

## WILLOW PARK HOUSING TRUST

### ALLOCATIONS POLICY

<b>Date of Issue</b>	<b>September 2005</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>September 2008</b>
<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Housing Services Manager (Estate Management)</b>

#### 1.0 Key Objectives

- To ensure the allocations system is fair and transparent.
- To give priority in allocations to those in greatest need.
- To make best use of available stock and respond to local housing need.
- To let tenancies which are sustainable in the long term and contribute to stable communities.
- To maximise applicant choice.
- To ensure clear, accurate and consistent information is available to applicants.
- To co-operate fully with Manchester City Council (MCC) and other Local Authorities, especially in respect of the authorities statutory responsibilities to the homeless.
- To respond to tenants' requirements for mobility moves and to participate actively in national and local mobility and exchange schemes.

#### 2.0 Eligibility

- 2.1 Anyone aged over 16 can apply to be registered on the Willow Park Housing Trust (WPHT) waiting list. References will be requested, and applications made active on receipt of acceptable references.
- 2.2 All application forms received will be assessed and prioritised according to policies and procedures adopted by the Trust.
- 2.3 The Trust operates a Review List of applicants who will be suspended from the list if they meet the criteria (see Section 7.0)
- 2.4 Applicants who are 16 – 18 years old will require a rent guarantor.
- 2.5 Owner occupiers who are able to buy a property will be suspended from the list. This will be determined by the average current value of the property type / size in the area, the amount of equity realised from the sale, and ability to meet mortgage requirements.

### **3.0 Applications from Board members, WPHT staff or their close relatives**

3.1 The application form requires applicants to state if they are related to Board or staff members. In addition, applicants will be asked again at the six monthly application review, and when an offer is made to advise of any connections. Any allocations are then dealt with under Schedule 1 Policies and Procedures. The Governance Committee (as defined in Standing Orders) will approve any allocations made.

### **4.0 Applications from offenders**

4.1 As a member of the Common Housing Register, applications from persons with an unspent criminal conviction will be assessed by the Risk Management Panel at MCC, which will make a recommendation on rehousing to the Trust.

### **5.0 People subject to immigration control**

5.1 The Trust will rehouse applicants who may be subject to immigration control, as unlike Local Authorities, there is no restriction on allocating to people who are subject to immigration control, providing that the applicants can meet their rent payments as they are not entitled to Housing Benefit.

### **6.0 Transfers**

6.1 All WPHT tenants can apply for a transfer to alternative WPHT accommodation. WPHT prioritises transfer applications using the same criteria as for general applicants. Their current property must be in good condition for the application to be approved.

### **7.0 Review list**

7.1 WPHT operates a review list for applicants where applications are suspended if they, or a member of their household:

- Owe WPHT money.
- Caused wilful and substantial damage to a WPHT property.
- Have been violent, threatening or disruptive in Willow Park
- Have been involved in significant instances of anti social behaviour / have unspent convictions.
- Where the Trust has taken legal action against a tenant for a breach of the Tenancy Agreement.
- Applicants on the shared Manchester review list will also be on the WPHT review list.
- Where legal action has been taken for not allowing access for the Trust to carry out its annual gas servicing check. The review list entry will be removed when access has been allowed

- 7.2 To be removed from the review list, applicants will need to:
- Reduce any outstanding debt by 50% AND maintain a payment pattern for 6 months AND the outstanding debt must be below £1000 AND there must be no legal action outstanding.
  - Be able to demonstrate that they will be able to maintain a satisfactory tenancy. There needs to be a minimum period of 12 months to demonstrate a sustained change in behaviour. Depending on the nature of any ASB in the community, an applicant may not be able to register for specific areas.
- 7.3 Applicants can appeal against a review listing.
- 7.4 There are some circumstances in which a review listing can be overridden. Each case will be considered on its merits, but circumstances such as a severe medical condition, harassment, personal tragedy may override a listing.
- 7.5 All cases will be considered on their merits and applicants advised in full of the decision.

### **8.0 Succession**

- 8.1 Where a tenant dies, and a member of the family would have a right to succeed in law, but cannot do so because there has already been one succession, the applicant will be offered a property which meets their needs, as stated in the tenancy agreement, unless the applicant is on the review list.

### **9.0 Lettings criteria**

- 9.1 Property size. One of the key objectives of the Trust is to make best use of available stock and respond to local housing need. The Trust has very few 2 bedroom houses or 1 bedroom flats. In order to achieve this objective, the Trust allows single people to queue for both 1 & 2 bed flats, and a single parent with one child to queue for both 2 & 3 bed houses, to ensure that need is addressed.
- 9.2 The Trust will agree age restrictions on flats where appropriate, and any such restrictions will be publicised.
- 9.3 Occasionally there may be a need to allocate properties out of turn to meet local needs. Any such lettings must be authorised by the Director of Neighbourhood Services or Head of Housing. All such cases would be formally recorded and would be the result of exceptional circumstances.

