

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy is owned by the Head of Community Housing. The effectiveness of the policy and provision of training will be reviewed annually. This exercise will ensure that the policy is up to date and remains relevant to our needs. Coastal Housing Group (CHG) is proud to provide social housing and values diverse communities. CHG understands that to achieve this, residents need sustainable homes in thriving communities with a prosperous local economy. CHG organises itself to contribute to all three of these areas and is committed, in the long term, to the areas it serves.
- 1.2 In an environment where people have a variety of housing options, CHG's aim is to provide high quality, secure and affordable homes to people for whom home ownership is out of reach or who are living in temporary, insecure or unaffordable accommodation.
- 1.3 In continually seeking to improve services for residents and communities, CHG uses a method that measures what matters from a resident's perspective and organises systems of work to meet that and deliver greatest value. Having a values-based model (as opposed to a points-based or choice-based model) means we can deliver a tailored service within a framework that is fair, equitable and transparent.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of the Lettings Policy is to provide the right property, in the right community, at the right time.
- 2.2 The policy aims to inform applicants and other stakeholders of the way in which CHG organises and manages lettings, which has been designed to ensure CHG can match applicants to homes in a way that brings most benefit to the individual and the community.
- 2.3 The lettings system is intentionally designed to be as clear as possible with applicants regarding expectations, both in relation to their suitability for our homes and in relation to the time that it may take. Demand for homes significantly outstrips supply and as a result, some difficult decisions have to be taken in this area however, CHG commits to all applicants that it will be transparent, honest and adult in the way it communicates with them and manages their application.

3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 In designing our lettings system, we have adopted the following principles:
- We provide homes to people where the greatest benefit is achieved
 - We listen to understand what matters to applicants
 - We design systems against predictable demand
 - We provide the right expertise upfront

- We pull in specialist skills when necessary
- We take ownership, ensuring we see tasks through to completion
- We record information in a proportionate, purposeful, person centred way
- We only do work that brings the greatest benefit to residents and communities
- We seek to tackle inequality and embrace diversity

4. WHAT MATTERS

4.1 CHG listened to residents and applicants to understand what matters to them about lettings. Residents told us that what mattered in the lettings system is that:

- I get a home that suits my circumstances
- I have time to move
- I have what I need to move
- The right help is available for me when I need it and you help me find it
- You have the relevant up-to-date information about me
- The condition of the home meets my individual expectations

5. ELIGIBILITY

5.1 All applicants must meet the application criteria as defined in *Appendix A*.

5.2 CHG will only accommodate applicants who have a right to publicly funded housing.

5.3 CHG will reject those applicants who have the means and the ability to meet their housing needs through home ownership. In these circumstances, applicants will be signposted to Pennant Homes, a subsidiary of CHG, that has properties for sale.

5.4 An assessment of income and expenditure will be undertaken to understand affordability.

5.5 We actively seek to enable older people to utilise their assets effectively as they move towards retirement (i.e. those who are asset rich/cash poor) and therefore there is no upper qualifying limit for people aged over 55 in relation to their property equity or savings levels. Applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

5.6 Applications from people under 55 who own a property with equity of more than £115,000 or who have savings in excess of £100,000 will have their application rejected. Exceptional circumstances will be considered case by case.

5.7 CHG will re-house people living outside of the local authorities it serves where they meet the housing need criteria and demonstrate a need to live in the area.

5.8 CHG will only provide occupation contracts to people between the ages of 16 and 18 under exceptional circumstances (*Appendix B*).

5.9 Former residents who meet eligibility criteria but have a debt with CHG may be excluded in accordance with the Suspension Policy (see *Appendix C*) and may only be included once the debt has been cleared.

5.10 CHG will consider applications from a person living in a Group property in accordance with the policy only where the applicant is a member of the existing household or is an authorised sub-holder. Applicants who live in a CHG property without permission will not be considered.

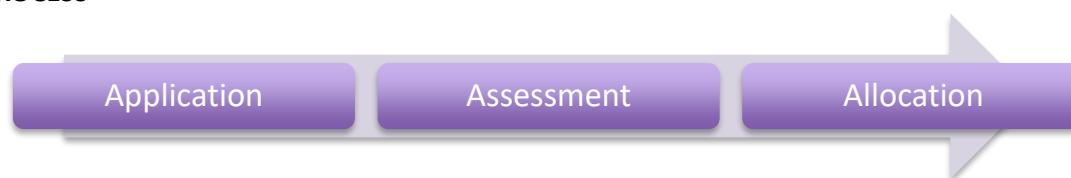
5.11 Members of the Board and their relatives and staff and their relatives may be eligible for housing where:

- The applicant satisfies the housing need criteria
- The applicant can evidence that alternative housing has been pursued and is not available to them
- The applicant has no influence over the allocation process.

(This is an area subject to regulatory control by Welsh Government and all applications from staff and their relatives must receive board approval. All applications from board members and their relatives must also receive Welsh Government approval. All records for applications under this process are managed and maintained by the Head of Community Housing. Please also refer to Appendix One of the Housing Management Policy.)

