

WHITE CLIFFS COMMUNITY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

ALLOCATIONS & LETTINGS POLICY (General Needs & Supported Housing)

Revised RSH Consumer Standards Edition – 2026

Policy version	4.0
Effective from	11/06/2026
Next review	08/06/2028
Responsible officer	[Director / Head of Housing]
Approved by	[Board / delegated committee]

1. Purpose

White Cliffs Community Housing Association (WCCHA) allocates and lets social housing in a fair, transparent, consistent and needs-led manner. This policy applies to general needs and supported housing and is designed to provide an auditable framework for eligibility, assessment, prioritisation, offers, refusals, transfers, mutual exchange, tenancy/licence arrangements, appeals and monitoring.

The policy is intended to support compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Consumer Standards, applicable housing legislation, equality duties, safeguarding requirements, data protection requirements and WCCHA's governing documents.

2. Regulatory and Legal Framework

- RSH Tenancy Standard (Consumer Standards effective from 1 April 2024).
- RSH Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard and associated Code of Practice.
- RSH Consumer Standards Code of Practice.
- Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 1996, as applicable.
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and applicable homelessness legislation.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Localism Act 2011 and relevant tenancy provisions.
- Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, where applicable.
- Any applicable government directions, statutory guidance, nomination agreements and local authority allocations policies.

WCCHA will keep this policy under review against changes in legislation, government guidance and RSH requirements. Where a local authority nomination agreement or statutory requirement imposes a higher or more specific obligation, WCCHA will comply with that obligation.

3. Scope

- General needs social housing.
- Supported housing and other specialist accommodation.
- New lettings and re-lets.
- Transfers and management moves.
- Sensitive and local lettings arrangements.

- Adapted and accessible properties.
- Mutual exchange.
- Temporary decants, subject to the separate Decant Policy, while maintaining the protections set out in this policy.

4. Core Principles

- Fairness, transparency and consistency.
- Allocation based on assessed housing need and the purpose and suitability of the accommodation.
- Individual consideration of relevant circumstances, including vulnerability, disability, support needs and safeguarding.
- Proportionate, evidence-based and auditable decision-making.
- No blanket exclusion solely because of a previous tenancy failure where an individual assessment can reasonably be undertaken.
- Reasonable adjustments and accessible information.
- Prevention of unnecessary tenancy failure and eviction.
- Efficient use of WCCHA's housing stock while avoiding inappropriate or unsustainable allocations.
- Effective cooperation with local authorities and relevant partners.
- Meaningful resident involvement and continuous improvement.

5. Access to Housing and Local Authority Cooperation

5.1 Nominations and Referrals

- WCCHA will accept nominations and referrals in accordance with nomination agreements and scheme arrangements.
- Referrals may be received from local authorities, homelessness organisations, domestic abuse services, health and social care agencies, probation and police partners, and specialist support providers.
- WCCHA will seek sufficient information to determine eligibility, suitability, housing need, support needs and risk.

5.2 Strategic Housing Cooperation

WCCHA will cooperate with local authorities' strategic housing functions and assist them to meet identified local housing need, including homelessness duties and obligations under nomination agreements. WCCHA will participate in appropriate local housing partnerships and provide information reasonably required for statutory and regulatory purposes.

6. Assessment and Verification

- WCCHA will verify information proportionately and lawfully.
- Assessments may include identity and eligibility checks, housing circumstances, tenancy history, affordability/sustainability, property suitability, support needs, risk and safeguarding information.
- Supported housing assessments will consider whether the accommodation and available support can safely meet the applicant's needs.
- Where practicable, assessments will be completed within 10 working days of receiving sufficient information.
- Decisions and the evidence relied upon will be recorded sufficiently to permit audit and review.

7. Eligibility and Housing Need

7.1 General Needs

Eligibility will be determined by applicable legislation, WCCHA's published criteria, nomination arrangements and the purpose of the accommodation. Applicants must normally demonstrate an identified housing need and meet applicable legal and scheme eligibility requirements.

WCCHA will not operate automatic exclusions solely because an applicant has previous rent arrears, a previous tenancy failure, property ownership or a criminal history. Such matters may be relevant to an assessment, but WCCHA will consider the circumstances, current position, risk, proportionality, support available and whether the tenancy can reasonably be sustained.

7.2 Supported Housing

- The applicant has a support need appropriate to the accommodation.
- The scheme can safely and appropriately meet the identified need.
- Any identified risks can be reasonably managed.
- The applicant understands the accommodation and support arrangements, with reasonable adjustments where required.

Spent convictions will not be considered except where lawful and directly relevant information is required for safeguarding or risk management.

8. Property Allocation Criteria

8.1 Bedroom Standard

WCCHA will use the applicable statutory and published bedroom entitlement criteria as a starting point, while considering individual circumstances and the purpose of the accommodation. Exceptions may be made where justified by disability, medical need, safeguarding, caring arrangements, household composition or other relevant circumstances.

