

The Hyelm Group

Selection & Allocation Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Hyelm Group (“The Group”) comprises Hyelm and The Ames House Trust. Both are housing charities. They were founded in 1926 and 1890, respectively, and now work together in providing high standards of affordable, rented accommodation and services in the capital for up to 125 young people and those from priority groups who are in employment but who cannot afford to rent or buy in the private sector.
- 1.2 In response to a considerable and ever-increasing demand, The Group have now embarked on an exciting new strategy to develop and provide further housing and services for an additional 250 young people in great London locations by 2019.
- 1.3 The Group aims to make a real difference to the lives of those whom it houses by providing positive, stable, safe, supportive environments and strong communities in which lasting friendships can develop in an otherwise vibrant but challenging, and sometimes impersonal, capital city.
- 1.4 The Group is a Registered Provider of Social Housing for General Needs. It does not provide Supported Housing in the traditional sense of its meaning within the Social Housing sector.

2.0 Housing Schemes

2.1 Hyelm – Old Street

Hyelm – Old Street is located in the Hoxton area of London and provides accommodation, services and facilities for up to 125 young people and priority groups in housing need in London.

74 places within the scheme are reserved for priority groups and comprise fully furnished en-suite one bedroom flats and two bedroom cluster apartments.

Priority groups are the groups of people to whom priority must be given for grant funded intermediate rent housing. They are defined by the government and by the local authority (LB Hackney) in which the scheme operates. Further details on priority groups can be found by visiting www.shareto-buy.com/firststeps

The remaining 51 places are reserved for young people on low to moderate incomes who are coming to or in London looking to embark on or in the early stages of their careers and comprise fully furnished en-suite three, four and six bedroom cluster apartments.

3.0 Related Documents

- 3.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with The Group's policies on:
- Equality & Diversity
 - Disability Access
 - Guide for Residents

4.0 Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.1 The Group is committed to challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in every area of its work, including the selection of residents and the allocation of spaces within its properties.
- 4.2 This policy is written from an equal opportunities perspective. Equality of opportunity is considered at every stage of the selection and allocation process.
- 4.3 All staff involved in the selection and allocation process must be aware of and pay attention to equalities issues and in particular not discriminate, within The Group's defined selection criteria, on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation ("the Protected Characteristics") or any other reason which could cause a person to be treated with injustice.
- 4.4 To avoid any discriminatory practices The Group ensures that two members of the Allocations Panel (section 11) are involved in making all key decisions when selecting and allocating accommodation. Where there is not a consensus of view the matter will be referred to a member of the Executive Management Team for consideration.
- 4.5 Training will be given to all staff who are involved in managing the policy and additional training will be given when a need arises.

5.0 Availability of Housing

- 5.1 It is recognised that housing within the sector and locations in which The Group operates is generally in limited supply.
- 5.2 Applications for accommodation greatly exceed the number of places available at any one time and, accordingly, not everyone who applies can be housed.
- 5.3 Available places are allocated to those applicants who meet the eligibility criteria and are in greatest need. Priority is assessed by using a band and points system.
- 5.4 An applicant who meets The Group's eligibility criteria will be placed within a priority band and either offered a place, subject to need and availability, or given a place on a waiting list. It remains the responsibility of the applicant to notify The Group of any changes in their circumstances.
- 5.5 As an individual's circumstances will change over time applicants placed on the waiting list will have their accommodation needs re-assessed on a regular basis.
- 5.6 The Group may close certain waiting lists, from time to time, where it is felt that anyone on the waiting list would not be offered a place within a reasonable

timeframe.

6.0 Eligibility

6.1 In broad terms a person would be eligible for The Groups accommodation if they are in the early stages of their career within London and their personal circumstances prevents them from being able to afford a deposit and/or rental/mortgage payments on a property but within a reasonable timeframe be in a position to do so.

6.2 The eligibility criteria for accommodation at each of The Group's schemes are:

○ **Hyelm – Old Street (Non-priority group accommodation):**

- Between 18 and 35 years of age.
- Coming to or in London.
- On low to moderate incomes.
- In need of affordable, rented housing.
- In the early years of their careers.
- In need of no to minimal levels of support but who could benefit from and contribute to living in positive, safe, stable, supportive environments and strong communities.

○ **Hyelm – Old Street (Intermediate Rented Places):**

Eligibility for The Group's intermediate rented places is defined by the government and the local authority (LB Hackney) in which the scheme operates and may change from time to time. Currently, to be eligible an applicant must:

- Have a household income no greater than £71,000 per year.
- Want to live in London.
- Save the discount between the rent paid and the market rental value towards a deposit to buy a property later.
- Commit to entering into home ownership through low cost home ownership products within five years of entering his or her tenancy.

