

Allocations and Lettings Policy

Version 1.1 [[link to v1.0](#)]

Pending adoption at Board Meeting February 2023

Objectives of this policy

The allocations policy has the following objectives:

- to enable the Stourbridge CLT to offer low cost housing to those who cannot meet their housing needs elsewhere
- to ensure that the Stourbridge CLT's homes are let in a timely and organised fashion and void rental loss is minimised
- to allocate and let properties in such a way as to maximise the potential for new members to become active within the Stourbridge CLT and/or the community, and to maximise the potential to establish a strong and balanced community
- to ensure that the Stourbridge CLT's Equal Opportunities Policy is implemented in allocations, transfers and exchanges
- to support the creative communities of Stourbridge

To achieve these policy objectives, Stourbridge CLT will operate a waiting list and interviewing system; it will also receive 50% nominations from Dudley MBC.

1. Equal opportunities

1.1 The Stourbridge CLT will ensure that its allocations policy does not discriminate against any applicant on the grounds of race, religion, gender, ethnic origin, age, disability or sexuality.

1.2 The Stourbridge CLT will ensure that its allocations policy abides by all relevant equal opportunities legislation including sections 20 & 21 of the Race Relations Act 1976, the Commission of Racial Equality Code of Practice, sections 2 & 30 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Stourbridge CLT will undertake to observe Section 15 of the Housing Act 1988 with regards housing staff, members and their close relatives. The Stourbridge CLT will also comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Code.

1.3 Applicants will be invited to describe their ethnic origin, sex and disabilities for monitoring purposes on the application form. Figures on applications and allocations will be compiled on an annual basis and if there is a wide variance between the percentage of allocations to minority groups and the surrounding population, the Stourbridge CLT will examine this issue.

1.4 Information on making an application in languages spoken within the local community, and in large print, braille and cassette, will be supplied to any applicant as necessary.

2. Access

2.1 Access will not be restricted by requesting deposits, rent in advance or by having residential qualifications. References will not be sought.

3. Applications

3.1 The Stourbridge CLT will allocate 50% of its properties to local authority nominees, and for each vacant property, will request 3 nominations from Dudley MBC.

3.2 The Stourbridge CLT will allocate the other 50% of its properties, and any properties for which Dudley MBC fail to make allocations for within reasonable timescales, to persons on the waiting list.

4. The waiting list

4.1 The joint waiting list will be publicised as widely and as fairly as possible. Particular regard will be given to advertising the joint waiting list to ethnic minorities and other potentially disadvantaged groups who may otherwise find it difficult to obtain housing.

4.2 The waiting list will be opened and closed at the discretion of the management committee Stourbridge CLTs. It will include new applicants and exchange applicants, and will include separate waiting lists for 1-bed, 2-bed, 3-bed and 4-bed accommodation. Membership of the waiting list will be reviewed once every 6 months.

4.3 A person who refuses 3 offers of accommodation without good reason will be removed from the waiting list.

4.4 Each applicant to the waiting list will be sent:

- information on Stourbridge CLT
- an application form to get onto the joint waiting list

4.5 Help and advice on completing the application form will be provided as requested.

5. Assessment of applications

5.1 Stourbridge CLT will nominate four members who will serve on an allocations sub-committee. The allocations sub-committee will consider applications to the waiting list. If any applicant is known personally by a member of the allocations sub-committee, that member should declare an interest and not be party to decision making about that application.

5.2 The Allocations sub-committee will invite all applicants to interview, and will interview applicants if they respond.

5.3 Interviews will normally be conducted at the applicant's current residence, unless there are particular reasons why this is not possible or unless this presents a security risk to any of the parties involved.

5.4 Interviews will be conducted by 2 members of the allocations sub-committee, who will give some information about how the Stourbridge CLTs work (paying particular regard to the unique nature of Stourbridge CLT, and that the properties are unfurnished).

