



LETTINGS POLICY

1.0 Introduction

This policy relates to how homes owned or managed by Citizen are let and re-let. The policy also sets out the different types of tenancies and licences that we may offer, the reasons for using them, the period that the tenure lasts for and the circumstances in which we offer each tenancy and licence type. The policy's intention is to provide a framework for us to let our homes in a way that is responsive to the needs of the individual in terms of their home, financial position and aspiration, the sustainability of the communities in which we have our homes and the efficient use of our stock.

Our staff will work within the policy framework and our values while completing this work. Citizen has a number of nomination and section 106 agreements and will ensure that these are complied with when letting our properties.

2.0 How we let our homes

In most cases our properties are allocated through the relevant local authorities Choice Based Lettings Schemes (CBL) or other partnership CBL schemes. Citizen does not keep its own waiting list for housing. This is managed directly via each local authority.

There are occasions when our properties may be allocated outside of choice-based lettings.

We have the option to allocate a percentage of our homes, depending on the local authority nomination agreement outside of choice based lettings or nominations, to enable us to meet the needs of our existing customers and/or to make the best use of our homes. When we advertise these properties, we will apply our eligibility criteria this includes having regard to our charitable status.

For more information on how we let our homes please see our Lettings Statement.

We are committed to the following objectives when letting and managing our tenancies and licences;

- To ensure our lettings contribute towards balanced and sustainable communities and promote social inclusion.

POLICY

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[Lettings Policy]

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Page 1 of 14

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- To let homes whilst giving customers as much choice as possible, with the aim of housing people where they want to live and therefore increasing customer satisfaction.
- To ensure that any tenancy or licence is sustainable.
- To provide services that support and enable access to appropriately sized accommodation therefore reducing under-occupancy and overcrowding.
- To let properties quickly and appropriately, minimising the number of empty properties, meeting demand and maximising rent income.
- To provide good quality homes which are of a high standard.
- To use appropriate tenancies and licences to fit individual circumstances, notably starter tenancies.
- To invest in social value by cooperating with the local authorities in which we have our homes, to meet local housing need and assist in fulfilling their statutory duties. Where we have nomination agreements in place we will continue to work in partnership.
- To ensure services are responsive to the diverse needs of the communities that we work within, ensuring equal opportunities for all applicants for housing.
- To ensure that we are clear and transparent in respect of customers understanding their rights and responsibilities with regards to their tenancies and the rights and responsibilities of Citizen.

This policy is based on, and reflects, the requirements of our regulator and UK legislation (for more information see Appendix A). In developing this policy, we have also considered the relevant local authority tenancy strategies for areas in which Citizen owns homes.

3.0 Scope

This policy establishes our core principles for letting our homes. We work in many communities and we believe it is important that our lettings policy provides clarity for existing and prospective customers and allows flexibility to help us effectively address housing needs in each community we serve and with each individual customer.

POLICY

Version: V3.00

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[Lettings Policy]

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Page 2 of 14

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The policy applies to general needs social housing, affordable rents, intermediate market rents, retirement living, Rent to Buy properties and properties within our care and supported housing portfolio.

This policy does not apply to any tenant or leaseholder that has an equity interest in their property.

4.0 Policy detail

4.1 Tenure

We offer a range of tenancy and licence types. We will decide which type of tenancy or licence to offer based on whether the applicant has held a tenancy or licence before, their homelessness status if temporary accommodation and the accommodation in which they are housed. Details of the different types of tenancy and licences that we offer are shown in Appendix B.

We communicate the terms and conditions and roles and responsibilities within our tenancy and licence agreement to all customers when customers sign their agreements, clearly and consistently to ensure they are understood.

4.2 Starter Tenancies

New customers in general needs and retirement living homes who have not held a secure tenancy or an assured periodic tenancy with any local authority or registered provider, or an assured shorthold tenancy with us, will be offered a 12-month starter tenancy, this will be an assured shorthold tenancy.

The exception to this is that customers who live in properties in the following circumstances will be offered an Assured Shorthold tenancy and not a starter tenancy

- Properties let on an Immediate Market Rent
- Properties which are part of the Next Steps and Rough Sleepers schemes

The tenancy will be monitored to ensure that new tenants settle into their homes and manage their tenancies effectively. If required additional support will be offered and staff will take prompt action if tenancy conditions are not met.

4.3 Transfers

Our tenants or tenants of other registered providers or local authorities will only be considered for an offer of alternative accommodation where they:

- have no outstanding rent, court costs or rechargeable debts
- have maintained the property in good condition
- have complied with the terms of their tenancy
- cannot afford or readily obtain housing on the open market

4.4 Housing for people at risk (emergency transfers and discretionary moves)

In certain situations, there may be an urgent need for a customer to be rehoused and it may not be possible to rehouse the household within our normal arrangements.