<b>Household criteria</b>	<b>Type of property</b>
Single person	1 or 2 bed flat
2 adults	1 or 2 bed flat
1 adult with access to children (less than 50%)	2 or 3 bed flat
3 adults	2 or 3 bed house or flat
Single parents or couple with child(ren) Single parent with more than 50% care of children	2 or 3 bed house
Single parent or couple with minimum 3 children (where overcrowded)	4 bed house or 3 bed parlour type house
Pregnant women	2 or 3 bed house
Single / couple over age 55+ Medical need for Cat 1	Category 1 bungalow or flats
Single / couple over age 60+	Sheltered scheme
Single /couple varied age limits	Age restricted flats (varied)

**10.0 Priorities and Need**

10.1 WHPT allocation policy operates by giving priority to applicants who are in greatest need – see table below. The date the priority is awarded is the effective date. If an applicant has multiple needs in the following categories, additional time of 6 months for each type of priority will be awarded to reflect the greater need e.g. a severe medical need and a social need A award would result in an additional 6 months queuing time awarded. To receive a multiple needs award the needs must be in two separate categories and not within the same category.

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Need</b>
<b>Group 1 Urgent / Emergency Need</b>	Demolition / decant	Need to move due to home being demolished / under major repair.
	Severe medical*	Support cannot be given in current home Hospital/care & property needed for discharge No access to toilet facilities Cannot get in/out of current home
	Two for one transfers / release high demand property	Tenants with 2 properties queuing for 1 property
	Children in Flats	Children under 11 or pregnant woman in flats above ground floor with a shared entrance (transfers only)

## APPENDIX 2

	Social Need A	Care of children conditional on having adequate accommodation Domestic Violence Harassment as defined in the ASB Strategy and associated procedures Landlord harassment (MCC Advice Centre determine) Fear of violence Bereavement/personal tragedy Members of the clergy needing to move to Willow Park Prevent a child being taken into care / released from care Foster parents with a need to move to foster
	Insecurity Level 1-3	Homeless within 2 months No Fixed Address (rough sleepers only) Elderly person leaving nursing/residential care after medical assessment Split family
<b>Group 2 In Need</b>	Overcrowding	Couples are expected to share a bedroom except: Children of opposite sex 8+ Parent & child 1 bedspace per person: Large bedroom = 2 bedspaces Small bedroom = 1 bedspace
	Insecurity 4-6	Wants own home (not homeless within 2 months) Split couple Forces applicants with local connection (work, relatives, previous residence) Group E if discharge & homeless within 2 months Prisoner release with local connection (work, relatives, previous residence) Group E if release & homeless within 2 months
	Children in flats	Children under 16 in flats above ground floor Children under 16 in ground floor flats (transfers only)
	Property in poor condition / lack of facilities	Property is unfit or where there are repair problems considered a health risk or are dangerous as determined by an Environmental Health Officer
	Medical priority (A&B)*	Move to a different property would improve current condition.
	Social need B	Applicants who need to give / receive support / care Relationship breakdown Moving near college/work Bereavement / personal tragedy
<b>Group 3 No need</b>	No identified need	

\* Medical priority is determined by the MCC Medical team. Evidence will be required as appropriate to support the assessment of need.

### 11.0 OFFERS

11.1 In order to offer choice to applicants we will :

- Encourage applicants to specify their requirements, including areas, and queue for them.
- Invite the top 10 applicants to express an interest in properties that are available to let, and make the offer to the applicant who expresses an interest who has the greatest priority.
- Not penalise applicants for refusing an offer, and re-interview applicants after 3 refusals to review requirements.
- Publish feedback on offers made in order to provide transparency and information to applicants.

### 12.0 Service standards

12.1 The following service standards have been agreed with tenant representatives:

- Applications will be processed on receipt within 5 working days.
- Applicants will be invited to an interview within 10 working days.
- Applicants will be informed of the needs based assessment and the group they are in, and how to appeal.
- Applicants will be invited to re-register every 6 months.
- Applicants will be given a choice of property type and area (within the criteria)
- Accompanied viewings will take place for all allocations.
- There is a right of appeal against needs assessment, suspensions and review list entries.

### 13.0 Monitoring and Review

13.1 Monitoring of the Service Standards will be carried out as part of the Annual Allocations Review, which is also reported to the Housing Corporation. There are several targets currently operating:

- Percentage of properties nominated to MCC
- Percentage of lettings to people in work
- Percentage of lettings to BME households

13.2 The targets will continue to be monitored in the Performance Standards Quarterly Review.