

Chippenham Housing Co-operative Limited

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

PART ONE: DESCRIPTION OF THE POLICY

1. GENERAL

Chippenham Housing Co-op is a Fully Mutual Housing Co-operative, whose tenants must be full members of the Co-op. At present the Co-op owns and manages 4 houses in Chippenham Road, comprising 12 units.

Management of the Co-op is through regular Management Committee Meetings and occasional General Meetings. All members are eligible to attend, and are encouraged to do so. Management Committee Meetings are normally held at monthly intervals. Day to day matters are dealt with by sub-committees, the main ones being Secretarial, Finance and Maintenance. The Management Committee is elected at the AGM.

2. WESTMINSTER COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

The Co-op has a nominations agreement with Westminster City Council for any new developments.

Westminster City Council has agreed that those people nominated should be keen to participate in a housing co-operative and the Co-op will be able to interview the nominees and select someone who will meet the Co-op's criteria.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The Co-op aims to represent the whole community. It will encourage applications for membership from groups which are under represented within it. It has an equal opportunities policy to address this issue. Membership is a pre-requisite of a tenancy within the housing managed by the Co-op. Membership also carries responsibilities. Members are expected to attend Management Committee Meetings and contribute to the day-to-day running of the Co-op.

4. CRITERIA

Criteria for allocation of flats from the Co-op's waiting list

- a) Housing need, adequacy and permanency of present housing;
- b) How people who qualify under a) fit into the housing available to us;
- c) How much commitment to the Co-op there has been on the part of the candidate (eg attendance at Management Committee Meetings and active participation in sub-committees and other Co-op work)

5. PROCEDURE

a) For allocations from the Co-op's waiting list

If an allocation to a flat is required, the Management Committee Meeting will elect an Ad Hoc Allocations sub-committee. The convenor of this meeting will normally be someone who was a member of the previous Allocations sub-committee. That person will take charge of the Allocations File.

The sub-committee will meet as often as necessary to consider the applications for any vacancies, and to make a recommendation to the Management Committee based on the procedures outlined in Part Two.

Allocations will be confirmed by the Management Committee Meeting, on the decision of the Allocations sub-committee.

A Management Committee Meeting of the Co-op will receive a written report from the Allocations sub-committee including its decision. The Management Committee may only question the Allocations sub-committee's decision if it feels that the procedure has not been followed correctly.

If the allocation is required urgently, it may be necessary for the Secretary to call an Extraordinary Management Committee Meeting.

b) For Allocations to new development to council nominees

The Co-op will nominate two members to interview each nominee and assess their willingness to participate in the Co-op. The Co-op members will report back to the Management Committee who will make the final decision re the allocation.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The aim of the Co-op is to house people regardless of their race, colour, ethnic origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or religion

7. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed regularly by Co-op. Any member can propose changes, but the policy can only be changed by a majority vote at a Management Committee Meeting .

PART TWO: ALLOCATIONS PROCEDURE

ALLOCATIONS UNDER WESTMINSTER HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEMES

I. The procedure will start when the tenant(s) has indicated that they **are** committed to going through with the scheme. The Co-op will contact Westminster Housing and inform them that nominees are required, but will inform Westminster that we cannot guarantee that the transaction will be completed until contracts are exchanged and notice of intentions to vacate is received by the tenant(s).

2. Two Co-op members will be selected by the Secretary to interview nominees. The two members should not be related to any of the nominees or have any other personal interest in the nominations issue. Where possible, one of the members should see all nominees in order to present an overall view to the Management Committee. One of the members should also be a tenant of the house with the vacancy, in order to represent the views of the present inhabitants of the house.

3. Nominees will be sent a letter giving details of an appointment with the two Co-op members. Introductory information regarding the Co-op, including copies of policies and a sample tenancy agreement, will be included with the letter.

4. Westminster nominees are assumed to be in priority housing need and therefore the Co-op only needs to assess interest in participation. The two Co-op members will therefore assess each nominee's interest in the Co-op and the likelihood that they will be active member/tenant who will participate in the management and day to day running of the Co-op. Nominees will be asked to inform the Co-op whether they wish to be considered for membership and the tenancy.

5. The Co-op members will report back to the Management Committee giving their opinion re. the nominee(s) considered most likely to meet the Co-op's criteria. After discussion, the Management Committee Meeting will make the final decision.

6. The successful nominee will be offered the tenancy of the flat and will be invited to view the flat before making a decision. If they wish to take up the offer of a tenancy, they will be asked to attend the next Management Committee meeting. It may be necessary for the Secretary to call an Extraordinary Management committee Meeting if the allocation is required urgently.

7. The Secretary will write to those nominees who were unsuccessful.

8. If any nominee is not happy with the Co-op's decision, then they should take the issue up with Westminster Housing.

Please note:

Allocations under the Homebuy Scheme are governed by the relevant statute of the time.