In addition, applicants for the grant funded places at Hyelm – Old Street **will not** be eligible for accommodation if they:

- Can afford to buy/rent a property suitable for their needs without assistance.
- Own a home (in the UK or abroad) that they do not plan on selling.
- Are a current homeowner unable to obtain support for their application from their Local Authority.
- Are a current homeowner unable to demonstrate that they have a housing need.
- Are a council or housing association tenant in rent arrears. Once they can provide a rent statement showing their arrears have been paid and that they have not been in arrears for 12 months they may be eligible.
- Are unable to afford the property without using housing benefits.

7.0 Choice-Based Letting

- 7.1 The idea of choice-based letting is to give a person more choice about the area and type of property in which they will live.
- 7.2 Applicants are provided with information about the types of accommodation and housing agreements available from The Group. They are able to apply to be considered for housing at one or more of The Group's schemes, subject to them meeting the eligibility criteria.
- 7.3 Where an offer of accommodation or a waiting list place is turned down by an applicant they will be asked to give their reasons and these will be noted accordingly.

8.0 Selection & Allocation

- 8.1 In order for The Group to consider a person for housing they will be required to complete and submit an application form.
- 8.2 An application may be rejected at any stage of the application and selection process where the applicant:
 - Does not meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme(s) for which they applied.
 - Has made a false statement, or requested a third party to provide a false statement on their behalf.
 - Has a significant change in circumstances and they fail to notify The Group.
 - Within the previous 12 months, has caused anti-social behaviour.
 - Has rent arrears with their current landlord.
 - Has failed to provide documentary evidence, as reasonably requested, to prove their eligibility.
 - Is unable to provide evidence of their eligibility to rent housing within the United Kingdom.
 - Has a requirement for Supported Housing in the traditional sense of its meaning within the Social Housing sector.
- 8.3 The Group may consider housing individuals who do not fully meet the eligibility criteria, but who have unusual and exceptional circumstances, on a case by case basis.
- 8.4 The Group aims through this policy to maintain a balanced community. To help achieve this in certain circumstances a person not in greatest need may be housed.
- 8.5 Although it is felt that all The Group's accommodation is best suited to the needs of younger people, applications, where the eligibility criteria allows, will be considered equally from other age groups.

8.6 Hyelm – Old Street (Intermediate Rented Places)

Applicants wishing to be considered for a place within The Group's grant funded intermediate rent one bedroom flats and two bedroom cluster apartments must meet the eligibility criteria to be considered for grant funded intermediate rented housing.

Further details can be found on www.shareto buy.com/firststeps

The Group uses a banding scheme to determine priority between applicants.

Applications will be organised into bands and prioritised within these bands by allocating points based on housing need. The greater the number of points the greater the housing need.

Where two or more eligible applicants are within the same band and have the same number of points, priority will be determined by the date of the application. The person who has remained on the waiting list the longest will be given priority.

The priority bands for The Group's grant funded intermediate rented accommodation are set out below:

Priority Band A (Highest Priority)

Housing association and council tenant who must:

- rent a council or housing association property (this does not include tenants who are currently renting through Intermediate Rent, Rent to HomeBuy or Rent to Buy schemes).
- be named on the lease / rental agreement for that property.

Priority is given to those wishing to move on into shared or low cost home ownership. It is unlikely, therefore, due to the nature of The Group's accommodation, that applications will be received from this group of people.

Armed forces personnel who are based in either London or the East or South East of England and fall into one of the following categories:

- Regular service personnel (including Military Provost Guards Service in the Army, Navy, Air Force).
- Clinical staff (excluding doctors and dentists).
- MoD police officers
- Uniformed staff in the Defence Fire Service
- Ex-regular service personnel (who have served in the Armed Forces for a minimum of six years and can produce a Discharge certificate, or similar document). Applications must be within 12 months of discharge
- The surviving partners of regular service personnel who have died in service may be eligible to be prioritised where they apply within 12 months of the date of being bereaved
- Full Time Reserve Service (full commitment)

Priority Band B

Social tenants (LB Hackney local priority) who currently live **in** LB Hackney and are:

- In inadequate or overcrowded housing.
- Socially mobile.
- Employed and earning under £50,000 per annum.
- Over 18 years of age.

