

# How We Allocate our Homes

**At PCHA we are committed to providing excellent homes and services to residents and helping to build strong and sustainable communities where people want to live and work. We recognise that our homes are a valuable resource that should be allocated in an efficient, fair, open and transparent way.**

PCHA does not operate a waiting list for our general housing and will not normally consider direct applications from individuals seeking housing. We work closely with local authority partners, to ensure we contribute to meeting local housing needs and building sustainable communities.

However, we do maintain a direct waiting list for internal transfers and hold a separate waiting list for studio flats, which are not required to be placed with our local authority partners.

Our Allocations and Lettings Policy applies to all PCHA's homes for rent; however, we also have individual contracts and nomination agreements that apply to some individual schemes or services. Our Policy sets out our objectives in full and is available on request.



## Who do we house and how do we allocate our homes?

PCHA provides rented housing to a wide range of people with a range of different needs such as:

- Families
- Single people with support needs and or disabilities
- Single people with mental health concerns (Stafford House)
- Older persons
- Keyworkers / single people on low incomes.

We allocate our homes through four main routes:

- Nomination agreements
- Choice-based lettings
- Transfers (for existing residents)
- Referrals from other agencies.



## Nominations and Referrals "

We work in partnership with local authority partners offering a percentage of properties to nominees from their housing registers. We will request an appropriate level of personal household information from our local authority partners in order for us to make a sensitive and appropriate allocation. *(continued)*



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We work with our partners to verify any information given by applicants to ensure that our housing is allocated and let appropriately; this will be done by interview/assessment.

Occasionally, we may need to reject a nomination. Grounds for rejection will vary, but we may reject an application or withdraw an offer if:

- We receive incomplete or inaccurate information
- We cannot verify the information provided
- We believe the property isn't suitable for the applicant's needs
- We believe we cannot provide the support required
- We believe the applicant may cause harm, or present a risk, to other residents, the service or the staff.

We also carry out a financial assessment, risk assessment and an external check on the applicant to verify information.

We also work with a number of other agencies from whom we may accept referrals.

## Choice-Based Lettings

Where Local Authorities operate a choice-based lettings scheme, we will use these schemes to increase applicants' choice about where they live.

## Transfers and Mutual Exchanges

PCHA operates a choice-based transfer scheme for existing residents who want to move from their present home because it is no longer suitable for their needs. For details of our Transfer Policy and how to complete a Mutual Exchange please refer to our leaflet "Transfers and Mutual Exchanges".

We encourage residents who apply for a transfer to also explore other ways of moving home. They will be given information and advice on other housing options including mutual exchanges, mobility schemes, private rented and low-cost home ownership schemes. PCHA pays for HomeSwapper to encourage resident mobility and choice, and as such all transfer applicants will be expected to register with HomeSwapper for mutual exchange (<https://www.homeswapper.co.uk/>). They will also be encouraged to register with their local authority for housing.



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## Tenancy Types

PCHA will let its properties using a range of tenancy agreements depending on the circumstances and the properties. Our general approach is to offer 12-month starter tenancies to all new residents in the first instance. For further details about the tenancies we offer, please see our leaflet “Your Tenancy Explained”.



## Overcrowding / under-occupation

We recognise that a household’s size can change over time. Tackling both overcrowding and under-occupation (where a property has one or more bedrooms that are not being used regularly as a bedroom) are key factors in improving life chances of our potential and existing residents. We wish to encourage release of under-occupied properties which are needed for family housing, and we will take part in cross-landlord arrangements for encouraging under-occupation moves to help release large homes for overcrowded families.

Details of our approach to these issues, including incentives to downsize, are provided in our Allocations and Lettings Policy.

## Property and household size

We set a property size relative to household size, and will normally stick to this guideline when allocating properties.

## Other principles for allocating our homes

We are committed to operating a high-quality and fair lettings service. To ensure this we apply principles and require appropriate evidence to support applications. Details are set out in our Allocations and Lettings Policy.

Irrespective of an individual’s housing need or the source of the nomination, where we feel that an allocation could have a detrimental effect upon the local community or where an applicant’s needs are so complex that we will be unable to support them, we may refuse an application. In such circumstances we will refer them back to the local authority for an alternative housing.



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## **Affordable Rents**

Some PCHA homes are let at sub-market rents, as a condition of the government's 'Affordable Rent' regime. The rents for these homes are significantly higher than traditional social rents. Whilst the allocation of these homes will be in accordance with our Allocations and Lettings Policy, some extra measures will apply regarding financial assessment criteria for applicants.

## **Supported housing – Stafford House**

We offer a partially supported housing scheme at Stafford House providing “move on” or “step down” accommodation. Our allocations policy and processes for Stafford House are detailed in a separate leaflet available on request.

## **Applicants without Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK**

Details and requirements for those affected by the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) are set out in our Allocations and Lettings Policy. Additionally, refugees and people with discretionary leave, humanitarian protection and exceptional leave to remain all have the right to apply for housing and to claim housing benefit, with no requirement that they be habitually resident.



## **Housing ex-offenders**

Arrangements for considering applications from ex-offenders are set out in our Allocations and Lettings Policy.

## **Exclusions to accessing PCHA homes**

PCHA will not create artificial barriers to accessing housing, but may exclude an applicant from being considered for housing in certain circumstances. Examples of these are detailed in our Allocations and Lettings Policy.

## **Further information**

If you would like to discuss your need for housing or further information about our Allocations and Lettings Policy, please contact one of our team by phone on **0208 659 3055** or email [housing@pcha.co.uk](mailto:housing@pcha.co.uk), or complete the contact form on our website: go to the 'Our Homes' menu and 'How to Apply for Housing'.