ALLOCATION OF FAMILY FLATS NOT UNDER WESTMINSTER HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEMES

1. In the case of families, if the tenant parent(s) should die, an option on the tenancy of the family flat should be offered to the testamentary guardian of the child(ren).

2. The procedure will start when the Co-op is informed in writing by the tenants that they intend to vacate the property or when the Co-op is notified that they will receive a new property within the following two months.

3. The Secretary will inform all members that a vacancy exists and will invite applications from any members who wish to apply for a transfer. If there are no applications from Co-op members, then the procedure will be as per 'Allocation under Westminster Home Ownership schemes' as set out above. If there are applications from Co-op members then the allocations process will proceed along the points system as set out in 'Allocations from the Co-op's waiting list' below.

ALLOCATIONS FROM THE CO-OP'S WAITING LIST

The procedure will start either when the Co-op is informed in writing by a tenant that they intend to vacate a property or when the Co-op is notified that they will receive a new property within the following two months.

1. Advertising the Vacancy

- a) Once an Allocations sub-committee has been convened, it will notify all members and all people on the waiting list that a vacancy exists. All applicants will be sent a description of the vacancy asking if they still wish to be considered. People wishing to view the flat will be able to do so and should contact the secretary to make the arrangements.
- b) All applicants will be asked to notify the sub-committee of any changes in their circumstances and to provide a written summary of their contribution to the running of the Co-op.
- c) Replies should be returned to the Convenor of the Allocations sub-committee.
- d) Applications should be completed by the applicant and signed by them. Where this is not possible, it should be clearly stated that it has been completed by a representative on the applicant's behalf and the reason why

2. Election of the Allocations sub-committee

- a) An Allocations sub-committee will be elected at the next Management Committee Meeting following the notice received as above. A Management Committee Meeting may be called especially for this purpose if time is short.
- b) Any member can stand for election to the Allocations sub-committee as long as they are not a relative of any of the applicants or have any other personal interest in the application. Members should not stand if they cannot be objective and impartial while considering the application.
- c) The Convenor of the Allocations sub-committee will normally be someone who was a member of the previous Allocations sub-committee in order to provide continuity.
- d) The Allocations sub-committee will normally include one tenant of another flat within the house containing the flat to be allocated, in order to represent the views of the present inhabitants of the house
- e) The Allocations sub-committee will consist of five members. All of the volunteers/nominees can be accepted by a single vote in the Management Committee Meeting, unless there are any objections
- f) If any member objects to the presence of any individual on the Allocations sub-committee, a separate vote will be taken regarding that individual. Before the vote, the objecting person will be given the opportunity to state the reasons for the objection. After hearing the objection, the person standing for election will be given the opportunity to withdraw from the election. If they still want to stand, the vote will be taken
- g) Care will be taken to ensure that the sub-committee as elected is representative of the Co-op and impartial. Following the application, any member can appeal if they think the sub-committee or any member on it was not impartial
- h) If it is not practical for a new Allocations sub-committee to be elected, the last elected committee can be re-convened to consider the allocation.
- i) The following will be available in the Allocations file:
 - A copy of the Allocations Policy
 - All the applications which have been received and any updated information
 - Information supplied by applicants on their contribution to the Co-op
 - The Co-op meeting attendance record
 - Any other relevant information
- j) There should be no discussion of possible allocations outside the Allocations sub-committee meetings.

3. Reporting back to the Management Committee Meeting

- a) The Allocations sub-committee will consider the applications and make a recommendation based on the criteria described in Part Three.
- b) It will produce a written report detailing the points awarded to each applicant, the recommendation of the sub-committee and any other relevant information.
- c) The Allocations sub-committee report will be presented to the next Management Committee Meeting (or Extraordinary Meeting)
- d) A copy of the report will be available to each member at that meeting. Applicants will be informed of the right to appeal, and the procedure to adopt if they think that the allocation has been made improperly or unfairly.
- e) The Management Committee Meeting will hear the recommendation(s) of the Allocations subcommittee
- f) At this point appeals may be made by any applicant, and should be heard by the Meeting
- g) If the Meeting is not satisfied that the procedure has been carried out properly and fairly, whether an appeal has been made or not, it will ask the Allocations sub-committee to meet again to reconsider its recommendation. It may be appropriate to suspend the Meeting for a period of time so that the Allocations sub-committee can meet quickly and report back again.
- h) If the Meeting is satisfied that the procedure has been carried out fairly and properly it will accept the report and recommendation (by a majority vote of the quorate meeting) and the vacancy will be offered as recommended.
- i) The Secretary will be responsible for issuing the new tenancy to the successful applicant
- j) If the successful applicant refuses the offer, the Meeting will offer the vacancy to the applicant with the next highest number of points in the Allocations sub-committee report.