We are not able to facilitate moves where there is a market or intermediate market rent, Rent to Buy in place or from shared ownership properties. We may also not be able to facilitate a new move where new members have been invited to join the original household as detailed in the tenancy agreement.

4.5 Emergency Transfers

Emergency Transfers will be considered where there are circumstances that threaten the life or safety of the customer or other household members, if they remained in the property. We will work with statutory partner organisations to confirm the circumstances and severity of the situation and to ensure our decisions are appropriate.

If we are unable to obtain any supporting evidence from external agencies or professionals, it is unlikely that we will award an emergency transfer.

This will only be facilitated when alternative accommodation is available. Emergency transfers will be agreed by the Neighbourhood Services Manager.

4.6 Discretionary Moves

Discretionary moves may be considered where there are circumstances that seriously impact on the health or wellbeing of the customer, or other household member, if they were to remain in the property. This would be for example when a household needs to move due to a medical condition which will cause permanent damage or disability if they do not move.

In addition, there are occasions when an allocation does not fit within the normal letting criteria such as severe under occupancy or where it would make financial sense for us to approve a move and in these circumstances, we may consider a discretionary move. Discretionary moves will be agreed by the Neighbourhood Services Manager, a senior Manager in Care and Supported Housing, the Head of Allocations and Lettings or the Lettings Manager

Prior to a discretionary move we will explore other available options, which may be a more effective solution.

4.7 Offers of accommodation

Once approved the alternative accommodation will be provided as quickly as possible. Where appropriate we will look to provide accommodation of a similar type and size to the current property where possible. This may not apply where the move is because of for example under occupation.

Customers will be offered housing in any area that removes them from the situation of immediate risk. We will offer customers one property that is the same size and type as their current home. We will not offer a discretionary move to a home bigger than the customer's current home.

If customers refuse an offer of accommodation without good reason they may be removed from the emergency transfer and discretionary move process.

4.8 Access to housing

4.8.1 Requirements

All our tenants and licensees must agree, and have arrangements in place, to:

- Pay their rent by direct debit on a date agreed.
- Agree to have an image of themselves uploaded onto our database as part of our sign-up process.
- Agree to our information sharing protocol.
- Not be subject to restricted access to housing as detailed in section 3.2.2 below.
- Have participated in any pre-tenancy or licence programme that they have been referred to.
- Participate in any support arrangements as identified or as a requirement of specific schemes.

- Make payments in accordance with our tenancy and licence agreements.

Prior to an authorised officer signing either a tenancy or licence agreement the individual officer must have evidence that these undertakings are in place, including evidence of any advance rent payment.

The Lettings Manager or Head of Allocations and Lettings may agree to vary one or more of these requirements when circumstances dictate.

4.8.2 Restricted access to housing

We will not normally accept the following applicants for housing:

- Applicants under 18 years of age, except in specialist accommodation schemes where effective support is in place, in general needs homes let as part of specific previously agreed project partnerships with some LA's and those with an Equitable Tenancy agreement.
- Applicants subject to immigration control or a person from abroad unless they are a qualifying person. A right to rent check will be completed for every applicant.
- Applicants or members of their family who have caused anti-social behaviour either in or around one of our properties or another landlord's properties. Further details on our approach to anti-social behaviour are set out in our Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy.
- Applicants with outstanding debts to us, another registered provider or local authority because of failure to pay rent, court costs, rechargeable repairs or any other housing related debt.
- Applicants where there have been previous breaches of tenancy or licence through non-payment of rent.
- Applicants who cannot demonstrate that they can sustain a tenancy or licence because they cannot afford to pay the rent. We will carry out affordability assessments for all our applicants ensuring that we support the applicant to maximise their income. If it is apparent that an applicant cannot afford the rent for a property, a tenancy or licence will not be offered. If this is the case, we will give advice about potential alternative solutions that may be available to them.

- Owner-occupiers / leaseholders except where housing needs are not being met and there are exceptional circumstances.
- Where the accommodation we offer does not and cannot reasonably meet an applicant's support needs or applicants demonstrate that they need a higher level of support which we or another provider cannot reasonably facilitate.
- Applicants who following an assessment cannot demonstrate that they currently have the appropriate skills in place to be able to manage a tenancy or licence effectively.
- Where applicants have been proven to act fraudulently when securing a home or in the subsequent conduct of a tenancy or licence with any local authority or registered provider.

