



Allocations and Lettings Policy

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1. The Purpose of this Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out Wandle's approach to the allocation and letting of our social rent and affordable rented homes and the options available to people who want to live in a Wandle property.
- 1.2 Wandle is committed to providing well managed homes, which are allocated through the lettings service in a way that is transparent, fair and efficient whilst also ensuring void times are kept to a minimum.
- 1.3 Our allocation and letting policy sets how we will work in partnership and build relationships with our local authority partners, to assist them to meet their statutory obligations to people in housing need, and increase choice and mobility for existing residents by making better use of stock and creating mixed and sustainable communities.

2. Policy Scope, Roles and Responsibilities

2. Scope

This policy covers General Needs tenants, Affordable Rent, Key Workers, designated housing for older people and supported housing properties managed and owned by Wandle.

The Policy does not apply to;

- Wandle properties managed by another agent, unless specified in the management agreement

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

- The Board is responsible for setting Wandle's strategic direction and for establishing policies and plans to achieve Wandle's key objectives. It provides systems of control and a framework of delegation to the Directors and employees of Wandle.
- The Executive Director of Customer Services is the designated Executive responsible for this policy.
- The Head of Housing is responsible for ensuring overall adherence to the policy. The Operational Housing Services Managers will ensure the policy is implemented by Officers and promote the aims and objectives across the organisation.

3. Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

3.1 Regulatory Code and Legal Framework

By publishing this policy we aim to ensure compliance with the Homes & Communities Agency's (HCA) Tenancy Standard, Home Standard and Affordable Rent Framework. The Social Housing Regulatory Framework stipulates that:

Registered providers shall let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way" which takes "into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants."

Registered providers are required to demonstrate how they:

- Make the best use of available housing;
- Are compatible with the purpose of the housing;
- Contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities. Therefore we will take into consideration the housing strategies of our partner local authorities and where possible we will work with them to address their identified housing priorities

The framework also requires registered providers to demonstrate "a clear application, decision-making and appeals process."

4. Policy Objectives

4.1 Policy Objectives

- Wandle is committed to working with and supporting our local authority partners to help them meet their identified local housing needs.

We will;

- ensure that the way we allocate our homes is fair and transparent which does not discriminate against any person or group.
- let our homes in an efficient and timely manner, whilst also being sympathetic to the needs of applicants.
- provide social housing for those who need it most for as long as they need it.
- offer and enable extra support to vulnerable residents
- provide residents with clear information on their rehousing options
- work with residents, applicants and local authority partners, to minimise potential financial hardship from under-occupation, due to the bedroom tax and other welfare benefit changes reform.
- ensure we meet the aspirations of residents who may not see social housing as a tenure for life and focus our product for those who can demonstrate a need for social housing.
- make the best use of our stock to house those in need of affordable housing and increase housing supply.

5. Our Approach

5.1 Guiding Principles

- Wandle operates in several local authority areas, each with different nomination arrangements and allocations policies. Demand for properties can vary greatly as there are many different local issues. Our priority will be to continue to work in partnership with local authorities to meet local housing needs and create diverse and sustainable communities through nomination agreements, choice based lettings (CBL) and local letting plans.

- We will allocate our homes based on housing needs, suitability, legislation, eligibility and in accordance with local authority nomination agreements and CBL schemes.
- Households requiring specially adapted homes will be prioritised for homes which meet their needs. Local authorities will be notified of any existing adaptations in void properties and CBL adverts will also be tailored to make potential applicants aware of these.
- Where any Wandle household is under-occupying their present accommodation and wish to move to a smaller home, we will do our utmost to assist this process. Wandle will offer assistance and support in a variety of ways including advice on moving and support in finding the right home for them.
- Wandle will not operate its own transfer list and Wandle residents whose homes no longer meet their needs and who need or wish to move to an alternative property or area, must register on the appropriate local authority common housing list scheme.
- Where local authority partners do not have access to empty properties through nomination agreements, we will negotiate with them for the allocation of properties directly by Wandle, if urgently required.
- We will continue to promote alternative housing options for current Wandle residents; for example mutual exchanges. We will do this through mutual exchange schemes and other national and local options.

5.2 Property, Household Size and Eligibility

The demand for social housing exceeds supply. Therefore we will maximise the use of available accommodation, to ensure our properties are fully occupied but not creating overcrowding. Wandle has taken into account the size criteria set out in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (as amended) and has applied the following size criteria for its properties. See appendix 1.