5.12 CHG may exclude any application under its Suspension Policy (*Appendix C*)

6. PROCESS



6.1 CHG does not keep housing registers for all of its housing stock as in some localities the turnover of properties is so slow and/or the number of properties of specific sizes (i.e. one bed homes, two bed homes, etc.) is so few that maintaining a register is impractical. This is understood through data analysis, which is subject to review. Therefore, while a register may not be maintained on particular properties in particular areas now, that could change in subsequent years as turnover and/or stock availability changes.

Application Stage

6.2 Any person over the age of sixteen may apply for accommodation by telephoning 01792 479200, calling in person to the office or applying online.

6.3 We will discuss with the applicant their current situation and why they want to move into a CHG property. Applicants should expect to provide a full and frank account of their situation, household and finances.

6.4 At this stage, applicants will be advised whether they meet CHG's criteria for housing and whether there is a realistic opportunity for the applicant to be housed within a reasonable timeframe. Where there is not a realistic chance of housing an applicant within a reasonable timeframe, the application will not be accepted.

6.5 For areas with a register, the applicant will be added to the relevant register. For areas without a register, applicants will be advised of how to register for notifications when properties become available.

- 6.6 If on a register, all applicants are expected to keep CHG informed of any changes in circumstances that could impact on their applications. These include (but aren't limited to) a change in contact information, changes to the size of household, changes in income or expenditure, etc. We will review registers periodically to confirm any changes of circumstances with applicants. Where CHG is unable to make contact, the application will be withdrawn from the register under the Suspension Policy (*Appendix C*).

Assessment Stage

- 6.7 For those areas and properties where there aren't registers, applicants will be able to apply following receipt of notification that a property matching their need is either available or is becoming available. CHG will accept applications until the required amount of applications have been received and then carry out home visits for up to five applicants to identify the applicant that is the best match for the property and the community. We aim to match people to properties where the greatest benefit will be achieved.
- 6.8 For those areas and properties where registers are held, applications will be held in date order. Once a property is planned to become available, up to five applicants from the top of the register will be visited at home and an applicant identified that is the best match for the property and the community.
- 6.9 Where there is an applicant with exceptional circumstances (*Appendix B*), CHG may not follow either process described above and may offer the available property to them.
- 6.10 The information provided at application stage will be confirmed in a visit from a Community Housing Officer to the applicant's home. At this stage, CHG will obtain any documentation and evidence in support of the application and will carry out a range of checks in order to assess eligibility and suitability.
- 6.11 The Community Housing Officer, on viewing the applicant's current home, will be able to offer tailored advice and information to the applicant that is suited to their individual requirements. The home visit is not intended to solely collect and verify evidence to support the application but to understand the applicant's preferences, priorities and wishes in more depth. This visit enables the Community Housing Officer to understand how the applicant lives in their current home and neighbourhood in order to inform making a 'best match' decision at allocation stage.
- 6.12 Only under exceptional circumstances (i.e. domestic abuse in the home or if the applicant is roofless) will this more detailed assessment be undertaken outside of the home.
- 6.13 Several checks are undertaken at the time of the home visit, including a credit check. Checks are made in order to obtain as detailed a profile as possible as to the applicant's history and circumstances so that CHG can assess the potential for the occupancy to succeed. Previous failed tenancies or poor credit histories are not barriers to becoming a contract holder but CHG needs to have all the facts to offer the correct advice and make informed decisions.
- 6.14 Information about any restrictions placed on applicants as a result of criminal convictions must be disclosed.

- 6.15 All checks are discussed with applicants before they are made and consent requested. Should applicants not provide consent for some/all checks, a decision will need to be made in the absence of that additional information. Applicants need to be aware that gaps in information may lead to their applications being rejected on the grounds of being incomplete.

Allocation Stage

- 6.16 Successful applicants will be offered a viewing of the property. The Maintenance Officer will accompany the applicant to the viewing and a discussion will take place about individual preferences regarding the works required at the property.
- 6.17 Where practical, CHG will broker a viewing with the current resident of the property still in occupation. This creates an opportunity to discuss any issues related to the property and its furnishings, neighbourhood, etc. CHG will facilitate a discussion with both parties to agree the condition expected at occupation contract end with the outgoing resident and the expectations upon CHG in terms of redecoration and repairs. A timetable will be agreed, and any interim contact arrangements confirmed.
- 6.18 CHG will seek to meet the applicant's stated preferences and will not offer accommodation which is unsuitable, or which is of a type or in an area that the applicant has stated would be unacceptable.
- 6.19 CHG will be sympathetic to genuine reasons for the refusal of accommodation and in such cases will not prejudice the application. However, where the reason for refusal is not deemed reasonable, because it meets the needs and stated preferences of the applicant, no more than two reasonable offers of accommodation will be made, after which the application will be cancelled. No new application may be made for six months, in accordance with the Suspension Policy (*Appendix C*).

