

Title: Allocations Policy

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## **Allocations Policy**

### **How we will allocate our homes**

This policy applies to Christchurch Housing Society's homes. It sets out how we will allocate our homes and the eligibility and affordability criteria that apply to all tenants and applicants. It explains our priorities and provides assurance to our partners and customers that where we directly allocate homes to tenants and applicants, we will do so fairly and transparently.

### **Equality and diversity**

Equality and diversity reflect the core values of Christchurch Housing Society. We strive to ensure these values are embedded throughout all of the services we provide in addition to our policies, procedures and decision-making. We are committed to promoting an inclusive and diverse culture that treats every individual with dignity, respect and fairness. We will actively challenge discrimination and empower people to succeed. In order to ensure there are no barriers to making an application with Christchurch Housing Society

We will ensure that we allocate houses in a manner that is consistent with our Equality and Diversity Policy. We will not discriminate against anyone because of their age (other than the charitable object of housing older people), sex, marital status, sexuality, disability, race, nationality, language or social origin, or other personal features including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that help and support is provided to make an application for housing and that we discuss the housing options available that best match individual needs.

Our flats are built for active older people, and the Society does not provide 'sheltered' accommodation. The Society does not provide 'emergency' accommodation of any kind. We will consider applicants who are at risk of homelessness but generally Christchurch Housing Society is not best placed to resolve an applicant's urgent need for housing.

Applicants should be able to live independently or be receiving support from a relevant agency that enables them to live independently.

The Society wishes to ensure that our limited housing resources are allocated to those applicants who are most in need and who may not have the financial means to resolve their own housing situation.

From time to time, Christchurch Housing Society will offer accommodation to existing Christchurch Housing Society tenants where their move is urgent or where it helps Christchurch Housing Society meet our objectives.

### **Age qualification**

All our tenants must be over 60 years of age. However, we will accept applications from those aged 58 years or over, but accommodation will not be offered until applicant(s) are over 60 years of age.

### **Financial Consideration**

We will not consider applicants for accommodation if we consider applicants have the financial capacity to resolve their housing need themselves.

### **Residential Qualification**

In order to access our waiting list, applicant(s) must either have been born in, or have lived within, the Highcliffe, Christchurch, Bournemouth, and Poole area for at least five years during their lifetime.

There is some flexibility to the residential qualification, and we will consider exceptional circumstances. For example, an applicant giving or needing / receiving support from a relative who lives in one of these areas above.

### **Accommodation to be offered.**

The flats are designed either for one person ('single', mostly studio flats), or for two people ('double', one-bedroom flats).

We reserve the right to offer one-bedroom flats to single people in order to meet the society's objectives.

### **Pets**

We will not unreasonably refuse permission for an applicant to bring their pet with them. Our decision will be made upon the size and type of pet and have regard to the size, type of property and the animal's welfare. Each request will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

## Review of our waiting list

It is the applicant's responsibility to inform us of a change in circumstances that could affect their position on our list, or our ability to communicate with them.

We will review our waiting list at least once every 2 years to confirm applicants wish to remain on our waiting list. Those applicants who fail to renew their application will be removed. Applicants will have the right to appeal to their removal and will have access to our complaints policy.

## Allocation of points

We will allocate points in the following way:

Criteria	Points allocated
At risk of homelessness	75
Current property in poor condition	50
Under occupation in a social rented property	25 points per room
Statutory Overcrowding	50
Sharing in a shared house	30
In need of support from a family member	30
Discretionary points	150
Length of time on the waiting list	10 points per full calendar year

## Offering of accommodation

A shortlist of the 3 applicants with the most points will be produced for consideration by the Housing Manager. Where the number of points is identical, time on the list will be the overriding factor. The Housing Manager reserves the right to provisionally offer accommodation to any of the first 3 applicants but will usually provisionally offer the applicant with the most points first.

Applicants can choose specific locations where they would like to live but this could mean a longer wait where properties are in high demand.

All provisional offers are subject to satisfactory references. Christchurch Housing Society reserves the right to withdraw an offer made.

## Refusals

Applicants will be offered 2 suitable properties in their area of choice. Applicants may have their application suspended for 12 months should they refuse accommodation twice.

## Transfers

We only consider transfers where you can provide evidence of a medical condition that is made worse by the applicant's current accommodation and/or where applicants need to move to be closer to a family member for support or in other exceptional circumstances.

We will not consider a request to transfer an applicant from a first floor flat to a ground floor flat unless doing so is a requirement under fire safety regulations. In these circumstances, we cannot guarantee suitable accommodation will be on the same estate.

We may consider a transfer where your home has been assessed and cannot be improved either for structural reasons or adapted to meet your needs. You will need to demonstrate that moving to a new property will significantly improve your condition, or your ability to manage it. A supporting medical report from your GP or from Occupational Health will be the minimum requirement. The report will need to clearly set out the type of accommodation you require and the medical reason for it. It may be that CHS do not have properties of this type and readily available. In these circumstances we may offer you accommodation on a different estate or encourage you to seek support from BCP council.

We will make one reasonable offer that meets your needs as described above.

All transfer applicants will also be encouraged to seek a move via BCP Housing Register. BCP maybe better placed to deal with your requests for a move.

## Mutual Exchanges

Christchurch Housing Society tenants' do not have the right to exchange their home. Although we will consider requests and not unreasonably withhold permission.

We will refuse exchanges based on:

- An exchange between a tenant of another landlord.
- Size of accommodation too big or too small.
- Condition of property and where legal action has started, or the tenant is being evicted.
- Rent arrears or other debts outstanding.
- The property has been specially adapted or will need adaptations where those adaptations have not already been carried out.

Our decision to refuse an exchange is final however applicants have access to our complaints policy.