4. Appeals

Stage I

If an applicant believes that the procedures or result of the Allocations sub-committee were improper or unfair, they should appeal at the Meeting at which the allocation is decided or deliver a written appeal to the Secretary, to be received within 48 hours of the Meeting

Stage II

An Extraordinary Meeting must then be convened within seven days to review the Allocation. The Co-op should make a determined effort to settle the matter at this meeting. The allocation will be suspended pending the review. The decision of the Extraordinary Meeting is final. If any person is still dissatisfied they should then follow the complaints procedure

PART THREE: CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATION FROM CO-OP WAITING LIST

This details the criteria which the Allocations sub-committee must apply when making an allocation from the waiting list.

SUMMARY

The basis of the procedure will be the following points system:

Maximum points available:

1	Attendance at Management Committee Meetings and commitment to the Co-op	50 points
2	Housing need and circumstances	50 points
	Total available points	100 points

ELIGIBILITY

The following will be deemed ineligible and will not be awarded any points:

- Applicants who would either over occupy or under occupy the premises will not be awarded any points.
- Except where they can demonstrate special circumstances, any applicant who is in arrears with their rent will not be awarded any points.

The reasons for any such disqualification's will be included in the sub-committee's report to the Meeting

Where a couple is applying for a flat, the higher individual score will be taken to represent the couple, to allow 'fair competition' between couples and single people.

ALLOCATION OF POINTS

1. Commitment and Participation

i) Attendance at Management Committee Meetings

For each applicant, one point is awarded for each Management Committee Meeting or General Meeting attended in the previous three years over the statutory minimum of four meetings. up to a maximum of 10 points. The relevant information will be supplied by the Secretary, based on the Minutes of Meetings

Maximum points in this category 10

ii) Posts held within the Co-Op within the last three years

Posts held Treasurer, Chairperson Secretary, Rent Collector

Maximum points in this category 10

iii) Commitment to and work done for the Co-op

a) Attendance at sub-committee meetings

One point for each meeting attended during the last twelve months

Maximum points in this category 5

b) Specific tasks, eg decisions book, membership, insurance, dealing with surveyors, contractors, etc.

Maximum points in this category 10

c) Work done as representative of Co-op. eg attendance at external meetings.

Maximum points in this category 5

- d) Other unpaid work, eg minor repairs

Maximum points in this category 10

Each applicant must supply details of work done as part of the letter of application. These details will form the basis of the assessment of commitment to the Co-op and should include as much detail as possible, ie posts held, dates etc. It would be helpful if some sort of evidence was provided too.

The maximum points available for Length of membership, Attendance. Work Done and Commitment is 50.

2. Housing Need

i) Top Priority

Some emergency applicants may be given maximum points under the system and are classified as Top Priority. Top Priority is to be given in the event of an accident or disabling illness which has become critical, such that applicants are medically unable to live in their present accommodation (if the Co-op has suitable accommodation). Top Priority status is also awarded if the applicant is in a situation or actual danger such as domestic violence, racial harassment, sexual harassment.

Top Priority is also awarded in the event of the permanent breakdown of the relationship of an existing couple (This clause only applies to existing Co-op tenants). In these cases the Co-op will take great care to establish the actual circumstances of the applicant, who should provide whatever supporting evidence may be required.

Top Priority is also awarded if a Co-op tenant or tenants wish to transfer to a smaller flat, in order to facilitate the release of under occupied property.

50 points will be rewarded if Top Priority status can be established

ii) Housing Need

- a) Homelessness - if the applicant is statutorily homeless *20 points*

- b) Short Life - if the applicant is homeless but living in a short life property *10 points*

- c) Overcrowding - applications may be made on the basis that:
a single adult will require a single bedroom or studio flat
a couple will require a double bedroom
a child will require a bedroom separate from his/her parents
(two children of the same sex may share a bedroom)

5 points for each extra bedroom needed. maximum 10 points

- d) Medical factors - will have to be supported by a doctor's recommendation:
Medical Priority - if the applicant's present accommodation is causing

Medical Recommendation - if the applicant can manage in the present accommodation but whose doctor confirms that the tenant will gain real benefit to their health from a move

Maximum 5 points

- e) Condition of present accommodation

Maximum 5 points

- f) Security - e.g. threat of eviction, supported by evidence

Maximum 5 points

Each applicant must supply details of their housing need as part of their letter of application. The points for each applicant will be totalled and arranged in descending order of points

Maximum points available for Housing Need 50

3. Transfers within the Co-op

a) Tenants wishing to transfer to a larger flat

Such applicants will be considered alongside any other applicants, whether from inside or outside the Co-op.

b) Tenants wishing to transfer to a smaller flat

In order to facilitate the release of under occupied property, such applicants will be awarded Top Priority status.