



Cymoedd i'r Arfordir
Valleys to Coast

Allocations Policy

Owner:

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Accountable Lead:

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Policy Control

Policy Level	Operational
Policy Reference	HCS04
Link to Strategy	Valuing People - ensuring transparent and equitable allocations of Valleys to Coast properties
Version Control	V2
Approved by	Senior leadership team
Equality Analysis	Equality and diversity has been duly considered and any adverse impacts will be mitigated with regards to its scope, application and communication.
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Policy Control

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1. Policy Statement and Aims

- 1.1 Our purpose is to provide places and homes where people feel happy and safe.
- 1.2 In order to achieve this, we work closely with local authorities and others with statutory responsibilities to meet housing need.
- 1.3 We also seek to establish balanced communities by facilitating a mix of economic and social factors through the way we let our homes.
- 1.4 We seek to allocate our homes in a fair and transparent manner.

2. Accountability

- 2.1 The Board and Executive, through the Policy Owner, ensure that the policy delivers Valleys to Coast's strategic objectives and reflects corporate values.
- 2.2. Responsibility for the implementation of the policy resides with the Executive Director of Housing, Customers and Communities.
- 2.3 Responsibility for the service actions resides with the Head of Housing.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Transfer agreement – the legal document written at the point of transfer which sets out the parameters in which we work as a business.
- 3.2 Social Housing Grant – the grant given by the local authority to help develop properties at a social rent.
- 3.3 Common Housing Register – the waiting list for all social housing stock run by the Bridgend County Borough Council and shared with the majority of social housing providers within the borough.
- 3.4 Choice based letting schemes – a system by which applicants can view the properties available and choose to bid on their desired property rather than be allocated a property from a nominated geographical area.



- 3.5 Empty homes – a property that does not have a current contract at the address and there is vacant possession.
- 3.6 Bridgend County Borough Council – the Local Authority.
- 3.7 MAPPA – Multi agency arrangement between Probation Services, Local Authority and Housing.
- 3.8 MARAC – Multi agency arrangement to support high risk survivors of domestic abuse.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Board and EMT, through the Policy owner ensures that it delivers our strategic objectives and reflects our corporate values.
- 4.2 The Accountable Lead is accountable to the policy owner for effective implementation.
- 4.3 Community Housing Partners are accountable for the advertising and allocating of our general needs homes and our Community Living Partners are accountable for the advertising and allocating of our older persons accommodation in a timely manner and according to the principles set out in this policy. They will not let a property if they feel it is unsafe, there are material outstanding repairs or it does not meet published standards.
- 4.4 Colleagues in the Voids, Customer Services and Customer Accounts teams have a responsibility to support Community Housing Partners and Community Living Partners and have operational accountability for the procedures which underpin this policy and support the efficient letting of our homes.
- 4.5 Bridgend County Borough Council is responsible for the administration of the Common Housing Register and the provision of the nominations.

5. Principles

- 5.1 This policy sets out the basis on which we let all our rented homes in general needs and older persons accommodation. It describes how we make our empty homes available and who we let them to.



- 5.2 The policy does not cover the letting of non-residential properties, including garages.
- 5.3 It describes and establishes principles for the routes to renting one of our homes:
 - Nomination by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)
 - Our own Choice Based Lettings scheme (CBL)
 - Transfers: an existing contract holder moving to another Valleys to Coast home.
 - Other methods such as letting agents, estate agents and websites.
- 5.4 This policy recognises the role we play in meeting the needs of homeless applicants and applicants wanting to move on from supported housing.
- 5.5 This policy also recognises the needs of existing contract holders where transfers might be required due to changes due to a number of reasons including family make-up, support needs and financial changes.
- 5.6 Valleys to Coast will act reasonably when allocating properties to ensure we are considering the prevention of homelessness agenda through ensuring that letting decisions support residents to successfully sustain their Occupation Contracts and in turn create sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 5.7 This policy will ensure it is fair and transparent through its publication on the Valleys to Coast website and posted in hard copy on request.
- 5.8 The policy is consistent with our values:
 - Valuing people – make the best use of our homes and are transparent in the allocation of our homes;
 - Thinking differently – allows for innovative approaches to the allocation of our homes;
 - Courage to see things through – we will use available methods to allocate our homes.