5.2.1 Property and Household size Household Size

One bedroom is allowed as follows:

- For the applicant and their partner if they have one (includes spouses, civil partner or person with whom the applicant lives as their long term partner)
- For every two children of the same sex – e.g. two boys or two girls up the age of 18
- For two children of opposite sexes where both are aged under 10.
- For an adult carer (if there is a need for a live in carer and this is shown on a care assessment)
- For every other adult (over the age of 18) or adult couple in the household

Exception to size criteria

- We will not normally take into account unborn children or people joining the household at a later date when determining the application. However we may take into account an unborn child or person soon to join the household if it will make the household **statutorily** overcrowded.
- Where applicants have access/staying contact with children, the children will only be counted on one application. This will normally be where the child or children spend the majority of their time. Access arrangements and agreements between parties or made by the courts will need to be evidenced
- Exceptions may be made for household members who must show evidence that they were part of the household coming out of social services care, from the Armed Services or for fostering/adoption purposes
- By preference under a CBL system e.g. under occupiers who wish to down size to a smaller property but one that still exceeds their specific needs
- Where a local lettings plan is in place
- By agreement with the local authority for their nominations
- Where there is low demand
- Where there is an urgent move under our management transfer or decant process.

5.2.2 Definition of Bedroom Size

In allocating a single or double bedroom Wandle uses the guidelines based on the Housing Act 1985 Part X clause 326 (3)(b) as follows:

- A double bedroom is one not smaller than 10 square metres.
- A single bedroom is one not smaller than 6.5 square meters.

We will not reclassify the property size for an existing Wandle property if the size of a bedroom is less than the definition of bedroom size set out in this policy

5.2.3 Eligibility

All applicants for a Wandle tenancy must be eligible. Where a joint tenancy is requested both applicants must be eligible. If an applicant has held a probationary or fixed term tenancy they must be eligible at the end of that period in order to be offered a new tenancy /renewal of tenancy.

To be eligible to be a Wandle tenant the applicant must:

- Be over 18 years of age (in exceptional circumstance we may offer a tenancy to someone who is over 16, and an adult guarantor will be required to hold the tenancy in trust in accordance with our tenancy management policy.
- Be over 18 and qualifies for the tenancy by way of assignment on the grounds succession following the death of the tenant
- Have capacity to hold a tenancy and be assessed as in housing need by Wandle.
- Be a permanent resident in the UK

- To not hold an interest in another property
- Be nominated by a local authority under the terms of their housing allocation policy
- Not be exempt from holding a tenancy because of immigration status. In general this means either holding a British passport or having been granted leave to remain
- **Meet one of the following criteria**
- Have been nominated to Wandle by a local authority or other recognised nominating body under the terms of a nomination agreements
 - Be a keyworker. See appendix 2
 - Be an applicant of another housing association or local authority who is exchanging homes with a Wandle tenant e.g. mutual exchange.
 - Referred by one of Wandle's agreed referral agencies and the provisions of the Right to Rent are met

5.3 Access to Wandle Homes

When a property becomes available for letting it may be let as follows:

- Local Authority nominee
- Wandle transferring tenants (Solomons Passage)
- Direct applicants

5.3.1 Local Authority Nominations

- The majority of Wandle's applicants are sourced from local authorities who nominate applicants for housing when a property becomes available. Agreements are in place between Wandle and its partner local authorities that govern and dictate the proportion of homes that Wandle is required to make available for local authority applicants.
- While Wandle is contracted to make 100% of void properties available for some local authorities in others the proportion may be between 50% or 75%. Therefore as part of our approach we will offer the local authority 100% of nominations but will retain the right in urgent circumstances to use these nominations in consultation with local authority partners the option to make direct offers when required.
- We will verify the details of all applicants supplied by local authorities or any other agency prior to making any offer of accommodation. We will assess each nominated household in order to determine eligibility, affordability and suitability to the home they have been nominated to. This will also include credit reference checks where required.
- Wandle will request relevant information for all nominations to enable a risk assessment to be undertaken as part of the accompanied viewing and prior to the offering of any tenancy. The risk assessment may include discussing the applicant's history with previous landlords, or agencies such as the police,

mental health teams, primary care trusts, social services and alcohol or drug agencies. We may carry out a home visit or ask that the applicant attends an appointment at Wandle's office. This approach is to ensure support needs for applicants are identified early and can be arranged as well as the duty to not to place Wandle staff at risk in the course of their duties.