7. ALLOCATION DECISIONS

- 7.1 CHG aims to make allocation decisions based on bringing the greatest benefit to the applicant and to the community. Managing allocations is a complex issue, with many competing demands on the Community Housing Officer to make an allocation that is sustainable, appropriate, affordable and in the interests of both the individual household and the local community.
- 7.2 Community Housing Officers are experienced in understanding the localities, neighbourhoods and resident populations they serve. This expertise is called upon most in the making of good allocation decisions and they are trusted to use all of their knowledge, expertise and insight to make informed and fair decisions.
- 7.3 All allocation decisions are recorded and reviewed by managers.

7.4 The following households will be considered for properties as set out in the table below:

| Property Type | Description / Maximum occ | Eligible / Minimum occ |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Studio | Studio / 1 person | Single adult |
| 1 bed flat / 1b1p | One single bedroom / 1 person | Single adult |
| 1 bed flat / 1b2p | One double bedroom / 2 people | Single adult or childless couple |
| 2 bed flat / 2b2p | Two single bedrooms/2 people | One or two adults or 1 adult 1 child |
| 2 bed flat / 2b3p | 1 double bedroom and 1 single bedroom / 3 people | One single adult or childless couple. One or two adults and one child or non dependant |
| 2 bed house / 2b3p | 1 double bedroom and 1 single bedroom / 3 people | One or two adults with access One or two adults and one child One or two adults and one dependent adult |
| 2 bed flat / 2b4p | Two double bedrooms/ 4 people | One or two adults One or two adults and one child or non dependant One or two adults and two children |
| 2 bed house / 2b4p | Two double bedrooms / 4people | One or two adults with access One or two adults and one child One or two adults and two children One or two adults and one dependent adult |
| 3 bed house / 3b4p | One double bedroom and two single bedrooms / 4 people | Two adults and one child One or two adults and two children Two adults and one dependent adult One adult & two dependent adults Minimum 3 people |
| 3 bed house / 3b5p | Two double bedrooms and one single bedroom / 5 people | Two adults and one child One or two adults and two children Two adults and one dependent adult One adult & two dependent adults Minimum 3 people |

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| | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| 4 bed house / 4b6-8p | Four double bedrooms 8 people Three double bedrooms/1 single bedroom 7 people Two double bedrooms/two single bedroom 6 people | Minimum 4 people |
| <i>Older person's properties (55+)</i> <i>1 bed flat or 2 bed flat</i> | <i>One single bedroom / 1 person</i> <i>One double bedroom / 2person</i> <i>Two bedrooms / 3 person</i> | 1 person for all |

Table 1 – Property Size and Household Eligibility

Notes:

- Households requiring accommodation with high level specialist design features e.g. wheelchair accessible, are managed through the ADAPT scheme (not applicable to Neath Port Talbot or Bridgend).
- Households who require 'extra care' housing may be accommodated in our schemes in Neath Port Talbot and will be subject to the Extra Care Application and Allocation Procedure (*Appendix E*).
- Households with children may not be suited to accommodation without direct access to a garden, or where the accommodation is above the ground floor. All circumstances are treated individually and will be discussed with the applicant at the home visit.
- Households with pets may not be suited to some accommodation. All circumstances are treated individually and will be discussed with the applicant at the home visit.
- Where a household is being considered for a property deemed too large for their requirements, the applicant/s must be able to demonstrate that they are able to pay the full rent.
- Where a household is being considered for a property deemed too large for their requirements but they require the services of a carer to live independently, special consideration will be given
- Where adults (single or in couples) wish to share a property, we can offer accommodation outside of the parameters in Table 1. All circumstances are treated individually and will be discussed with the applicant at the home visit.
- Where an applicant is pregnant, they will be considered for accommodation that provides appropriately sized, located and designed accommodation for the expected child/ren.

7.5 Provision of appropriately sized accommodation for households who have included a child or children on the application will only be considered where the child or children normally lives with the applicant's household. Where a child lives with an applicant for less than half a week, and where the applicant can demonstrate a special requirement for larger accommodation, such accommodation may be offered.

7.6 CHG will not normally under-occupy a property and will prioritise applicants whose household needs match the property size as defined (see Table 1). Where the property is to be under-

occupied, the applicant must be able to demonstrate an ability to pay the rent in full. Properties which may be under occupied are:

- Accommodation for older people (55+) in some circumstances
- Areas or properties of low demand
- Areas subject to an approved local lettings policy (e.g. areas of low demand)
- Properties subject to an approved special allocations policy
- Other circumstances (e.g. the relevant housing register has been exhausted, specific housing management considerations, decant properties to allow remedial works, medical reasons necessitating the use of separate bedrooms or the applicant requires accommodation for a carer)

7.7 All allocation offers and decisions are recorded on the system by the Community Housing Officer managing the allocation.

7.8 Allocations will be conditional on:

- The stated preferences of the applicant in terms of property type, size and location.
- Achieving the 'best match'; this will be property, area and household specific but issues that will be considered include maintaining local connections, improved affordability, distance to important cultural centres, contribution to local community, etc.
- The housing management implications of the allocation; where the allocation of a property to an applicant would be to the detriment of the peaceful enjoyment of the neighbours, such an allocation may not be made.