5.5 The allocations sub-committee will assess each applicant according to the interview and their application form and will allocate each applicant to one of the three following lists:

1. A waiting list for those in severe housing need:

Those whom the allocations sub-committee consider to meet the following criteria will be placed on the waiting list for those in severe housing need:

- applicants who are homeless
- applicants living in severely overcrowded homes
- applicants facing extreme security of tenure issues
- applicants living in extremely poor quality housing
- applicants suffering extreme forms of harassment
- applicants with particular extreme medical conditions, infirmity, disability or criteria caused by the age of the applicant

2. A waiting list for those in housing need:

Those whom the allocations sub-committee consider to meet the following criteria will be placed on the waiting list for those in housing need:

- applicants who suffer from less extreme severe housing need criteria
- applicants living in non self contained accommodation
- applicants living in homes lacking facilities, such as access to a kitchen or bathroom
- applicants who need to live nearer to other family or household members
- applicants suffering due to family or other disputes
- applicants who need to live independently of their family or current household

3. A waiting list for those not in immediate housing need:

All other applicants will be placed on this list.

5.6 Each applicant will also be given a number of points based on the following criteria:

- the length of time the applicant has been on the joint waiting list (one point for each quarter)
- the applicant's likely involvement with one of the housing Stourbridge CLTs (up to a maximum of 20 points)
- Their involvement as a creative worker in Stourbridge (up to a maximum of 10 points)

5.7 The allocations sub-committee will also make an objective judgement on the applicant's likely involvement with Stourbridge CLT, based on:

- an assessment of whether the applicant will attend housing Stourbridge CLT meetings
- an assessment of the applicant's interest in Stourbridge CLT housing
- an assessment of whether the applicant is likely to get involved with a Stourbridge CLT
- the applicant's previous history of voluntary or community involvement
- the potential skills that the applicant is prepared to devote to the running of Stourbridge CLT

All successful applicants should demonstrate a willingness to get involved in the running of one of the Stourbridge CLTs.

5.8 The Stourbridge CLT will write to each applicant advising of the outcome, which waiting list they have been placed on and their current place on the relevant waiting list. If the allocation sub-committee believes that no suitable vacancies will be available in the foreseeable future, any relevant advice on other housing providers operating in the area will be provided.

5.9 Stourbridge CLT will hold induction sessions for applicants on the waiting list or for members recently allocated properties on a six monthly basis. Once an applicant has been interviewed and placed on a waiting list, they will be invited to attend the next Stourbridge CLT induction session, and meetings of Stourbridge CLT, and they will be informed that attendance and active involvement in a Stourbridge CLT may increase their chances of being housed.

The allocations sub-committee will update the points allocated under clause 5.3 on at least a quarterly basis to give extra points for the length of time the applicant has been on the waiting list, or to increase/decrease the number of points given for Stourbridge CLT involvement (dependent on whether the applicant has attended Stourbridge CLT meetings and shown particular interest in getting involved).

5.10 The allocations sub-committee will not place an applicant on any waiting list if:

- the applicant is able to buy their own home or if they already own their own home, unless there are particular mitigating circumstances
- Stourbridge CLT does not have properties that are suitable for the applicant.

5.11 No assessment will be made of the applicant’s housekeeping standards.

5.12 The Stourbridge CLT will not ordinarily house applicants who own their own home, or who are in a position to own their own home.

6. Offering properties

6.1 If a property is available for let, the allocations sub-committee members will determine whether the vacancy will be offered to Dudley MBC or to the joint waiting list.

6.2 If the property is to be offered to Dudley MBC the allocations sub-committee members will seek 3 nominations and will interview them according to the above criteria.

6.3 If the property is not to be offered to Dudley MBC, the property will be offered to the person with the most points on the severe housing need waiting list (for the appropriate category of property). If there is no suitable applicant on the severe housing need waiting list, the property will be offered to the person with the most points on the housing need waiting list. If there is no suitable applicant on the housing need waiting list, the property will be offered to the person with the most points on the not in housing need waiting list.