5.3.2 Wandle will require the following information about local authority applicants and nominees

- Name, date of birth, ethnic origin, nationality and national insurance numbers of the lead applicants
- Current address, type of accommodation moving from and household composition and tenancy type.
- Details of any long term illness , health problem or disability that may require specific specialist support, or any other care and support packages
- Relevant information about previous tenancies including maintaining conditions of their tenancies such as payments of rent and any history of anti-social behavior , harassment , or domestic abuse perpetrated by any household members , visitors or guests to their property

5.3.3 If the local authority fails to provide the information required to assist Wandle fully risk assess an applicant we may reject the application. However we may consider the applicant for an alternative property that is more suitable and all applicants will be considered on its merits provided an appropriate support package is in place to meet their needs.

5.4 Transferring Wandle Tenants

Wandle does not operate an internal transfer list and tenants will be required to register on the appropriate local authority list though the local authority common housing register and be prioritised accordingly. The majority of Wandle's local authority partners operate a choice based lettings (CBL) scheme for the allocation of applicants. Wandle recognises that these schemes may be difficult to engage with for many people and will endeavor to actively support all residents with the process.

Wandle will enter into agreement with local authority partners to ensure Wandle tenants are awarded the same priority as local authority tenants. This will require for some local authorities Wandle offering 100% of voids becoming available to let.

General information on CBL as well as links to the various schemes can be found on Wandle's website and we will have information on the details of local authority local schemes. This information will be available in a variety of languages and formats to ensure no one is excluded from participating in CBL.

Wandle residents will also be advised where appropriate to seek a mutual exchange. Wandle has signed up to mutual exchange schemes to enable tenants to access this mobility option free of charge. Wandle will actively signpost such routes and will provide support to residents wishing to take up these opportunities.

However in specific circumstances in agreement with local authority partners properties will be directly offered to Wandle tenants and applicants in accordance with specific priorities as set out in appendix 3 and as follows:

5.4.1 Wandle Decanting Tenants

Vacant properties may be let to decanting tenants who are being re-housed because they have to move to carry out major repairs, improvement or redevelopment work or because the property is to be demolished or sold in line with Wandle's Decant Policy, Solomons Passage Allocations policy and Wandle's Asset management strategy

5.4.2 Wandle Management Transfer Cases

An empty property may be allocated directly to a Wandle tenants as a management transfer in the following circumstances and will be managed in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures

- Urgent social reasons (threat to harm or life)
- Domestic abuse or severe anti- social behaviour
- Under occupying successors
- Tenants wanting to move to Wandle Older Persons designated scheme

5.4.3 Direct Applications

In certain circumstances a home may be allocated directly to a specific applicant outside of the normal lettings process with agreement by the local authority.

- Where a management move has been agreed in line with Wandle's Management transfer procedure (See above) and a recommendation from Multi Agency (MARAC) has been received.
- Where there is specific and exceptional medical need evidenced by the tenant with an independent medical assessment and agreed by the local authority and we cannot address these needs through the normal processes.
- Where the tenant's home is being repaired or disposed of and they need to be moved from their home permanently or temporarily.
- Where the tenant is statutorily overcrowded and the local authority cannot assist.
- Where the property has exceptional facilities that match the needs of a particular client group and that these facilities would otherwise be under-utilised.
- To support Wandle deliver its housing management function by making better use of stock and supporting us to meet our contractual and statutory obligations to applicants who are eligible to succeed to a Wandle tenancy.
- Where we have the ability to advertise and allocate properties as they are not required to be allocated to the local authority we will determine the appropriate route to allocate the property based on local housing demand as well as past outcomes of advertising on choice based letting schemes.
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- The routes but not limited to:
 - Wandle managed direct offer list
 - Direct offer with an approved agency
 - Alternative local authority area waiting list

6. Hard to Let Properties

6.1 Wandle will consider a property as hard to let in the following circumstances

- A property has been advertised on two CBL advertising cycles and or four weeks and there has been no expression of interest.
 - A property has been offered to the local authority in accordance with the nomination agreement and has been refused by three or more applicants or Wandle has rejected three or more applicants based on the affordability criteria
- 6.2 Where the condition or layout of the property is making it difficult to let we will consider the following:
- Enhance the specification of works e.g. full decoration or carpeting before letting
 - Increase the value of the decoration allowance
 - Disposal of the property in line with Wandle's Asset Options Appraisal process.
 - Relax occupation restrictions
 - Offer to an adult non dependant member of an overcrowded household to alleviate statutorily overcrowded household
- 6.3 Where we are unable to allocate a property through our normal routes we reserve the right to seek applicants from alternative sources as stated above.