8.2 Adapted and Specialist Properties

WCCHA will seek to allocate properties that are designated, designed or adapted for specific needs to households whose needs are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation. Property suitability and accessibility will be assessed before an offer is made.

8.3 Affordability and Sustainability

Affordability will be assessed individually. WCCHA will consider income, benefits, rent and service charges, essential expenditure, debts, household circumstances, support arrangements and likely changes in circumstances. No single percentage of income will automatically determine eligibility. Where affordability concerns arise, WCCHA will consider advice, support, payment arrangements or alternative accommodation before refusing an otherwise suitable allocation.

9. Under-Occupation and Overcrowding

WCCHA will develop and deliver services seeking to address under-occupation and overcrowding, focused on tenant needs. Options may include transfers, mutual exchange, advice, housing options assistance, practical support and liaison with local authorities. Priority will be considered where overcrowding or under-occupation materially affects the suitability or sustainability of the household's accommodation.

10. Tenancy Fraud

WCCHA will take proportionate action to prevent and tackle tenancy fraud. This may include verification at allocation, appropriate tenancy checks, investigation of suspected fraud and liaison with relevant authorities. Any action will be lawful, evidence-based and proportionate.

11. Offers, Refusals and Appeals

11.1 Offers

An offer will normally be made where eligibility is established, the property is suitable, identified risks can be safely managed and the accommodation is compatible with the household's needs and the purpose of the scheme.

11.2 Refusals

WCCHA will provide written reasons for refusals and, where appropriate, signpost applicants to alternative housing options or support.

11.3 Appeals

Applicants may appeal decisions concerning eligibility, prioritisation, refusal, suitability, risk assessment or tenancy/occupation type. Appeals will be considered by an appropriately authorised person who was not involved in the original decision.

- Appeals will be accessible and straightforward.
- Applicants will normally have at least 10 working days to appeal unless a different statutory or contractual period applies.
- WCCHA will normally issue an appeal decision within 20 working days of receiving sufficient information.
- Applicants may be supported by a representative or advocate and reasonable adjustments will be provided.
- The appeal decision and reasons will be recorded.

12. Transfers and Management Moves

- Transfers may be considered where the current home is no longer suitable, overcrowded, under-occupied, affected by serious risk, or where another significant housing-management reason exists.
- Rent arrears or tenancy breaches will be considered but will not automatically prevent a transfer where exceptional circumstances or serious housing need justify one.
- Management moves may be authorised where necessary to protect a tenant or household, manage serious risk, facilitate works or address other exceptional circumstances.
- Decisions will be recorded and reviewed in accordance with delegated authority.

13. Mutual Exchange

WCCHA will support eligible tenants to mutually exchange their homes.

- WCCHA will provide access to a mutual exchange service without charging tenants a fee for access to available matches.
- WCCHA will publicise the service and explain how tenants can use it.
- WCCHA will provide reasonable support to tenants who may otherwise be unable to access the service, including those who lack digital access or require reasonable adjustments.
- WCCHA will provide information about the implications of an exchange for tenure, rent and service charges.

- Applications will be processed in accordance with statutory rights, applicable tenancy terms and WCCHA procedures.

14. Tenure and Terms of Occupation

WCCHA will offer a form of tenancy or other lawful term of occupation compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of the household, the sustainability of the community and the efficient use of stock.

- General needs tenancies will normally be periodic assured tenancies or fixed-term tenancies of at least five years, subject to statutory exceptions.
- Probationary or equivalent periods will comply with the RSH Tenancy Standard and applicable law and will not exceed permitted maximum periods.
- Any fixed term of less than five years will only be used where legally permitted and in exceptional circumstances, with the reasons and review arrangements documented.
- Where a fixed-term tenancy is due to end, WCCHA will review the household's circumstances in good time and provide clear information about the proposed outcome.
- Where WCCHA requires a tenant to move or ends a tenancy/licence, it will provide appropriate advice and assistance about housing options.
- Tenancy agreements and terms of occupation will clearly explain rights, responsibilities, rent, charges, review/renewal arrangements and termination provisions.

15. Supported Housing and Terms of Occupation

WCCHA will determine whether a tenancy, licence or other term of occupation is legally appropriate having regard to the nature and purpose of the accommodation, the actual occupation arrangements and the support provided. Supported housing will not automatically be treated as licence-based merely because support is provided.

- Residents will receive clear written information about their rights and responsibilities.
- Support expectations and arrangements will be explained.
- Support plans will normally be initiated promptly following acceptance and reviewed at least every 12 weeks, or sooner where circumstances change.
- Move-on planning will begin at an appropriate stage and will be reviewed regularly.
- Where a tenancy or licence is at risk of ending, WCCHA will provide appropriate advice and assistance.