6. Partnership working

- 6.1 Valleys to Coast understands that partnership working enables value for money through the sharing of resources and improved customer satisfaction through the provision of joined up services.
- 6.2 Valleys to Coast will work closely with all our partners including Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) in order to meet housing need.
- 6.3 We will work closely with other partners such as support agencies and other housing agencies to ensure customers with a high level or variety needs are able to fairly access our homes.
- 6.4 We will proactively work with formal partnership groups such as MAPPA and MARAC to ensure people with high and diverse needs access the most appropriate homes for them and the communities we represent.
- 6.5 Valleys to Coast will actively work with the BCBC to develop and apply the Common Housing Register.

7. Pre-allocation visits

- 7.1 All allocations will be subject to a pre-allocation visit. This can be incorporated into a pre-transfer visit for internally transferring contract holders.
- 7.2 The purpose of the visit is to:
 - Build a relationship with customers at the earliest opportunity;
 - Allow new customers the opportunity to ask questions and express any concerns;
 - Identify any needs which could put the contract at risk and discuss how the new Contract Holder can manage this. This will include signposting to appropriate agencies or direct referrals to services such as Money Matters;
 - Check they are eligible for social housing in the UK.
- 7.3 People who are eligible are defined as British or Irish citizens in habitual residence or anyone with an immigration status that allows recourse to public funds.
- 7.4 It is the responsibility of the Community Housing Partner or Community Living Partner to ensure evidence is photographed at



the pre-allocation visits and stored on the file and the current document management system to allow for effective audit.

8. Empty homes Common Housing Register

- 8.1 The policy does not cover the letting of non-residential properties, including garages.
- 8.2 At point of transfer it was agreed that 75% of Valleys to Coast homes that were Social Housing Grant funded would be provided on a nomination basis to Bridgend County Borough Council based on the Common Housing Register (CHR) allocations policy.
- 8.3 Where an empty home is offered for nomination to BCBC and they are unable to refer a person who will accept the property it will be advertised on the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system. This will still count as a nominated empty home for the purposes of performance monitoring (known as 'in lieu properties).
- 8.4 The empty home will then be advertised as a direct allocation via our own CBL scheme. After one advert via CBL we will look at other advertising methodologies such as rental websites, estate agents, free ads and any other reasonable method.
- 8.5 The additional 25% of empty homes funded through Social Housing Grant will be allocated through our own CBL scheme in order to assist with creating balanced communities.
- 8.6 When identifying the 25% of empty homes to be allocated the deciding factors will be:
 - Any adapted property will be allocated to people with a requirement for the adaptation;
 - Priority transfers will take precedence over all other applicants;
 - All other applications will be decided in application date order to providing opportunity to people not in priority housing need who are unlikely to be successfully allocated via the CHR;
 - We can apply a local letting policy, sensitive let or local connection for specific properties or developments to assist us in effectively managing our communities.
- 8.7 Where properties are funded not through Social Housing Grant we will advertise through our own CBL scheme unless the development was created to facilitate a specific demographic



that may require advertising in an alternative manner such as a website or estate agent. These also do not count towards the 25% direct applications.

- 8.8 Properties within our sheltered accommodation, and managed by the Community Living Team, will always be offered to those over the age of 55 years, irrespective of what route is used for allocation, and subject to the applicants meeting the requirements for this type of accommodation. A list of properties that fall within this criteria is detailed in Appendix 1.

9. Nominated allocations (75%)

- 9.1 This process is applicable to both current Contract Holders looking to transfer and new applications.
- 9.2 Adapted properties will always be offered to BCBC for nomination in the first instance. If a suitable person(s) is not identified to make good use of the adaptations then the property will become a direct allocation. An Occupational Therapy report may be requested as evidence of good use.
- 9.3 The nomination request is sent to BCBC to request a prospective tenant is nominated according to the criteria set out in the [Common Housing Registers Allocation Policy](#).