7.9 CHG will consider the offer of accommodation to be reasonable where:

- It meets the applicant's stated preferences and requirements in terms of property type, size and location
- It is of a reasonable standard of decoration and cleanliness; and
- There are no other reasonable grounds to prevent the applicant taking up the offer of accommodation.

8. LOCAL AUTHORITY NOMINATIONS

8.1 CHG will house nominees of the local authority in discharging its duty to a homeless applicant under Housing (Wales) Act 2014 by way of a formal agreement with the local authority, or in accordance with the appropriate Circular and/or any formal or informal agreement with the local authority, and where such nominees are on the local authorities housing register in accordance with Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

8.2 CHG will work to meet the requirements of its partner local authorities through nominations agreements with them. These are often different in different authorities but CHG will aim to assist them in meeting their duties to house eligible applicants within all relative timeframes.

8.3 CHG will cooperate with local authorities to prevent and respond to homelessness. We will take direct applications as well as signposting homeless or potentially homeless applicants to a range of agencies as well as referring them to the local authority.

8.4 Individuals experiencing street homelessness will receive guidance and be directed to the appropriate support organisations and local authority housing options teams. CHG will also offer accommodation to applicants by way of the nomination procedure, this includes applicants who

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present themselves as having 'no fixed abode' (NFA) or people living in emergency or temporary hostels or shelters. CHG will accommodate people who are claiming asylum in the UK where this is part of a recognised scheme, supported by the local authority.

FORMER ARMED SERVICES PERSONNEL

9. In May 2011 the UK Government sought to improve the current relationship between the nation, government and the Armed Forces by introducing an Armed Forces Covenant. This document outlines a set of principles or moral obligations, enshrined in the Armed Forces Act 2011, by which members of the armed forces and their families should expect to be treated.

9.1 All 22 Local Authorities in Wales have in place an Armed Forces Community Covenant. In Wales, former armed services personnel qualify as having priority need for housing if they are homeless.

9.2 CHG is committed to working in partnership with local authorities to assist them in discharging their duties to former armed services personnel.

9.3

SUPPORTED HOUSING (INCLUDING DOMESTIC ABUSE REFUGES)

10. CHG discharges housing management responsibilities to managing agents in accordance with their management agreement.

10.1

CHG is committed to assisting residents of supported schemes to move into independent accommodation. We will look to facilitate the move into independent accommodation for all residents in supported housing through a move-on strategy. CHG recognises that most applicants who are referred by a move-on strategy are single people, but the policy applies to all households. Residents in supported housing will only be rehoused through the strategy and will not be rehoused by direct application or direct referral from the supported housing scheme unless:

10.2

- There is no formal move-on strategy
- There is a formal move-on strategy but it is not, in the opinion of CHG, meeting the needs of residents in supported housing
- It is the opinion of CHG that the applicant can manage a secure occupation contract satisfactorily and independently
- It is the opinion of CHG that appropriate support is in place for a sufficient period to allow the resident to manage a secure occupation contract satisfactorily.

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

11. CHG may provide temporary accommodation to residents of other agencies who need to be rehoused to allow remedial or improvement works to be carried out to their homes.

11.1

EXTRA CARE

12. CHG provides 'extra-care' accommodation at two purpose-built schemes in Neath Port Talbot. Allocation of these homes is undertaken in conjunction with Neath Port Talbot Borough Council and is described in detail at Appendix E.

12.1

TRANSFERS, MOBILITY AND PURCHASE

- 13.** CHG will endeavour to meet the requirements of its residents through its transfer policy, (which forms part of the larger Housing Management Policy), its participation in recognised mobility schemes and by way of any statutory purchase schemes.
- 13.1

FALSE INFORMATION

- 14.** In the event of an applicant providing false or misleading information, and where such information has material effect on the application, CHG may:

14.1

- Where an occupation contract has already been created, issue proceedings to recover possession of the property;
- Where an offer of accommodation has been made, but no occupation contract created, withdraw that offer, amend the assessment to accurately reflect the housing need, and defer the application for six months or;
- Prior to any offer of accommodation being made amend the assessment to accurately reflect the housing need and defer the application for six months.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

- 15.** If an applicant is dissatisfied with the assessment or wishes clarification of the assessment, they can speak to a member of the Community Housing Team for a re-assessment of their circumstances.
- 15.1

- Applicants who remain dissatisfied with their assessment or are unhappy with the way in which their application has been handled or consider that CHG has in some way discriminated against them can complain through the Complaints Policy.
- 15.2

LEGISLATION / REGULATION

- 16.** This policy reflects and adheres to a range of legislative requirements, these include:

16.1

- Housing Act 1988
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 2004
- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 Data Protection Act 1998
- Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019
- Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Act 2018
- Regulation of Registered Social Landlords (Wales) Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016

17. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

17.1

CHG is committed to equal opportunities and this policy will be operated fairly and equally. CHG will not discriminate, harass or victimise any victim, witness, alleged perpetrator or other interested party on the grounds of any protected characteristic(s).

