

SECTION 1.1 – ALLOCATION POLICY



INTRODUCTION

Arcon provides accommodation for people who have no home of their own and people who are inadequately housed but whose needs cannot be met at prices they can afford elsewhere in the housing market. Arcon will consider direct applications from individuals seeking housing and operates a Waiting List. In addition, the Association works closely with the local authorities in the areas in which it operates and consults and co-operates with other concerned local agencies to ensure that local housing needs continue to be met.

Arcon is a partner, with a number of other registered Social Landlords and Manchester Housing, in the Manchester Housing Register. Applicants for accommodation in the Manchester area will need only to complete one application form which will give them access to all other partners on the register.

Arcon is committed to ensuring, both in access to its housing and deciding to whom properties are allocated, that no-one will be treated less favourably than anyone else because of race, colour, origin, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation or age. The Association operates an Equal Opportunities Policy, and copies are available from the office at 12 Lloyd St, Manchester, M2 5ND.

Under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 the fact that a household is homeless will no longer solely give a household priority for rehousing.

It is likely, however, that people who are homeless will qualify for some form of priority for rehousing given that circumstances leading up to their becoming homeless or their circumstances whilst in temporary accommodation would fall within one of the groups to which Arcon will give reasonable preference.

Allocations will also be made with the requirements of existing residents being considered along with the needs of individual applicants to facilitate the establishment of mixed, stable and sustainable communities.

WHO CAN APPLY ?

Arcon will consider applications from all people except :

- Applicants under 18
- Applicants, who due to their current immigration status are not eligible to hold an 'assured periodic tenancy'.
- Applicants who cannot provide two satisfactory references and the necessary documentation to support their application
- Former Arcon, Local Authority and other Housing Association tenant's who have :
 - (a) Left a property with a housing related debt (rent arrears, court costs, rechargeable repairs, service charge arrears) and made no agreement to pay these arrears.
 - (b) Been evicted from a former tenancy
 - (c) Abandoned a property
 - (d) Been subject to legal action for issues other than rent arrears (i.e anti-social behaviour)
 - (e) Have threatened or been violent towards an Arcon staff member or the staff of a previous landlord
- Applicants with an unspent conviction for a community offence or who are the subject of a civil restraining order.
- Anyone who is intending to live with somebody who falls into the above categories.

A copy of Arcon's Suspension Policy can be obtained by contacting our office.

All applicants excluded by the Association will be informed in writing and have a right to appeal against this decision through the complaints procedure.

PRIORITIES FOR ALLOCATION OF HOUSING

All registered housing associations have a duty to assist the local authority of the areas in which they operate by offering a certain percentage of their available homes to people nominated by the local authority. Arcon has agreed with the local authorities in which it operates that this will be a minimum of 50% of the Association's voids.

Accommodation that becomes available for letting and is not being offered to the Local Authority as a nomination will be allocated in the following priority order:-

Arcon Waiting List areas

1. To Priority Group 1 transfer applicants from properties undergoing major works

Tenants who need to move from their existing Arcon home so that major works of repair or improvement can be carried out.

2. To other Priority Group 1 applicants

Properties will be allocated in date order except in the case of an adapted property in which case the suitability of the applicant is of priority

3. To other waiting list applicants

The offer will be made to the applicant at the top of Priority Group 2. In the case of a refusal the next applicant on the waiting list will be made the offer. If all Priority Group 2 applicants are offered the property and there is no acceptance, the applicant at the top of Group 3 will be made the offer.

4. Move-on from supported housing schemes

Arcon will offer a quota of its voids for the rehousing of residents in supported housing schemes.

Manchester Housing register Waiting List areas

To applicants on the MHR in order of priority.

LETTING STANDARDS

Arcon is committed to operating a high quality and equitable letting service. To ensure this the following principles are adhered to:

1. All applicants with a likelihood of being housed/rehoused are interviewed personally to obtain full, reliable and comparable information.
2. Standard forms are used at all stages of the lettings process so that all applicants are assessed on the same basis.
3. All allocation decisions are authorized by the Housing Director.
4. Properties are allocated according to the following written criteria:
 - a) Arcon's overall priorities on allocating property.
 - b) The annual targets set by the Housing Management Committee
 - c) Arcon's policy on household size/property size ratios.
5. Lettings performance is monitored against annual targets and is reported to the Housing Management Committee.
6. Ethnic monitoring of lettings is carried out in terms of the number of lettings to members of different ethnic groups. This is reported to the Housing Management Committee quarterly.
7. An annual summary of its lettings activity is prepared for publication. This is included in the Arcon Annual Report.
8. Details of all new lettings are recorded using the National Core system.