7. Affordability

- 7.1 We will carry out an affordability assessments on all applicants to assess that the applicant is able to afford the rent for the property without being unable to meet their other outgoings, therefore we will do the following
- The property is the appropriate size and not subject to the size criteria reductions.
 - That the affordability assessment determine the property is affordable
 - The applicant's age e.g. young person aged 21 or a single person under the age of 35 may mean that they do not qualify for housing benefit entitlement.
- 7.2 **Generally we will aim to meet the objective that no household should pay in excess of 40% of their net household income on housing costs rent including charges**
- 7.3 If an applicant fails our affordability test we may still agree to grant a tenancy. We will consider offering those under aged 21 and single applicants under the age of 35 a one year fixed term tenancy, this will be conditional on the applicant engaging with the community investment team to secure training and employment opportunities to mitigate the impact of welfare benefits. If at the end of the one year period employment has not been secured and there are arrears the tenancy will be brought to an end on the grounds the tenancy is not affordable
- 7.4 Applicants will pass our affordability test if they are in receipt of full housing benefit or universal credit.

8 Lettings to Applicants Under 18

- 8.1 Applicants under the age of 18 cannot hold a legal interest in land. Applicants under the age of 18 years will be offered an equitable tenancy which should be in the name of the legal guarantor up until the age of 18. The guarantor should be a family member or social worker.

9 Local Lettings Plan

- 9.1 In order to achieve balanced and sustainable communities we will work in partnership with local authorities to develop local lettings plan particularly for new and mixed tenure developments. Staff may also work with residents from existing communities to develop local lettings plans.
- 9.2 Where local lettings plans are in operation these will take precedence over our lettings policy for that particular area or estate and we will publish the detail of the lettings plan to residents in the areas and other customers on request.

10 Sensitive Lettings

- 10.1 It may be appropriate to carry out sensitive lets to a property to stabilise the area following very serious anti –social behavior. In these cases the eligibility criteria will be applied in the allocation of the property.

11. Exclusions and Refusals

- 11.1 Wandle may need to refuse and exclude applicants in doing so we will be fair and transparent in our decision making process. This may be for the following reasons:

11.2 Eligibility

If the applicant is subject to immigration control or if a person is from abroad unless they meet the criteria for the habitual residence test as defined in S161 Housing Act 1996 and the allocation of housing regulations 1996 (s1 1996 no.2753) as amended by the Homeless Act 2002 will have their application refused.

11.3 Affordability

If the applicant fails the affordability test we may refuse the application or offer alternative accommodation that is affordable. **See section 7**

11.4 Housing Debt

Wandle will not house applicants with debts this includes rent arrears, recharges, court costs , housing benefit overpayments and any other sundry debt and housing arrears with Wandle. **Exceptions to this restriction may include the following:**

- Those that have a high priority for a transfer where the applicant is at risk,
- Those who wish to downsize who are in rent arrears due to restrictions to their housing benefit payments as a result of the size criteria or benefit cap.
- Where the arrears are entirely due to outstanding housing benefit claim and the tenant has provided comprehensive evidence that they are entitled to housing benefit for the period in question and the arrears will be cleared in full.
- Where the move would allow Wandle to deliver its housing management or maintenance functions more effectively.
- Where we agree to offer a tenancy where the applicant owes any money to Wandle a clause will be written into the new tenancy agreement creating a contract obligation to clear the debt according to an agreed repayment plan.

- Should a statutory home loss payment, decoration allowance or any other payment or compensation be due we reserve the right to offset the payment against any debt to Wandle, including any debts or recharges on the applicant's current Wandle home.

11.5 Breaches of Tenancy

If the applicant is in breach of their current Wandle tenancy conditions the application will be rejected. All breaches must be rectified prior to an offer of alternative accommodation being made. For example:

- Any damage must be rectified to Wandle's satisfaction
- The property must be in a lettable condition with the exception of any repairs or safety checks that are the responsibility of Wandle.

11.6 Outstanding Notices

An applicant with outstanding notices e.g. notice of Seeking Possession or a court order may be rejected by Wandle. However all cases will be reviewed on a case by case basis before an applicant is rejected

11.7 Evicted Tenants

Wandle reserves the right to not house any applicant who was previously evicted from either a Wandle property or that of another registered provider of social housing or private landlord.