17.2

The protected characteristics under the quality Act are:

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Age | Pregnancy and Maternity | Sex |
| Disability | Race | Sexual Orientation |
| Gender reassignment | Religion of Belief | Marriage / Civil Partnership |

17.3

CHG must, in the exercise of its housing management functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

This includes the need to:

- (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (iii) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This includes the need to:

- (i) tackle prejudice, and
- (ii) promote understanding.

17.4

We are not a public authority but we do exercise public functions when we allocate and manage social housing. This means that we have to have regard to the matters mentioned above.

17.5

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

18. DATA PROTECTION

18.1 CHG operates a specific Data Protection Policy which governs how the organisation will manage the collection, retention, processing, management and disposal of individual's personal data and special category data. The policy is designed to incorporate the legal requirements contained in

Data Protection Act 2018, the GDPR, and guidance and best practice issued by the Information Commissioners Office.

18.2

When dealing with information relating to ASB, CHG will be careful to differentiate between what information it is able to use and share in investigations and that which it is not.

19. WELSH LANGUAGE

19.1 CHG appreciates that residents can express their opinions and needs better in their chosen language. We will ensure that services are available through the medium of Welsh if requested, are of a high quality, and provided in a timely manner.

20. MEASURES, LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

20.1 The basis of all learning and study is quality data and CHG commits to keeping proportionate, purposeful, person-centred tenancy management records. We strive to produce leading measures that study how we are performing to purpose and lagging measures.

20.2 Measures are captured to understand specific details relating to housing management performance and these are regularly reviewed both in teams and at management level.

21. COMPLAINTS

21.1 Complaints regarding any aspect of how CHG make decisions and implement this policy can be made through the company's complaints process by contacting Coastal by telephone, email, live chat, visit or by letter.

A1 **APPENDIX A(i) – APPLICATION CRITERIA**

Security of occupation

- The home is rented from a Private Landlord and they have a standard occupation contract
- The applicant lives with friends or family
- The current owned home is being repossessed or no right to stay
- The applicant lives in tied accommodation and the employment is coming to an end

A2 **Sharing Facilities**

Where the home has shared facilities such as bathroom, kitchen and these are detrimental to the applicant's quality of life.

A3 **Condition of property**

Where the condition of the property is prejudicial to health or welfare.

A4 **Overcrowding and under-occupation**

In assessing overcrowding or under-occupation, CHG will measure the number of bedrooms in the applicant's accommodation with the household size and the number of bedrooms required to accommodate that household. Please refer to Table 1 of the Lettings Policy.

A5 **Affordability**

- Where the rent or mortgage is beyond the means of the applicant.
- Where the applicant will be in a better financial position in a CHG property.

A6 **Access to Work**

- Where the applicant can demonstrate that:
 - They are employed at least 16 hours a week; or
 - They have an offer of employment; or
 - They have had recent periods of employment; or
 - They are on a full-time work based training scheme.
- And they need to move for one of the following reasons:
 - To live near public transport links or the employer in order to cut down on travelling expenses and travelling time;
 - To have access to child care in order to be able to work;
 - Have to leave their present accommodation but need to stay in the area for employment purposes.
- In order to confirm the above, the applicant will be asked to provide copies of pay slips, or confirmation in writing from the employer of any job offer, or details of the work-based training scheme. Where the applicant is self-employed, they will need to provide

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recent copies of accounts, tax returns or other similar documentation.

A7 Medical/Support Needs

- Where the current property is prejudicial to health or welfare.
- Support needs are defined as those where the applicant requires professional support in order to be able to manage an occupation contract.
- Criteria for support needs will only be awarded where confirmed by evidence from a supporting agency and established at the home visit.

A8 Access to Housing

Accommodation that is particularly suitable for people over 55

- Any applicant who is over the age of 55 and meets the requirements of the Lettings Policy

Applicant who has a physical disability and requires special design features

- Applicants with requirements for more complex or higher end adaptations, will be referred to ADAPT
- Applicants with requirements for more simple or lower end adaptations, will have their application managed through this policy

Applicants for all other accommodation (general needs):

- Meets three of the application criteria and the requirements of the Lettings Policy

APPENDIX A(ii) – APPLICATION CRITERIA WELSH HOUSING PARTNERSHIP (WHP)

A9 Criteria

- In reasonably secure employment
- Income range - £17,000 +
- Can demonstrate an ability to meet the rent from household income