Priority Band C

Social tenants (LB Hackney local priority) who currently live **outside** LB Hackney and are:

- In inadequate or overcrowded housing.
- Socially mobile.
- Employed and earning under £50,000 per annum.
- Over 18 years of age.

Priority Band D

Key workers (LB Hackney local priority) working within LB Hackney

Priority Band E

Key workers (LB Hackney local priority) **not** working within LB Hackney

Priority Band F (Lowest Priority)

All other applicants, in employment, who can demonstrate a need for affordable housing.

A summary of The Group's point scoring matrix for grant funded intermediate rented accommodation is, as follows:

Income (from all sources)

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| ○ Less than the London Living Wage (LLW) | 0 points |
| ○ LLW – £25,000 | 35 points |
| ○ £25,000 - £30,000 | 30 points |
| ○ £30,000 - £50,000 | 10 points |
| ○ More than £50,000 | 0 points |

Savings and Investments

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| ○ No savings or investments | 25 points |
| ○ Up to £4,000 | 20 points |
| ○ £4,000 - £10,000 | 10 points |
| ○ £10,000 - £20,000 | 5 points |
| ○ More than £20,000 | 0 points |

8.7 All Other Applicants

The Group uses a banding scheme to determine priority between applicants. Applications will be organised into bands and prioritised within these bands by allocating points based on housing need. The greater the number of points the greater the housing need.

Where two or more eligible applicants are within the same band and have the same number of points, priority will be determined by the date of the application. The person who has remained on the waiting list the longest will be given priority.

The priority bands for The Group's non grant funded places at the Hyelm – Old Street scheme are set out below:

Priority Band A (Highest Priority)

Applicants who fall into one of the following categories:

- Current accommodation is unsuitable for one or more of the following reasons:
 - Living in an overcrowded household.
 - Daily commute, to attend work or study, takes more than 1½ hours in each direction. To apply, commute must be, on average, at least 4 days per week and the provision of The Group's housing would decrease the time taken to commute.
 - Has a negative effect on applicants health and/or safety.

- Unable to take up an offer of work or study within London without securing suitable affordable housing.
- Unable to afford to live in the private rented market.
- Unable to afford the deposit for renting in the private rented sector.

Priority Band B (Lowest Priority)

Applicants who plan, within a maximum period of 5 years, to purchase or rent housing of a more permanent nature within the social or private sector.

A summary of The Group's point scoring matrix is, as follows:

Income (from all sources)

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| ○ Less than the London Living Wage (LLW) | 0 points |
| ○ LLW – £25,000 | 35 points |
| ○ £25,000 - £30,000 | 30 points |
| ○ £30,000 - £40,000 | 10 points |
| ○ More than £40,000 | 0 points |

Savings and Investments

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| ○ No savings or investments | 25 points |
| ○ Up to £4,000 | 20 points |
| ○ £4,000 - £10,000 | 10 points |
| ○ £10,000 - £20,000 | 5 points |
| ○ More than £20,000 | 0 points |

9.0 Strategic Partners

- 9.1 The Group works closely with a number of strategic partner organisations whose work helps further support The Group's mission of helping improve the lives of young people, with no to minimal support needs, who are in the early stages of their careers and who are in need of affordable accommodation.
- 9.2 A number of places within The Group's schemes will be allocated to those who meet our eligibility criteria from the strategic partners with which The Group works. These places will be allocated outside of the allocation scheme set out under section 8 above.
- 9.3 If strategic partner organisations are unable to refer an applicant within a reasonable time scale of an apartment becoming available, usually within 2 weeks, the space will be offered to a resident on The Group's waiting list.
- 9.4 The strategic partner organisations and the number of allocated spaces will be decided by The Group from time to time with a view to providing a balanced community within its schemes.
- 9.5 A list of strategic partner organisations can be made available on request.

10.0 Existing Residents

- 10.1 The accommodation offered by The Group is not intended to be of a permanent

nature.