11.8 Incorrect or Fraudulent Information

We will ask all applicants to provide photographic evidence of the tenants and their household to support Wandle combat tenancy fraud. If a local authority has not supplied sufficient information to allow us to identify any potential risk posed to staff or the community in which the property is located or not supplied a detailed risk assessment and support package together with any monitoring arrangement we will reject the nomination.

If any information provided by the applicant in respect of their application is deemed to be inaccurate, fraudulent or incomplete, we will reject the nomination. If it is discovered after the letting of a property that fraudulent information was used to obtain the tenancy, legal action will be taken to recover the tenancy and we may also take criminal action to prosecute applicants as tenancy fraud is a criminal offence,

11.9 Anti- Social Behavior, Harassment or Domestic Abuse.

Wandle will not house perpetrators of harassment, anti-social behavior or domestic abuse. This will include the applicant, members of their household, guests or visitors to the property. Ineligibility for housing on the ground of the applicant's antisocial behavior will be based on evidence of the behavior.

Evidence might include the service of Notice or the extension of a starter tenancy or introductory tenancy within the preceding two years or an injunction or the service of Notice or the extension of a starter tenancy or suspended possession order or possession order or criminal conviction relating to behavior /activity or in the locality of the previous tenancy in the preceding five years

11.10 Homeowners

Wandle will not normally house applicants who own their own home although exceptions can be made depending on the circumstances of the individual or individuals involved.

11.11 Sustainability

We may decline to offer accommodation where there is evidence to suggest the applicant may not be able to sustain the tenancy. If carrying out an assessment of an applicant's circumstances, Wandle feels that the tenancy would be unsustainable due to the applicant's inability to afford the property. Such a decision would only be made after a full assessment of the applicants financial circumstances.

The applicant has support needs and has failed to engage with support from external agencies, and the lack of support will negatively affect the applicant's ability to sustain the tenancy or move into the property at the commencement of tenancy.

The applicant or member of their household has specific requirement e.g. adapted home that cannot practicably be done in a reasonable period of time or at reasonable cost or the property is otherwise unsuitable on the recommendation of social services professional.

Wandle will only consider application from sex offenders if the local authority can confirm they have investigated the risks associated with rehousing in an identified property and monitoring arrangements are in place otherwise the application will be rejected.

A risk assessment will be carried out during the household application process prior to offering a tenancy. Where risk is identified but no care or support package is available or in place we may reject the an applicant

11.12 Immigration Status

Any applicant for housing without permanent leave to remain will be rejected unless the following documents are **seen** prior to the signing of the tenancy agreement:

- A copy of their passport; and
- The Immigration Status Document they were given with the asylum decision; or
- A letter from the United Kingdom Border Authority (UKBA) or Home Office confirming eligibility; or
- A copy of the documents they sent off with an application to renew their leave to remain with the receipt from the UKBA

Where the Immigration Act 2014 applies Wandle will follow the Right to Rent Immigration Checks Landlords Code of Practice unless the agreement is excluded:

- If an applicant is being nominated by a local authority and the applicant already holds a social or affordable tenancy or
- If an applicant is being nominated to Wandle by a local authority under its statutory duties and we have already considered their immigration status as above.

11.13 Under-Occupation and Overcrowding

Wandle will not knowingly let a property so that it would lead to overcrowding from the start of the tenancy. Wandle will refer to the household and property size guidelines set out in **section 5**.

If it is felt a property is too small for the applicant we will contact the nominating authority to seek clarification.

We will make best use of our property's by not under occupying them. However we will in certain circumstances where local lettings policies are in place decide to under occupy properties but will approve the under occupation of the property by no more than one bedroom .

Where under occupation in existing households is identified, Wandle will encourage those tenants to move to a smaller property and will, where possible, offer assistance in order to facilitate such a move.

11.15 Authority to Reject a Nomination

Any proposed rejection of a nomination is to be verified by a Neighbourhood or Rehousing Manager. The Voids and Allocations officer will contact the relevant local authority to outline the reasons and grounds for the rejection along with discussing any support that will be required that may result in the nomination being accepted.

12. Local Connection

Wandle does not have a residency policy and will not normally exclude an applicant should they not have a local connection. However, due to the shortage of accommodation in some popular areas, applicants are expected to have reasons for wishing to live in a particular area, such as employment, the need to be near relatives who can offer support, or previous residence in the area.