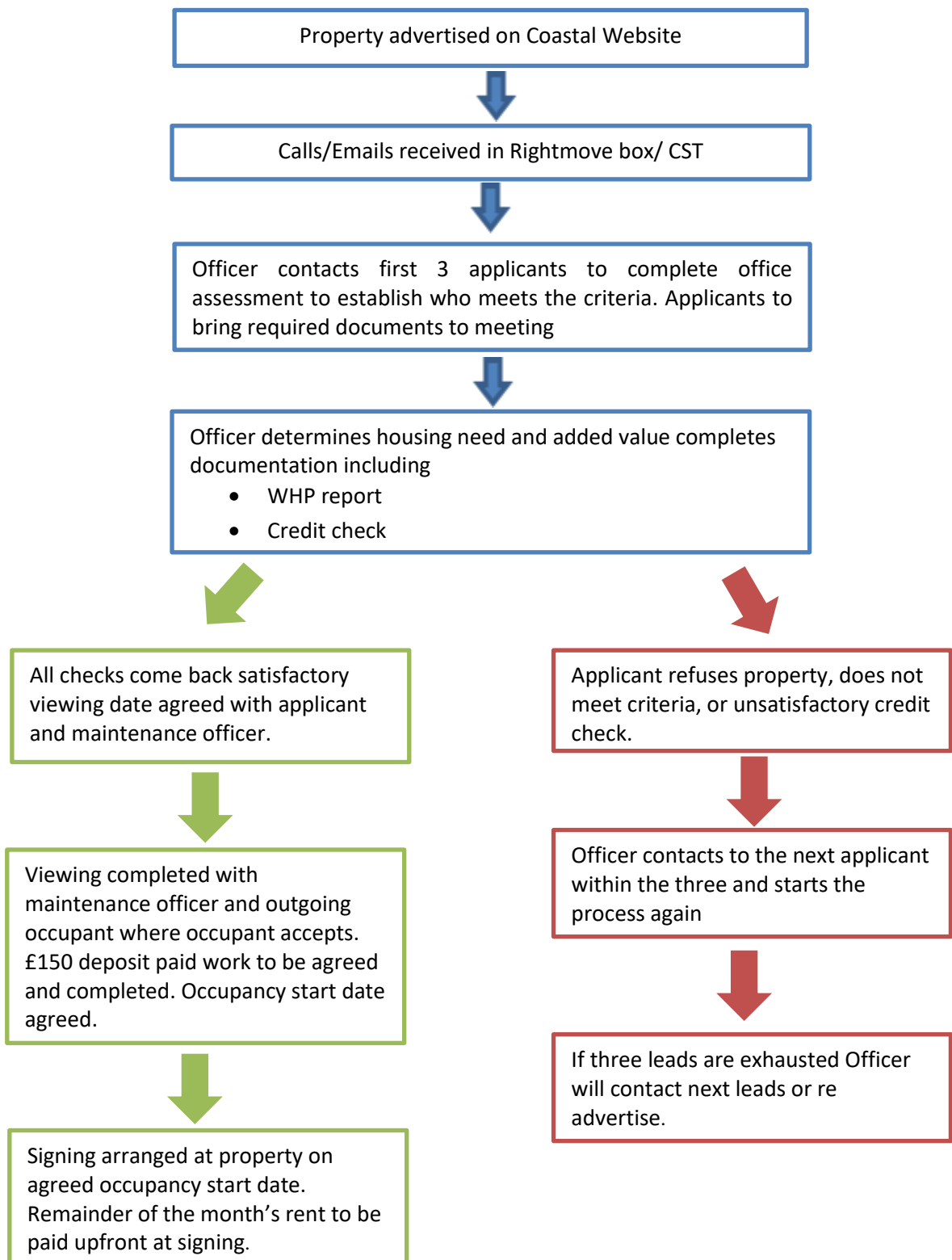
Applicants are required to be either working or living within the borough which they are making an application and have a Housing Need satisfied by meeting one of the following criteria;

- Current accommodation is unaffordable
- No security of occupation
- Accommodation is not appropriate for the household's needs
- Need to be closer to job

N.B. We will aim for the best fit for the type of property, but will allow under-occupation by one bedroom the above is subject to change

If we receive no expressions of interest from applicants working or living within the borough after advertising the property for a period of time, we will consider applications from other areas if one other criteria is met

A10 Application Process for WHP properties



APPENDIX B – EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

B1 There is no single definition of “exceptional circumstances” and each case will be considered on its own merit. However, as a guideline, the following examples may constitute an exceptional circumstance when considered with all the housing factors and the likely availability of accommodation.

- The current accommodation is so prejudicial to the applicant’s health, that to continue living there could result in a long-term and serious medical problem. Note that applicants who have accessibility problems due to a disability may be referred to ADAPT
- The applicant is a victim of serious harassment and intimidation, which can be supported by the police or a recognised agency and rehousing would provide the applicant with safe and secure accommodation.
- The applicant is unable to provide a home for a child when they would be reasonably expected to live with the applicant on a permanent basis and where no other reasonable accommodation is available to the child
- The property in which the applicant is living does not have a bathroom/toilet which the applicant could reasonably be expected to use
- The applicant is aged between 16 and 18 and requires independent accommodation, with or without support from a professional agency.

B2 Exceptional circumstances will be determined by the Community Housing Manager.

APPENDIX C - SUSPENSION POLICY

C1 CONTACT

Where CHG is unable to make contact with an applicant, the application will be withdrawn from the register.

C2 FALSE INFORMATION

In the event of an applicant providing false or misleading information that has a material effect on the application, the application will be deferred for six months

C3 OFFER REFUSAL

Where the reason for refusal is not deemed reasonable, inasmuch as it meets the needs and stated preferences of the applicant and no more than two reasonable offers of accommodation have been made, the application will be cancelled. No new application may be made for six months.