We do not automatically consider anyone ineligible for housing if they have a previous conviction(s). Where an appropriate assessment has been carried out, in line with our procedures, and we are concerned that an applicant will pose a risk to themselves, our staff and contractors, their home or the wider community then they may be deemed ineligible for housing.

4.9 Responding to offers of accommodation

We will remove the offer of accommodation and will not make any further offers of accommodation where applicants have been made an offer and have:

- made no contact to arrange to view the property
- failed to turn up to an appointment to view the property
- failed to complete the sign-up process or provided information reasonably requested

And/or;

- where applicants have been made three offers of accommodation and these have been refused.

We also reserve the right not to make an offer when we feel further background checks are required before we decide whether to offer a property and the information is not provided to us within two working days by the applicant. Where additional information is required from other organisations in order for us to establish the applicant's ability to sustain a tenancy or licence, and that is not received, we also reserve the right not to make an offer.

4.10 Tenancy Fraud

Tenancy and licence fraud is a criminal offence. We will use our legal powers and partnership working to detect and pursue tenancy fraud so that homes are available to those that really need them. If an applicant has knowingly or recklessly provided false information and tenancy fraud is proven, which resulted in the allocation of a property they would have not otherwise been entitled to, we will act to recover possession of the property and all costs. We will also report the fraud to all relevant authorities and registered providers who ask us. This may adversely affect any housing application the perpetrator makes to other registered providers

4.11 Joint tenancies

A joint tenancy is a tenancy held by two or more parties, who share equal responsibility in adhering to the conditions of the tenancy. Where a joint tenancy exists, all parties are jointly liable for paying rent, any outstanding debts and must abide by all tenancy conditions.

Applications for joint tenancies will be considered and assessed on a case-by-case basis. The decision to accept or refuse an application is at the discretion of Citizen but will be based on individual circumstances of the applicants. This decision will be evidenced.

There are no legal obligations for us to offer joint tenancies when requested.

4.12 Management of vacant properties

We are committed to letting our vacant properties quickly. Our aim is to minimise rent loss, keep the number of vacant properties as low as possible and thereby maximise the availability of housing to meet need.

We will repair our vacant properties in accordance with an agreed lettable standard and will regularly review those standards.

4.13 Exceptions and Complaints

Flexibility regarding the restrictions and criteria set out in this policy will be considered in exceptional cases. If a tenant, licensee or applicant wants to make a complaint about the service they have received this will be dealt with in line with our Complaints Policy.

4.14 Lettings to staff, board members and involved tenants

We will not allocate a property to a board member, member of staff, involved tenant or close relative of these groups unless the following conditions are met;

- The applicant would normally qualify for the tenancy or licence under the appropriate Choice Based Lettings Scheme and this policy.
- The board member, member of staff or involved tenant had no involvement or influence in the allocation process.
- The allocation has been approved at the authorisation level set out in line with our probity policy and procedures.

For information relatives include; spouses or partners, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, and siblings. This statement also applies to someone who has a relationship with a board member or employee, such that, there is a risk any decision taken by the board member or employee could be influenced. These rules also apply to former employee and board members for a period of 12 months after they leave their post.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Board to seek assurance that this Policy is successfully implemented. The Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy and that all staff understand the importance of this Policy, the related procedures and that they comply with them.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their team have undertaken the appropriate Policy eLearning and training,

Any changes to this Policy must be made in line with the requirements set out in Citizens Standing Orders and our Policy framework.

6.0 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 year/s, unless legislation, service delivery or sector developments require otherwise ensuring the policy continues to meet its objectives and take account of good practice developments.

Legal advice will be taken to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and contractual responsibilities.

Where appropriate service delivery reports in respect of this policy as incorporated into our quarterly reporting suite.

7.0 Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been subject to an Equality Analysis. Staff working across Citizen have considered the impact of this policy on different groups and communities that we work with. In framing this policy, our staff are committed to not discriminate adversely against any group and will respect the diversity of the communities we are working within.

8.0 Version control

EVERY change made must be logged in the version control and ALL boxes completed.

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENTS	APPROVED AT/BY	NEXT FULL REVIEW
V 1.0	September 2022	New Policy. Lettings separated from the Tenancy Management Policy.	ELT	September 2025
V 2.0	November 2022	Date changed due to taking to November 2022 board.	Board	September 2025
V3.0	June 2023	References added to new Rent to Buy product. Immaterial change.	Policy owner – Director of Housing, Care and Support	September 2025

POLICY

Version: V3.00

Date: June 2023

[Lettings Policy]

Lead Officer: Peter Gill

Page 10 of 14

Approved at/by: Board November 2022

Date of review: September 2025

Appendix A

This policy meets the requirements of the Governments regulation of all Registered Social Landlords as prescribed in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and laid down by Homes England in the Tenancy Standard. In summary these require housing associations to ‘let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way’. Further details on the Tenancy Standard are available [here](#).