12.1 Wandle may also require a local connection where:

- There is a local lettings policy in place (see below); there is a Section 106 agreement that applies.
- Any local lettings policy that Wandle may operate will endeavor to ensure the competing demands of housing need and local authority nominations is weighted against promoting balanced and stable local communities in those areas the local lettings policy applies.

12.2 Wandle does not offer tied accommodation with the exception of tenancies in existence before 1 July 2013. Appendix 4 sets out our approach to housing people with a close connection to Wandle

13 Tenancy Types and Preserved Rights

13.1 Applicants moving to a new Wandle home who have held a social tenancy continuously since before the 1 October 2013 are entitled to preserved tenancy rights? This means that any offer can be on no less favorable terms than their existing tenancy. An applicant on a secure or assured tenancy cannot be forced to move to a fixed term tenancy as set out in our tenancy policy in appendix 5

13.2 Residents with a fixed term tenancy when moving to another Wandle property will be offered a new fixed term tenancy with the same duration. As long as they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

14. Rent Policy

14.1 Rents will be set in accordance with Wandle's rent setting policy. Our rent policy complies with the HCAs regulatory framework and complies with the conditions of any agreement with grant providers.

- 14.2 To ensure payments are made on time the applicant must make a payment at sign up and set up on going payments in accordance with the Income maximization Policy and Procedure.
- 14.3 If no payment is made by the applicant at sign up we may refuse to grant the tenancy and reject the application.
- 14.4 Applicants in receipt of full housing benefit or Universal Credit will be required to set up a direct debit to ensure the rent is paid in line with the conditions of the tenancy agreement.

15. Lettable Standard

- 15.1 We will let properties in accordance with Wandle's lettable standard. We reserve the right to complete non –urgent repairs with the new tenant in situ and will agree a deadline for the completion of repairs with the new tenant when they take on their tenancy.

16. Tenancy Start Dates

- 16.1 Wandle tenancies run from Monday to Sunday. We will provide applicants with a proposed tenancy commencement date. It may be possible for new tenants to delay moving into their new homes for a short period but rent will be payable from the commencement of tenancy.

17. Refusal by an Applicant

- 17.1 A reasonable offer of accommodation by Wandle is one where it is considered to meet the stated size and access requirements of the applying household.
- 17.2 The consequences of an applicant refusing an offer of accommodation made by Wandle will vary depending on the local authority's allocation policy and whether or not a Choice Based Lettings scheme is in place.
- 17.3 Should a household refuse an offer, advice should be given to the applicant regarding the consequences of their refusal, either by Wandle or by the local authority that provided the nomination.
- 17.4 Where a household has refused an offer of accommodation from Wandle staff should try to discover the reasons and record this in order to help identify any underlying problems with Wandle's stock, the Allocation & Lettings Policy or other processes being applied.

18 Appeals by Rejected Applicants

- 18.1 If an applicant disagrees with our decision to refuse their nomination they can make an appeal.
- 18.2 In the first instance the applicant should contact the officer who dealt with their application to discuss the reasons for our decision.

- 18.3 If the applicant is still unhappy, they can appeal in writing within 10 working days of the decision to the appropriate manager. However, this will not hold-up the allocations process for the property under dispute.
- 18.4 Having received a response they are still not satisfied, the applicant will be entitled to make a complaint through Wandle's formal Complaints Procedure. A written response will be given within 10 working days of the complaint being received.
- 18.5 If the applicant's dissatisfaction stems from a decision made by their local authority they should be signposted directly to the local authority concerned.

19. Monitoring

- 19.1 Wandle is committed to providing equal opportunities for all those in housing need. No person should receive less favorable treatment on the grounds of their ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, gender, physical disability, appearance or marital status.
- 19.2 Wandle monitors the allocation of properties to new tenants against six diversity strands – ethnicity, age, religion, gender, sexuality and physical disability – to ensure that discrimination against any particular diversity strand is not taking place with regards to the allocation of Wandle's properties.
- 19.3 Wandle also monitors resident satisfaction with its letting process against the six diversity strands to ensure that no particular group receives an inferior level of service.
- 19.4 In both instances, monitoring against diversity strands takes the form of self-classification by applicants and residents and the results are kept anonymous and confidential.
- 19.5 The results are published in Wandle's annual Key Performance Reports which are made available to all Wandle staff and which are regularly reviewed by the Senior and Executive Management Team and the Wandle Board. The results are also used to ensure Wandle's policies and procedures are fit for purpose and that our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is adhered to.