C4 FORMER BREACHES

An application in which any member of the household has been evicted from rented housing, in the previous five years, on the grounds of nuisance and/or anti-social behavior, rent arrears or using the accommodation for illegal purposes will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It may be rejected, suspended or accepted depending on the individual circumstances and merits of the case.

CHG will treat each case on its merits and will obtain a report from the previous landlord in order to determine the nature of the breach and the steps taken by the landlord in respect of that breach. CHG will also consider any steps taken by the person to address the breach.

Where the Community Housing Officer is satisfied that the person is likely to cause breaches in the future, the person will be suspended from applying.

C5 OCCUPATION CONTRACT SUSTAINABILITY

An applicant, who in the opinion of CHG, will be unable to adhere to an occupation contract satisfactorily, without the provision of appropriate support, may have their application suspended.

In the first instance CHG will seek to determine the support needs of the applicant and will recommend the applicant for inclusion on a supported housing scheme.

Where there is no appropriate supported housing scheme, the CHG may grant a fixed term standard contract if it considers it appropriate.

Where the Community Housing Manager is satisfied that the person is not capable of managing any form of occupation contract, and where there is no support package available, the person may have their application suspended.

C6 FORMER ARREARS

In the case of a former resident of CHG, where former rent arrears have been cleared, the application may be accepted in accordance with the Lettings Policy.

Where arrears remain outstanding and a schedule of payments agreed to clear the arrears is in place, the application may be accepted but the allocation of any accommodation will be deferred until such time as the person has demonstrated a commitment to clear the former arrears.

Where arrears to another landlord are outstanding, the application may be accepted if the Community Housing Manager is satisfied that arrears will not accrue in any future occupancy and that the applicant has agreed and is maintaining a schedule of payments with the former landlord.

C7 RECORD KEEPING

CHG will maintain a register of suspended applications, reviewed by the Head of Community Housing on a quarterly basis.

C8 COMPLAINTS

Any person suspended from making an application is able to complain through the Complaints Policy.

APPENDIX D – CITY LIVING SCHEMES

D1 Coastal Housing is proud to be a leading partner in regenerating city and town centres in South Wales. The purpose of differentiating these homes from the rest of our housing is to encourage people working, studying or training (or who have plans to) to live affordably in the city centre.

D2 We think there are significant advantages to living in these types of locations, these include:

- Close proximity to employment, training and education
- Excellent public transport links
- A more ethnically and culturally diverse population
- Easy access to shops and local amenities
- Easy access to religious, sports, arts and cultural activities
- Easy access to theatres, restaurants, bars and nightlife

D3 Schemes that we have developed in city and town centres often have the benefit of:

- Access to City Wheels Car Club, run by Coastal Housing
- Secure parking
- Video entry
- Courtyards, balconies and private terraces
- Views

D4 The following schemes and properties are listed as our 'City Living' homes.

- Strand Court
- Strand Mews
- Castle Quarter
- Swansea High Street
- Wind Street
- Port Talbot Town Centre (includes Custom House)
- Neath Town Centre (includes Harlequin Court)
- Leonard Charles
- Urban Quarter

D5 We know living in these areas is not for everyone. For instance, living in city and town centres might mean more noise from commercial premises. We appreciate that some people don't see these areas as particularly family friendly however others find the ease of accessing local resources enhances family life. We're keen to continually improve our building and estate designs to keep attracting lots of different people to live in our centrally located homes and market 'city living' schemes accordingly.

APPENDIX E – EXTRA CARE APPLICATIONS AND ALLOCATIONS PROCEDURE

- E1 This procedure is intended as a new approach as Coastal’s two Extra Care schemes in Neath Port Talbot transition from primarily sheltered schemes into a more traditional extra care model. It is agreed that this will take some time, and during the transition period, this procedure will be kept under review by both parties and amended as required.
- E2 The intention is that the two Extra Care Housing schemes are specialist housing provisions designed to offer safe, private and secure accommodation. Residents of the schemes retain the independence of having their own home whilst enjoying the benefits of having staff on hand to provide planned and unplanned care and support.
- E3 The objective of Extra Care Housing is to provide high quality housing, support and care services which enable, support and encourage people to live independently for as long as they wish to do so. Each Extra Care housing scheme will aim to create a balanced community of people with a mix of care and support needs. The provision of Extra Care housing can reduce the likelihood of admission to hospital, with the knock-on benefits of increasing the bed capacity within hospitals, increases the number of patients discharged from hospital, and decreases those who may have a need for residential care.
- E4 This allocation procedure governs:
- the allocation of apartments in the Extra Care Housing Scheme at Ysbryd Y Mor
 - the allocation of apartments and bungalows in the Extra Care Housing Scheme at Ty Twyn Teg
- E5 These schemes provide services dependent on the degree of care and support required by individual residents and applicants, with the aim of achieving a balanced community considering the levels of care being received by residents in the schemes.
- E6 It is intended that 50% of the residents will have a care package in place. Once this is achieved, we will review the percentages to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the residents, the wider community and stakeholders.
- E7 To be eligible to be allocated a property within one of the aforementioned schemes, a person must meet at least one of the following criteria:
- A support and/or care need as identified by an Adult Social Care Assessment;
 - A housing need as identified through Coastal’s application process (see Appendix E(ii) attached),
 - Are awaiting discharge from residential, nursing, hospital or other care settings and their previous housing is no longer suitable to return to due to a decline in their health;
 - Needs arising where the level of provision of services is already high but entry to the extra care scheme can prolong independent living and enhance their quality of life;
 - Requirement for extensive adaptation etc. to existing property due to their disablement or have personal and social care needs that cannot be met in an individual’s home;
 - Require assistance with their daily living tasks and / or personal care as identified by an Adult Social Care assessment; or
 - The applicant is moving back to the area in order to receive support from family.