6.4 Once the successful applicant has accepted the property, they will be invited to a “handover” of the property at which:

- the new tenant will be given a copy of the Stourbridge CLT’s policies, and will be informed of the date and place of the next Stourbridge CLT meeting
- the new tenant will be invited to pay a £1 share to become a member of the Stourbridge CLT.
- if for any reason the prospective tenant refuses to pay a £1 share and become a member of the Stourbridge CLT, they will not be allowed to become a tenant of the Stourbridge CLT
- the Stourbridge CLT will explain fully the terms of the tenancy agreement and the tenancy agreement will be signed by the new tenant(s) and a Stourbridge CLT representative
- particularly if the new tenant has previously been a local authority or housing association tenant, the differences between statutory and contractual tenancies will be explained, particularly in relation to the Right to Buy
- the Stourbridge CLT will explain how the new tenant can pay their rent to the Stourbridge CLT and will offer help to the tenant with housing benefit applications
- other information about the property and area will be given to the new tenant

6.5 The successful applicant will be formally agreed as a member of the Stourbridge CLT at the next Stourbridge CLT meeting.

7. Transfers & exchanges

7.1 Prior to requesting nominations from the local authority, the allocations sub-committee members will also consider whether there are requests for transfer from existing Stourbridge CLT tenants. A transfer application will only be accepted if the property to which the member wishes to transfer is suitable for their needs. If there is more than one Stourbridge CLT member seeking transfer to a particular property, priority will be given to the Stourbridge CLT member who has been most active within the Stourbridge CLT for the longest period of time. If a transfer application is accepted, the Stourbridge CLT will seek nominations from either Dudley MBC or the joint waiting list for the property they are vacating.

7.2 The Stourbridge CLT will receive requests for transfer from members with rent arrears, but at the point of transfer, there should be no arrears outstanding on the tenant's rent account. The Stourbridge CLT may be prepared to make an exception to this if the transfer is on the grounds of racial or other harassment including domestic violence, urgent medical grounds or other social reasons (for which reasonable evidence will be required). In these cases, the tenant will be asked to sign a form accepting responsibility for their rent arrears.

7.3 Members will be allowed to carry out mutual exchanges with other tenants of the Stourbridge CLT, and other social landlords who give assured or secure tenancies, provided the incoming tenant(s) meet the Stourbridge CLT's membership criteria; both properties are suitable to the housing needs of the parties and the allocations sub committee members approve membership.

7.4 The Stourbridge CLT will participate in the HOMES mobility scheme where appropriate. For each tenant(s) of the Stourbridge CLT allocated an alternative home under the HOMES mobility scheme, a Stourbridge CLT property will be made available to the HOMES scheme.

8. Joint tenancies

8.1 All persons residing in each property over the age of 18 will be eligible for membership of the Stourbridge CLT. All persons over the age of 18 who become members of the Stourbridge CLT will have to be listed as joint tenants of the property, and all tenants listed on the tenancy agreement must become members of the Stourbridge CLT.

8.2 In the event of a partnership breakdown, where one tenant has to move out of the property, the tenancy will normally be transferred to the member who has custody of children living in the property, subject to any court determination.

8.3 The Stourbridge CLT does not have the facility and will not be obliged to offer alternative accommodation to other joint tenant(s). A joint tenant's membership of the Stourbridge CLT will cease if they move out of the property. However, under such circumstances, a joint tenant may apply to the joint waiting list and will be assessed according to the relevant criteria.

9. Reporting

9.1 The Stourbridge CLT will keep records of all nominations and allocations decisions.

10. Appeals

10.1 Applicants to the joint waiting list, and applicants for transfer are entitled to appeal against the following decisions:

- which category of housing need an applicant is placed in
- the points awarded for time spent on the joint waiting list or for Stourbridge CLT involvement
- the refusal of a transfer request when there is an available property within the Stourbridge CLT

10.2 Appeals should be put in writing to the Stourbridge CLT's registered address. The Management Committee will nominate one its members (not one of the members of the allocations sub-committee) to investigate the matter and report back to the Management Committee. The Management Committee will respond in writing to the person who made the appeal outlining whether the Management Committee agrees with the previous decision or whether it has upheld the appeal.