- 10.2 To be housed in one of The Group's schemes residents are required to demonstrate their commitment to moving on to purchase or rent housing of a more permanent nature.
- 10.3 The Group works with a number of strategic partners and offers a range of support tools to help residents understand the various types of more permanent move on accommodation available to them and which type would be most suitable for their individual needs.
- 10.4 Residents housed within one of The Group's schemes will initially be offered a stay of 24 months, subject to the resident not breaching the tenancy agreement complying with The Group's various policy documents.
- 10.5 To allow The Group to fully utilise its housing to help the greatest number of people, who meet its eligibility criteria, and are in greatest need of affordable housing, after the initial 24 month period residents will be re-assessed every 6 months prior to being considered for any housing extension.
- 10.6 Any resident wishing to be awarded a housing extensions, after their initial term, must complete a "Housing Extension Request Form" and agree to meet with the management team on a regular basis to support their move-on.
- 10.7 After the initial term, extensions will be awarded for up to a maximum of 6 months at a time and a resident will need to re-apply for further extensions prior to the end of each extension period.
- 10.8 If a resident fails to engage with the management team and/or unreasonably fails to engage with any support offered they will not be awarded any further extensions.
- 10.9 Residents may only be eligible to be considered for a 6 month extension to their tenancy if the following apply:
 - They still meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme at which they live.
 - They are able to demonstrate a continued commitment to moving on to purchase or rent housing of a more permanent nature.
 - They are able to demonstrate that they are making reasonable progress and arrangements in relation to their move on. In regards to the intermediate rental apartments this is achieved by saving the discount on their rental payments towards either buying a property or renting within the private sector later.
 - They have not lived at one of The Group's schemes for more than 5 years.
 - They are not in rent arrears.
 - They have no history of anti-social behaviour during the previous 12 months.
 - They have not been served with notice for breach of the tenancy agreement during the previous 12 months.
- 10.10 The Group estimates that residents will be in need of its accommodation for, on average, 2 years. It will, however, provide housing for up to a maximum of 5 years, in certain circumstances.
- 10.11 The Group understands that the needs and wishes of existing residents often change. Residents may wish to transfer to another of The Group's rooms and/or schemes.
- 10.12 The administration of a transfer takes up a considerable amount of resources and

has a financial implication for The Group. As a result and as the accommodation offered at The Group's schemes is temporary in nature most requests for transfers will not be accepted.

- 10.13 However all requests for transfers will be considered on a case by case basis and reasonable requests accepted.
- 10.14 For a transfer request to be considered, a resident must meet the same criteria as those that are applied to tenancy agreement extensions, except in cases of arrears, where a transfer request will only be considered if it is for cheaper accommodation.
- 10.15 Where a transfer would help The Group deal with cases of anti-social behaviour, harassment or other relevant housing management matters it will be given priority and the eligibility criteria would not necessarily need to apply.

11.0 Allocations Panel

- 11.1 The allocations panel makes the decision about whether to accept or decline applicants. It will meet at least on a weekly basis, or more often, as required.
- 11.2 It will consist of at least two Housing Managers, supported by the Scheme Manager. A member of the Executive Management Team will join the panel if there is not a consensus of view on a case.
- 11.3 If a member of the panel knows an applicant personally this must be declared and the member must not be part of the allocations process.
- 11.4 Decisions made by the allocations panel will be recorded, together with their reasons.

12.0 Checks and False Statements

- 12.1 Any false statement will disqualify an applicant. If a tenancy agreement is granted and it is subsequently proved that a false statement was made to obtain it, The Group reserves the right to take action to terminate the agreement.
- 12.2 When an offer of accommodation is made, the applicant will be notified that such an offer may be made subject to The Group receiving proof in relation to the information provided to support their application.

13.0 Major Works

- 13.1 The Group may need to offer accommodation to existing residents where their current accommodation is no longer available due to The Group's strategic development or major repairs programme. Spaces may be allocated to these residents outside of the allocations policy set out under section 8 above.

14.0 Appeals Procedure

- 14.1 All residents and prospective residents have the right to request that their case for the allocation of accommodation be reconsidered if they believe that The Group has not acted in accordance with this or any other relevant policy.
- 14.2 The Group will deal with all appeals swiftly, in a fair and reasonable manner, and will treat each case on its merits.
- 14.3 Accommodation will not be held open whilst an appeal is being dealt with.
- 14.4 If the resident, or prospective resident, is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may make a complaint by using The Group's complaints policy, which is available on request.

15.0 Commitment to Review

- 15.1 The Group is committed to continuously improving its practice in the direct work that it does with its residents and prospective residents. It is a learning organisation and where it identifies that its policies or procedures could be improved, it will change them.
- 15.2 The Group understands that the needs of the client groups which it sets out to house will change over time as will the housing priorities defined by the government and local authorities in which it operates.
- 15.3 The Group values and responds to feedback from its residents, partner agencies and all other stakeholders, particularly in relation to good practice. This Policy and any supporting documents will be fully reviewed annually or sooner where any changing legislation has an impact.
- 15.4 The next review is due in March 2019.