
 - b. If so, would a court consider it reasonable to make an order for possession under Housing Acts 1985/1988? On the basis of that behaviour; and
 - c. If so, would a court make an outright order for possession?

All three questions must be answered with a 'yes' for the applicant to be ineligible for housing.

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Such behaviour includes, but not exclusively rent arrears, nuisance, using the dwelling housing or allowing it to be used for immoral or illegal purposes, threats of violence, condition of dwelling house, making false statements. RSLs will notify applicants who it considers to be ineligible for an allocation in writing, explaining their decision and the grounds for the decision.

Ineligible applicants can request a review within 10 working days from the date of notification. Review will be carried out by the Denbighshire County Council. The applicant will be notified in writing of the decision of the review. An applicant can reapply for accommodation at any time and provide proof that their behaviour has changed.

Stage 2: Screening Panel decision

Applicants must have been assessed by a DCC Officer and have a level of need significant enough to require Extra-Care housing.

Stage 3: Allocations Panel decision

Applicants must be at significant risk of losing their ability to live independently.

Applicants must be motivated to enjoy the benefits of having their own independent accommodation with appropriate support assessed and indicated on their care plan.

Applicants need to be able to gain access to other parts of the Extra-Care scheme with support as necessary.

Applicants will not be considered if they have an identified behaviour or condition which could put themselves, other tenants or staff at risk (a specialist report may be needed in some cases).

Applicants will be willing to be financially assessed for any services that are arranged through Community Support Services, and for their ability to meet the accommodation charges of the scheme.

Applicants will be willing to pay the rent, support and service charges of the accommodation, with the assistance of Housing Benefit if necessary.

**Appendix 2 - Denbighshire County Council and Registered Social Landlords Extra Care Schemes
Panel - TENANT ASSESSMENT REPORTING SHEET**

| CASE NO. | NAME & ADDRESS | CARE NEEDS | ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA | HOUSING ISSUES | OTHER ISSUES | RISKS | OUTCOME |
|----------|----------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|-------|---------|
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Appendix 3 – Extra Care Application Process