- E8 Anyone falling outside these criteria will be considered on a case by case basis to understand their needs and circumstances.
- E9 In the case of those persons falling outside the criteria and whose assessments indicate that they are suitable for residential or nursing home care the Council will provide advice and assistance as appropriate.
- E10 Coastal may refuse a nomination if they believe:
- It does not meet the criteria of the nomination agreement;
 - It breaches the 50% rule if no agreement has been reached to amend the figure; or
 - It is believed that the applicant's behaviour would have an adverse effect on the operation of the scheme.
- E11 The following rules will apply when allocating:
- Coastal Housing Group's Extra Care Allocation Policy will be used (see Appendix E(ii));
 - The Reablement units will be allocated by a multi-disciplinary panel from the Local Authority, as well as Coastal and the care provider. The initial number of reablement units will be four but may increase over time.
- E12 The allocation of flats/bungalows will be undertaken by a panel. The panel will consist of named officers from Coastal Housing Group, the provider and assessor of care services, and Neath Port Talbot representatives, as agreed.
- E13 For a person to be a resident and enter into a tenancy agreement, they must have the capacity to understand the contract. A prospective resident without mental capacity cannot sign a tenancy agreement and will not normally be offered a tenancy. There are exceptions to this where there is a Lasting Power Of Attorney or Deputyship or where Power of Attorney or Deputyship has been applied for and where extremely tight criteria are met.
- E14 If there is any concern about the applicant's mental capacity an assessment can be conducted by a mental health professional or a social worker.
- E15 In order to maintain equilibrium when nominating/allocating tenancies consideration will be given by the aforementioned panel to the balance between extra care and sheltered housing elements within the scheme and specifically to the levels of care being received by residents within the scheme. The panel will therefore have some discretion to ensure that the overall balance of needs within the scheme will be taken into account when allocating tenancies with a view to retaining an appropriate mix of occupants with varied needs.
- E16 Extra Care is regarded as a home for life but there may be occasions when because of severely increasing physical or mental frailty the needs of residents can no longer be met. Any decision around the need for a resident to move along the spectrum of care e.g. into nursing care, will only be taken as part of a Social Services review of their care needs in consultation with all relevant parties. Coastal Housing Group can initiate a request for such a review if they have concerns for the wider safety of the scheme. Coastal will ensure that housing legislation is adhered to, and that notice would only be served where there is suitable alternative accommodation.

- E17 This policy will be reviewed annually although either party may initiate an earlier review if there is just cause.
- E18 A steering group will be established with representation from named officers from Coastal Housing Group, the provider and assessor of care services and the housing authority responsible for commissioning/contracting and nominations and allocations to establish and monitor the working practices, the inter-relationship between housing (landlord function), support and care. This steering group to meet quarterly or more regularly if required.
- E19 Monitoring: An agreed suite of metrics will be developed to ensure that outcomes and expectations for the schemes are being delivered; and that the allocation procedure is working effectively for all parties.
- E20 Transition: During the transition period the Steering Group will meet to keep the plans under review and will amend the procedure as necessary to achieve the best outcomes for the residents and the wider communities.

Appendix E(ii)

Coastal Housing Group: Allocation Policy: Extra Care Housing

- E21 Extra Care Housing recognises the importance of a purpose-built environment that enables older people to regain or retain independence.
- E22 Coastal Housing has two Extra Care schemes. Ty Twyn Teg in Neath and Ysbryd Y Mor in Aberavon. Both schemes have on site facilities such as communal lounges, a laundry and a therapy room. Residents told us that it was important to have staff based on site overnight and this is available in addition to access to Support Workers during office hours. All residents benefit from a 24hour alarm system linking their homes to an external control centre.

E23 Eligibility

- 1.1 At least one resident in each property must be aged 55 or over.
- 2.1 In order to maintain a viable community at each scheme, the ratio of those residents needing care and those residents who require sheltered housing must be 50:50
- 3.1 The Extra Care stock is allocated on the following basis:

| Property Size | Eligible Household |
|--------------------|--|
| One single bedroom | One adult |
| One double bedroom | One or two adults (where one is over 55) |
| Two bedrooms | Two or three adults (where one is over 55) |

E24 Exceptional Circumstances

Due to the specialist nature of this type of accommodation: -

- 2.1 The waiting list will remain open.
- 3.1 Applicants will be accepted who have a secure form of tenure with another housing association or local authority.

<https://www.coastalha.co.uk/can-i-rent-with-coastal/>

