

Lettings Policy (Community Support Accommodation)

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POLICY FOR LETTINGS OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT ACCOMMODATION

POLICY

1.0 Principles

- 1.1. To accommodate people who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness and who are in need of and accepting of support in their transition to independent living.
- 1.2 To be accountable to stakeholders and funders, including the local authority and referral agents, and ensure that our community support services are provided to people meeting the eligibility criteria for the service and in the greatest need.
- 1.3 To make optimum use of our properties and minimise void losses, allowing that lettings may be deferred to allocate rooms/flats appropriately, considering the specific needs of clients.
- 1.4 To take a risk-based approach to the types of tenancies we offer i.e. licences or assured shorthold tenancies, taking into account the likelihood for rent arrears and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.5 To enable transfer between our Community Support accommodation services where the needs of an individual may be better met.
- 1.6 Subject to the above, to ensure equality of opportunity in the selection and allocation of accommodation.
- 1.7 To assist the local housing authorities, and children's and adult services to fulfill their statutory duties towards homeless people in need of support.

2.0 Scope of policy

- 2.1 This lettings policy applies to CHS's directly managed schemes for designated groups as follows:
 - 1 Wheatsheaf Close, Ely - young single people aged 16 to 25
 - Young Futures Support Service, Cambridge – young single people aged 16-25 (referrals are via the Young Futures Partnership)
 - 82 Russell Street, Cambridge – single adults (18-64) with a learning disability, or who are on the autistic spectrum
 - Young Parent Project 31-38 Peter Maitland Court, Cambridge – single young parents, or expectant (at least 6 months pregnant) mothers, aged 16-25
 - 40 Norwich Street, Cambridge – single adults (18-64) with a learning disability, or related difficulty or who are on the autistic spectrum.

- Alison House, Cambridge- single adults (18-64) with a learning disability, or who are on the autistic spectrum
- Corona House Cambridge– single women with mental health difficulties (18-64)
- 204 Norwich Road Wisbech – young single people who are in care and are aged 16-17
- In partnership services where CHS provides a supported housing management service only and where support to residents is provided by a third party, we work closely with them to ensure that eligibility criteria for the service is met. As the landlord, CHS makes the letting and therefore has the final say on whether accommodation is offered.

3.0 Applications

- 3.1 In general referrals may be made by any statutory or voluntary agency, or individual, who has contact with these client groups. Individuals may also self-refer. 204 Norwich Road only receives referrals from Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Children’s Resources Teams. Applications to the Young Futures Support Services accommodation are via the Inform system used by the Young Futures Partnership.
- 3.2 Consideration for a place is based on the following criteria:
- 3.2.1 Strengths, and needs assessment which ascertains the applicant’s need for support and housing;
- 3.2.2 Risk assessment and safety planning to ascertain the degree to which they present a significant risk to themselves, other occupants or staff;
- 3.2.3 The degree to which they are likely to benefit from the opportunity and degree of motivation to use the support offered;
- 3.2.4 Whether they face one or more of the following situations:
- (a) Is believed to be at serious risk of harm if he/she remains where they currently are.
 - (b) Is currently residing in a children's resource centre, or with foster parents, or is leaving hospital, care or residential education and feels unable for the time being to adapt to a fully independent lifestyle, or is unable to go back to his/her parental home or to relatives, is street homeless or sofa-surfing.
 - (c) Has been, or is about to be, evicted from the family home or wherever else he/she is currently staying, and has no appropriate alternative accommodation
 - (d) Is failing to cope in their accommodation due to lack of the necessary life skills or ability to take responsibility.
- 3.3. Those over the age limit may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

- 3.4 Young parents must be capable of taking full responsibility for the care of their baby.
- 3.5 Applicants to the Young Parent Project - 31-38 Peter Maitland Court, will only be considered where the applicant and baby are assured of move-on accommodation via the local authority at the end of the placement. The young parent may be male or female. Mothers are usually at least 6 months pregnant on admission.
- 3.6 Out-of-County placements may be taken though it is expected that the applicant will have local connections.

4.0 Equality & Diversity

- 4.1 Subject to the age criteria, applications are welcomed from all groups – i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation
- 4.2 The schemes are not intended for people with serious offending or criminal behaviour, or severe learning disability or mental health needs, unless our risk assessment and safety planning deem them suitable.
- 4.3 Applications from people who would pose a serious risk to the safety and welfare of other clients and staff will be refused.
- 4.4 People on release from a custodial environment, or subject to a Court Order, will be considered, subject to risk and needs assessment.
- 4.5 Applicants who have a recent history of significant substance misuse (Class A drugs/alcoholism) must be participating in a programme of rehabilitation.
- 4.6 Apart from Wheatsheaf Close and Corona House, which have accommodation adapted to meet the needs of those with mobility issues, the schemes are not suitable for wheelchair users – though reasonable aids and adaptations may be considered for non-wheelchair users, in line with our Aids and Adaptations Policy.

5.0 Right of Appeal

We use the principles and criteria in this policy when considering appeals against decisions on lettings. If a customer is dissatisfied with a decision taken by CHS in respect of their application for housing, they may appeal to a Community Support Manager within 7 days of being informed of the decision (or to the Director of Communities if the Manager was involved in the original decision)- It may not be possible to delay re-letting a property while an appeal is being considered however the outcome of the appeal may help to inform a future allocation decision for the applicant.

6.0 Monitoring

CHS's Customer and Homes Committee receives an annual report on lettings in the first meeting following the end of its financial year. Quaterly monitoring also takes

place on the satisfaction of customers with the lettings process, and on BAME lettings against target.

7.0 "CORE"

CHS participates fully in the CORE (Continuous REcording) system for monitoring the characteristics of new tenants e.g. age, income, employment status, reason for re-housing. The data provides central government with statistical data on trends in social lettings over time. Although any information sent to the CORE system is entirely anonymous, the data is covered by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and once submitted digitally to CORE the paper record completed with the new tenant is destroyed.

8.0 Access to Information

All customers have the right to see information held about them by CHS or provided about them or by a third party (e.g. GP, Social Worker, previous landlord), if the third party agrees. CHS also ensures it meets the requirements of the General Data Protection Data regulation (GDPR) and signposts all customers including those applying for housing to its privacy notices.

9.0 Lettings to Staff/Committee Members/their relatives

CHS may offer accommodation to its employees, former employees, or their relatives, or Board or Committee members or their relatives. However such a person would receive exactly the same consideration as any other customer and would be given no priority because of their connection with CHS. They would also have no involvement or influence over the decision-making process.