The following legislation influences the conditions and policies set out in this document:

Legislation	Main powers and relevance
Housing Act 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains the grounds that landlords must prove to gain possession for secure tenancies - Schedule II Grounds for Possession • Contains Notices Seeking Possession -first stage in possession process (s.83): s82A added by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 regarding demotion orders • Contains the rights of secure tenants
Housing Act 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains the grounds that landlords must prove to gain possession -Schedule II Grounds for Possession • Contains Notices Seeking Possession - first stage in possession process (s.8): S6A added by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 regarding demotion orders • Contains the rights of Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenants
The Prevention of Housing Fraud Act 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates offences and make other provision relating to sub-letting and parting with possession of social housing; • Makes provision about the investigation of social housing fraud; and for connected purposes
Localism Act 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New freedoms and tenure flexibilities • Mutual Exchange – changes to the type of tenancy granted may differ. May also impact on the tenancy commencement date. • New rights and powers for communities and individuals • Reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally
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Appendix B

Social Rent - Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime

Affordable Rent and Intermediate Market Rent - Rents are set at 80% of gross market rent values and are inclusive of service charges.

Our tenancy agreements reflect where an affordable rent is being charged.

Tenancy Type	Who this will be offered to	Period of Tenancy
Assured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New tenants where we do not issue a starter tenancy. Housing association tenants where the tenancy began on or before 15 January 1989 	Lifelong
Assured Shorthold	<p>Homeless households who are nominated by the local authority for Citizen properties designated as Temporary Accommodation.</p> <p>This tenancy type is offered where the homeless decision has been made by the local authority.</p> <p>Properties let at an Immediate Market Rent</p> <p>Properties let under the Next Steps and Rough Sleepers schemes</p> <p>Properties let on a Rent to Buy</p>	Dependant on scheme
Assured Shorthold Type 2	Offered to tenants housed in certain supported schemes	Dependant on scheme

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Version: V3.00
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[Lettings Policy]

Lead Officer: Peter Gill
Page 12 of 14

Approved at/by: Board November 2022
Date of review: September 2025

Assured Shorthold Type 3	Offered to tenants in certain supported housing schemes where there is an agent delivering the housing management service.	Dependant on scheme
Assured Equitable	Offered on the successful completion of a Starter Equitable Tenancy	Dependant on scheme
Contractual Temporary Accommodation	Homeless households who are nominated by the local authority to Citizen properties designated as Temporary Accommodation. This tenancy type is offered where the homeless decision by the local authority is pending.	Dependant on scheme
Contractual Type 2	As above where tenants are housed in certain supported housing schemes	Dependant on scheme
Contractual Type 3	As above where tenants are housed in certain supported housing schemes where there is an agent delivering the housing management service	Dependant on scheme
Decant – temporary periodic contractual	Tenants who move out of their permanent home into a temporary home to allow for major works to be completed at their permanent address	
Family Intervention	Tenants who are at risk of eviction on the grounds of Anti Social Behaviour	Variable
Licence Excluded	Those who occupy a room within a hostel.	Weekly
Licence Protected	Those who do not have exclusive possession of the accommodation, but that accommodation is self contained.	Weekly

POLICY

Version: V3.00

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[Lettings Policy]

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Page 13 of 14

Approved at/by: Board November 2022

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UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

Licence Excluded Managing Agent	Those who occupy a room within a hostel schemes where there is an agent delivering the housing management service	Weekly
Licence Protected Managing Agent	Those who do not have exclusive possession of the accommodation, but that accommodation is self contained. in certain supported housing schemes where there is an agent delivering the housing management service	Weekly
Secure	Those who held a secure tenancy with Citizen or prior to amalgamation another Group member immediately before moving within Citizen homes.	Lifelong
Starter	Available for new tenants moving into Citizen general needs property unless <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They had a tenancy with a Local Authority or other registered provider immediately before the letting • They had a tenancy with Citizen or prior to amalgamation another Group member immediately before the letting 	Tenancy runs week to week for one-year dependant on the conduct of the tenancy however the starter period can be extended by 6 months. At the end of the starter tenancy period if the tenancy has been successful we will offer an assured tenancy.
Starter Equitable	Care Leavers will be issued an Equitable Starter Tenancy Agreement, held in trust by CCC until such a time as the young person reaches 18 years old.	Dependant on scheme At the end of the starter tenancy period if the tenancy has been successful, we will offer an Assured Equitable Tenancy.