20. Diversity and Inclusion

- 20.1. Wandle works in diverse communities and neighbourhoods in which many groups and individuals are disadvantaged. We recognise we have an ethical and legal duty to advance equality of opportunity and are committed to playing a positive role in combating discrimination. The policy complies with the Equality Act 2010. No person or group of persons applying for housing will be treated less favorably than any other group because of their race, color, ethnic origin, gender, age, religion or belief, disability, sexuality, marital status, pregnancy / maternity or responsibility for dependents.
- 20.2 To help fulfill its commitment to equal opportunities and diversity, we will collect and monitor records of the race, gender and disability of all those referred to us for housing and track our allocations and lettings decisions on the CORE website.

21. Value for Money

- 21.1 We will take a value for money approach to the allocation and lettings of our properties by using the most cost effective mobility options and minimise rent loss by letting our

properties efficiently. We will support staff to deliver an efficient and effective service by developing the service to deliver best value for customer and Wandle.

22. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 22.1 Wandle takes seriously the need to protect personal data of applicants and tenants. We do enter into information sharing protocols with Local Authorities and other statutory agencies, and we ask all applicants and customers consent to share their data within these protocols.
- 22.2 We do not share applicants or customers data with third parties without consent, except where we are required to do so by law enforcement agencies, or as part of fraud detection and prevention campaigns and via the CORE (allocations monitoring) process.

23. Publishing the Policy

- 23.1 The Allocations Policy will be publicised internally through management structures, and Wandle's internet.
- 23.2. The Allocations Policy will be publicised externally in a number of ways including:
- Leaflets
 - Residents Newsletter Resident Website
 - Policy Briefings and Training

Related Documents

- Anti-social behaviour policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Rent Setting Policy
- Income Maximisation Policy
- Mutual Exchange Procedure
- Management Transfer Procedure
- Void Lettable Standard
- Asset Management Strategy
- Community Investment Strategy

Ensuring the Policy Delivers: Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement

Key and leading performance indicators will be reported and monitored as follows,

- the number of properties becoming empty (other than by reason of an internal move), and the percentage of these used to house nominations/ internal moves, by property size. This is to ensure we keep to nominations agreements.
- the time taken between a request for nominations, and receipt of a nomination for a nominee who accepts the property

- the number of occasions where Wandle refuses a nomination, as a percentage of nominations made
- the rate of refusals by nominees, as a percentage of all nominations offered
- the number of properties requiring three or more cycles of requesting nominations from Local Authority/ other agencies
- the number of properties where the Local Authority fails to nominate a suitable person within a reasonable period, and other routes are used to fill the property
- empty home time in days and % (tenancy end to tenancy start for short term empty homes, and handover to tenancy start for long term empty homes)
- compliance with lettings information completed
- allocations by diversity criteria
- lettings by diversity criteria

LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITH WHOM WANDLE HAS NOMINATIONS AGREEMENTS IN PLACE

Borough	Terms of Access to LA	Cost
Bromley	Common housing list register	No
Croydon	Direct application to housing register on line and access to CBL	Yes
Kingston	Access to common waiting list	No
Lambeth	CBL can be accessed as general partner or enhanced partner whereby Wandle tenants treated the same as Lambeth residents	No
Lewisham	Access via CBL and 100% nomination	Yes
Merton	Access to list via their website	No
Southwark	Access to waiting list	No
Sutton	Application to their housing register on line	No
Wandsworth	Direct application on the website and will require further negotiation as require registration on RP transfer list may be mitigated by giving 100% nomination rights	No currently

Appendix 1: Property Size Criteria

	bedsit	One bed	Two bed	Three bed	Four bed or larger
Single person	X	x			
Couple without children	X	X			
Family with one child			X		
Family with one boy, one girl, both < 10yrs			X		
Family with one boy and one girl where one or both of them are older than ten				x	
Family with 2 boys or 2 girls, up to 18 yrs			X		
Family with 3 children				X	
Family with 4 children – 2 boys and 2 girls up to 18 yrs				X	
Family with 4 children - 3 girls and 1 boy or 3 boys and 1 girl – depending on age of children				X	X
Family with 5 or more children					X

Appendix 2: Keyworker Criteria

All keyworker properties are restricted to occupation by people who meet a keyworker definition. Some schemes have specific eligibility criteria, however generally we consider those workers that are essential for the sustainability of urban communities to meet the requirements for keyworker housing. Examples of eligible occupations include:

- Teachers
- Nursery workers
- Police Officers
- Social Workers
- Nurses
- Hospital support staff i.e. porters / catering staff etc
- Care Workers
- Transport workers

Appendix 3: Transfer Priority Bands, Reasonable Offers and Lettings Panels

To be read in conjunction with Solomon's Passage Allocation Policy

Applications for direct offers for re housing will be assessed for their housing need. Applications will be put into Priority Band BA depending on their housing need as set out below.