10. Valleys to Coast direct allocations (25%)

- 10.1 This process is applicable to both current Contract Holders looking to transfer, who are not in a priority need, and new applications.
- 10.2 Valleys to Coast will use a fair and transparent process for allocating its empty homes.
- 10.3 Valleys to Coast will ensure that we match empty home size and location to family size to allow the best use of the housing stock. Please see Appendix 2 for breakdown. A person will be allowed to bid for one bedroom more than Appendix 2 but they will have demonstrated they are able to afford the additional rent via a financial assessment prior to signing the contract.



- 10.4 The adapted property will be advertised for two cycles. If there is no successful bidding the Head of Housing will approve for it to be let via as a general needs property.
- 10.5 A sensitive let will be used where there are current or recent serious housing management issues where these issues could affect sustainability for the incoming Contract Holder and stability of the community.
- 10.6 The criteria will be determined on a case by case basis based on evidence and determined prior to advertisement.
- 10.7 Applicants who own their own property will have to evidence the property has an offer accepted prior to the offer being made.
- 10.8 An applicant is only able to refuse one offer before being suspended from the list for 12 months.
- 10.9 An applicant will be subject to successful reference from a previous landlord showing no contract breaches including rent debt prior to offering the property.
- 10.10 The Head of Housing can authorise 10.9 to be by-passed as it is acknowledged that some people do not have landlords prior to application or that a landlord can be tardy with their responses.
- 10.11 To ensure we are making every effort to prevent homelessness through offering the right home at the right time, a pre-allocation assessment will be made before offer. This will provide opportunities to identify any support needs at the earliest opportunity.
- 10.12 All internal transfers that are not priority will be treated as standard applicants and no separate transfer list will be maintained.
- 10.13 If the property is classed as Older Persons Accommodation then all the above will apply with the addition of a lower age limit of 55 years old. Evidence will be required prior to a formal offer.

11. Priority Transfers

- 11.1 Valleys to Coast holds a Priority Transfer list which does not count towards the 25% of allocations as there will be a void property at the end of this process. This list will take precedence for all non-adapted properties. Priority Transfers are transfers for



people who are unable to live in their current property due to the following reasons:

- Is at significant financial hardship due to under occupation of the property;
 - is the victim of a hate crime or domestic violence or is at risk of serious harm;
 - occupies a property with specific facilities or support services and no longer needs them;
 - has a medical need for a transfer to a lower floor and wishes to remain at the same development;
 - has asked to move, and we believe that a move would resolve a serious management issue such as anti-social behaviour;
 - needs to be moved either permanently or temporarily to enable emergency, major repairs or re-development to their home;
 - Other reasons agreed by the Executive Director of Housing, Customers and Communities.
- 11.2 A Priority Transfer will be directly matched to a property.
- 11.3 They will be matched to the applicant via date order with the longest application being first.
- 11.4 On a case by case basis there may be certain exceptional and or emergency circumstances where the Head of Housing can authorise for the Priority Transfer list to be by-passed.
- 11.5 The void property created by a Priority Transfer will be offered in the first instance to the local authority for nomination if the property is being brought back into use.

12. Intermediate accommodation

- 12.1 Intermediate accommodation is advertised and allocated through Valleys to Coast's Choice Based Lettings scheme.
- 12.2 Intermediate properties are primarily a product to provide access to affordable homes for people in employment.
- 12.3 Valleys to Coast will give priority to applicants who have at least one contract holder in employment at the time of signing.
- 12.4 Applicants will be able to apply and bid for a property and they will be chosen via date order with the longest application being first.



12.5 Applicants who own their own property will have to evidence the property has an offer accepted prior to the offer being made.

13. Pets

13.1 Valleys to Coast understands that pets are an important part of any household and as such we generally welcome pets in our general needs homes.

13.2 Discretion will be exercised by the Community Housing Partners or Community Living Partners regarding the type and number of pets and the accommodation type.

13.3 Dogs, apart from assistance dogs, are not permitted in our Sheltered and Extra Care accommodation.

14. Extra Care

14.1 Please see the [Extra Care Allocations Policy](#).

15. Other specialist accommodation

15.1 From time to time Valleys to Coast may develop properties for specific housing need which may have its own allocation requirements, priorities and restrictions. In these instances we will publish a Local Letting Policy according to the usual methodology for Local Letting Policies.