REFERENCES

Arcon is committed to maintaining stable communities and all applicants must provide two references. If the application is joint we require two for each applicant. If applicants have held a tenancy within the last 3 years, one reference must be from their landlord and one other from the following list. If they have not held a tenancy within the last 3 years, two references must be provided from the following .:

Current employer, Former employer (within last 2 years), Doctor, Solicitor, Social Worker, Teacher / lecturer, Probation Officer, Priest, Health visitor, Community Worker

We also require applicants to provide documentation to prove their identity, current address and national insurance number and also supporting documentation of their reasons for requiring rehousing. This is to prevent fraudulent applications and to ensure a fairer system. We will accept photocopied documents and may make checks to ensure the validity of these.

SYSTEM FOR ALLOCATION

Arcon's properties are allocated using a choice based lettings system. There will be an open waiting list and every applicant will be given the opportunity to register for a property in the area of their choice. They will be placed into one of three priority groups according to their housing circumstances, and properties will be allocated on a date order basis within each group.

Priority Group 1 – Time limited for up to 3 months

- Existing Arcon tenants requiring major works to their property i.e. DPC
- Serious medical condition that makes current accommodation unsuitable or unable to remain in accommodation without major adaptation
- Homeless – as defined by the Housing Act 1996, Part VII, and there is written confirmation from the local authority that they are in a priority need.
- Suffering from serious harassment – which can be confirmed by the police, their landlord or another agency.
- Tenants living in Arcon Supported Housing Schemes requiring move on accommodation.

Applicants placed into Group 1 will be considered to be in urgent housing need. A time limit of three months will be put on these applicants. However, at the discretion of the Housing Director, this time limit can be extended for certain cases. These cases being

- (a) Transfer applicants requiring decant / move on from Arcon Supported Housing whereby we have been unable to make a suitable offer
- (b) Applicants with terminal / degenerative medical conditions whereby we have been unable to make a suitable offer.

If all other Priority 1 applicants refuse a reasonable offer or Arcon is unable to make them an offer in their preferred area within 3 months, they will be placed into Priority Group 2.

Priority Group 2

Applicants will be placed in Group 2 if they meet the following criteria:-

- They have a medical condition that is made worse by their current accommodation.
- They occupy an unfit property or one where they lack amenities, or have to share amenities.
- The property is too small and they are overcrowded.
- They have suffered relationship breakdown

- They are suffering problems concerned with noise nuisance / anti-social behaviour and this can be confirmed by their landlord / other external agency.
- Their security of tenure is under threat or they have been classified as non priority homeless by the local authority.
- They are elderly or have young children and live in a block of flats without a lift.
- There are social, economic or environmental factors such as family living apart, relocate for work, medical reasons or need to move to give or receive care.
- Community Letting; applicants can demonstrate a useful contribution to the local community, such as involvement in local voluntary work or community based activities, creating employment or providing a useful service for the community.

Priority Group 3

- Lodging with friends or family
- Require a smaller home.
- Current property too large or too expensive to maintain.
- Desire to move closer to family or friends.
- Any non urgent medical needs.

The applicant will be placed into one of the priority groups in the date order that their application was made. Existing tenants who apply for a transfer and HOMES applicants will be placed into an appropriate group and dealt with like any other applicant.

Once they have been placed into a group the applicant will be given advice in respect of each area or development on how frequently vacancies occur, the approximate waiting time before an offer is likely to be made, and the number of people on the waiting list for the area or development they have chosen. The applicant can then choose which areas or developments they want to register for. Applicants can register on up to 3 lists in an effort to increase their chances of being rehoused.

Each applicant will be sent a review letter every six months to re-register their interest and will be informed of how many vacancies have occurred in the last six months and what number they are on the list.

In order to meet the planning consent for 23 Claremont Grove, we cannot allocate to applicants who are car owners.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Any applicant who does not agree with any part of the allocations process can follow Arcon's Complaints and Appeals Procedure. If an applicant refuses two reasonable offers for an area of their choice, they can at the discretion of the Housing Director, be taken off the waiting list

RELATED PROCEDURE

H001 Applications and Allocations.