Band A	
Priority Move – Decant (Permeant) Disposals, Major Works	BA 1
Priority Move – Relief of Statutory Overcrowding	BA2
Priority Move – Management Transfer	BA3
Priority Move – Successors/Additional Rights to a Tenancy	BA4
Priority Move – Under-occupation by 2 bedrooms	BA5
Priority Move – Under occupation by 1 Bedroom	BA6

Where applicants have the same priority waiting time will be taken into account.

Number of Reasonable Offers

The reasonable offers that will be made to a customer are as follows:

Source of Application	Number of Offers
Decants	2
All others seeking to move	1

The Lettings Panel

The Allocations and Lettings Policy refers to the Lettings Panel as the body which authorises exceptions to the normal eligibility criteria, exceptional and urgent priority transfers and bandings and which hears appeals from customers related to allocations decisions, banding, and suspensions etc.

The Lettings Panel will consist of the following staff:

- Neighbourhood Manager
- Rehousing Manager
- Income Manager /Customer Services Manager

When the Lettings Panel is hearing an appeal, the Panel will also include the Head of Housing or Head of Customer Experience

Appendix 4: Applicants with a close connection to Wandle or other Conflicts

Wandle will offer a tenancy to people with a close connection to Wandle only in the following circumstances:

1. They have not sought to influence the decision to house them, and there is no evidence that the offer being made has not followed “due process”, or is unusually generous.
2. For nominations: they have been nominated by the Local Authority or appropriate agency (as defined in this policy);
3. For former employees with tied accommodation: only where required to do so as a condition of contract, settlement or compromise agreement.

Any offer of a tenancy to a person with a close connection with Wandle must be signed off by the Chief Executive, unless the offer is to a person connected to the Chief Executive, in which case it must be signed by both the Company Secretary and Chair of the Board. Before making such an offer, the authoriser will check and record that there is no evidence of influence, that the person appears at the top of a valid shortlist, and that they are not being offered a property which appears to be more generous in any way than this policy would normally allow.

With the exception of tenancies which already existed at 1 July 2013, Wandle does not offer tied accommodation to Wandle employees.

For the purposes of this policy, we define “people with a close connection to Wandle” as:

- a. current employee of Wandle and previous employees who left in the past 12 months;
- b. current Board or Committee members (and any who have left in the past 12 months);
- c. any household which includes people described in a) and b), even where they are not the applicant;
- d. Partners, close relatives, business partners and very close friends of such people.
- e. Where applicants work for the nominating local authority partner this is a potential conflict
- f. Where applicants work for one our direct suppliers

In order to help people with a connection to Wandle to be housed, where it is appropriate for them to do so, our application form and offer of tenancy letter both include a section where applicants can declare any connections. The Neighbourhood Officer conducting the sign up and the manager authorising it will determine whether any connections declared qualify as “close connections” under the terms of this policy. If there is a close connection which is not disclosed by the applicant, it will be considered to be a fraudulent application and the tenancy will be terminated.

Appendix 5: Affordable Rent Product and Tenancy Types.

Customers who have held a full secure or assured (lifetime) tenancy since before 1st October 2013, and continuously since that date, have protected rights when they move to another Wandle home.

If moving (or undertaking a mutual exchange) to another home on a social rent, they should not suffer any loss of security of tenure. This means they must be offered a new lifetime tenancy (or keep their existing one under a deed of assignment for m/ex).

Where existing Wandle customers with a lifetime (assured or secure) tenancy choose to move to a home which is originally advertised at an Affordable Rent level (and fixed term tenancy), there is no legal protection for them on the type of tenancy offered, however Wandle's Board has approved that they will keep their existing tenure type and social rent level. The only exception is where a Wandle customer chooses to move to a new build home being advertised on an Affordable Rent, in which case the customer would need to accept a new tenancy (with the same security of tenure as their existing tenancy) on an Affordable Rent level.