16. Support, Risk and Safeguarding

- Risk assessments will be completed at allocation and reviewed at least at four-week intervals in supported housing, and whenever circumstances materially change.
- Safeguarding concerns will be referred and escalated in accordance with WCCHA procedures.
- WCCHA will liaise with relevant agencies, including MAPPA where appropriate.
- Non-engagement will normally trigger early intervention and support rather than automatic termination.
- All significant risk and safeguarding decisions will be documented.

17. Tenancy Sustainment and Eviction Prevention

WCCHA will provide services that support tenants to maintain their tenancy or licence and prevent unnecessary evictions. Where tenancy failure is threatened, WCCHA will consider early intervention, affordability support, welfare and housing advice, safeguarding, support-provider involvement, payment arrangements and other reasonable measures before enforcement action.

Where WCCHA ends a tenancy or licence or requires a tenant to move, affected tenants will receive appropriate advice and assistance concerning their housing options, subject to statutory requirements.

18. Equality, Diversity, Accessibility and Human Rights

- WCCHA will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and applicable human rights obligations.
- Information will be available in accessible formats and reasonable adjustments will be made.
- Applicants and tenants may use a representative or advocate.
- WCCHA will monitor allocation outcomes to identify any evidence of unfair or inequitable outcomes.
- Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken where appropriate and will inform policy and service changes.

19. Resident Influence and Transparency

WCCHA will provide meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise housing policies and services. Residents will be consulted on material changes to this policy, service standards and relevant allocation arrangements, with feedback considered in decision-making.

WCCHA will publish clear information explaining eligibility, allocation processes, prioritisation, appeals, mutual exchange, tenancy types and relevant performance information.

20. Monitoring, Records and Regulatory Reporting

- WCCHA will maintain accurate records of applications, assessments, offers, refusals, appeals, transfers, management moves, mutual exchanges and relevant supported-housing decisions.
- WCCHA will record all lettings and sales as required by the RSH Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) system.
- Performance will be monitored through agreed management information and Board reporting.
- Monitoring will include allocation timescales, refusal reasons, appeals and outcomes, occupancy, move-on, tenancy sustainment, eviction prevention, mutual exchange performance, under-occupation/overcrowding activity, safeguarding and risk-management outcomes.
- Where appropriate, information will be analysed by relevant tenant characteristics to identify inequitable outcomes.
- WCCHA will retain sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance to its Board, auditors, local authority partners and the RSH where required.

21. Governance, Delegation and Audit

The Board will approve this policy and receive assurance on its implementation. The Responsible Officer will maintain procedures and guidance under the policy and ensure staff understand their responsibilities. Material exceptions from policy will be authorised in accordance with WCCHA's delegated authority framework and recorded with reasons.

The policy will be reviewed at least every two years and sooner where legislation, regulation, local circumstances, organisational arrangements or audit findings indicate that an earlier review is necessary.

22. Related Policies and Procedures

- Tenancy Management Policy
- Supported Housing Management Policy

- Safeguarding Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- Rent Setting Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Decant Policy
- Tenancy Fraud / Fraud Response Procedure
- Mutual Exchange Procedure
- Housing Options / Allocation Procedure
- Delegated Authority Scheme

Appendix 1 – RSH Compliance Checklist

RSH requirement	Policy location
Fair and transparent allocations	Addressed – Sections 4–8
Local authority strategic housing cooperation	Addressed – Section 5.2
Specific/adapted housing	Addressed – Section 8.2
Under-occupation and overcrowding	Addressed – Section 9
Tenancy fraud	Addressed – Section 10
Accessible appeals	Addressed – Section 11
Tenancy sustainment / eviction prevention	Addressed – Section 17
Advice and assistance when tenancy/licence ends	Addressed – Sections 14–17
Mutual exchange service	Addressed – Section 13
CORE recording	Addressed – Section 20
Tenure policy	Addressed – Section 14
Tenant influence and advocacy	Addressed – Section 19

Appendix 2 – Key Implementation Actions Before Board Approval

- Inserted effective date, next review date, responsible officer and approving body.
- Approved a separate Mutual Exchange Procedure and identify the service used.
- Confirm WCCHA's CORE reporting arrangements and responsible officer.
- Confirm nomination agreements and local authority partnership arrangements.
- Approved the delegated authority framework for allocation exceptions, sensitive lets and management moves.
- Ensured the complaints and appeals procedures provide the timescales and advocacy/reasonable-adjustment arrangements referenced in this policy.
- Reviewed all existing tenancy and licence agreements against the revised tenure provisions.
- Ensured supported-housing schemes have documented support, risk, safeguarding and move-on arrangements.
- Established Board-level allocation performance reporting, including the indicators in Section 20.
- An Equality Impact Assessment undertaken before implementation.

Document Control Note

This revised edition has been prepared from WCCHA's existing Combined Allocations & Lettings Policy (Version 3.0) and strengthened against the RSH Consumer Standards and Code of Practice applicable from 1 April 2024 and checked against WCCHA's actual stock, tenancy agreements, nomination agreements, local authority requirements and legal advice before formal adoption.