15.2 If the scheme is of significant size and longevity consideration will be given to adding it to the allocations policy on its next scheduled redraft.

16. Local Lettings Policy (LLP)

16.1 A Local Lettings Policy (LLP) is a variation of this Allocations Policy for a specified empty home type, or geographical location.

16.2 The LLP will be used to assist in recreating balance in our communities where there have been issues relating to concentrations of specific social and demographic characteristics. The LLP would look to redress this balance.

16.3 The LLP would only be in place for a fixed period of time, usually for one year.



- 16.4 The LLP will define the stock it is applicable to, the reasons why it is in place and its review date.
- 16.5 A LLP may also be used for other specialist accommodation or new build sites as a 'first lets' LLP to ensure a balanced community or to achieve specific and started goals.
- 16.6 BCBC will be consulted with in the development of the LLP and an agreement will be made with them prior to the introduction.
- 16.7 The Community Housing Team Leader will collate the supporting evidence and the approval for the policy will reside with the Executive Director of Housing, Customers and Communities.
- 16.8 The LLP will be advertised on Valleys to Coast's website, available in hard copy on request and noted on any advert for the property.

17. Discretionary Offers

- 17.1 From time to time there may be instances when it is appropriate for an offer to be made outside the remit of this policy, for example offering sheltered accommodation to someone under 60 years of age, or to support a decant from another Registered Social Landlord.
- 17.2 Where this is the case a request will be made in writing by the Head of Housing to the Executive Director of Housing, Customers and Communities for approval.

18. Exclusions (refusal of applicant)

- 18.1 This will apply where there is a nomination from BCBC.
- 18.2 Prior to an offer of a property being made all applicants will be contacted for a Pre-allocation Assessment. Please refer to BCBC's policy for a list of the exclusions criteria.
- 18.3 The Inclusions Panel process should then be followed.
- 18.4 Any former tenant debt owed by an applicant will be required to be brought to under £300 prior to the start of the tenancy in accordance with the Former Tenant Debt Management Procedure.



18.5 Where there is a direct application prior to the offer of a property, all applicants will be contacted as part of our pre-allocation visit.

19. New Occupation Contracts

19.1 New Contract Holders within general needs accommodation, sheltered and extra care will be offered a Secure Contract.

19.2 New Contract Holders within our intermediate accommodation will be offered an Intermediate Secure Contract.

20. Measurement of success

- Complying to our nomination agreement with BCBC.
- Performance target for void end to end times.
- Occupation contracts ending under one year.

21. Equality and Diversity

Valleys to Coast is committed to promoting equality and diversity in the way we deliver our services. We take steps to ensure people are treated fairly and given equal access to the opportunities available, and that people receive fair outcomes in the standard of service they receive from us. This incorporates everyone, regardless of a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.



Appendix 1

Properties that are allocated to over 55s.

Community Living Team

Hafan Deg Sheltered Scheme Gareth, Maesteg, Bridgend, CF34 9HQ

Treharne Row Sheltered Scheme, Maesteg, Bridgend, CF34 9UU

Ger Y Nant Sheltered Scheme, Brook Street, Bridgend, CF31 1HQ

Merfield House, Sarn, Bridgend, CF32 9PZ

Llys Cynffig, Pyle, Bridgend, CF33 6HW

18 - 42 Lake View Close, Porthcawl, CF36 5NA

Community Housing Team

Ty'r Orsaf, Porthcawl, CF36 5TD



Appendix 2

Number of Bedrooms	Occupants	Children
0 – bedsit	1 or 2 that can share a bedroom	None
1	1 or 2 that can share a bedroom	None
2	2 or up to 4 for shared bedrooms	1 or 2 that can share a bedroom. A bedroom can only be shared if it is classed as a double room
3	3 or up to 5 for shared bedrooms	2 or 3 that can share a bedroom. A bedroom can only be shared if it is classed as a double room
4	4 or up to 6 for shared bedrooms	3 or 5 that can share a bedroom. A bedroom can only be shared if it is classed as a double room
5	5 or 10 for shared bedrooms	4 to 8 that can share a bedroom A bedroom can only be shared if it is classed as a double room