



Contents

1.	Policy Objectives.....	1
2.	General Information for all Lettings (external and internal)	2
	Local Area Agreements	2
	Priorities for Letting Housing	2
	Lettings Standards.....	2
	Housing Minors.....	3
	Rejections	3
	Matching Standards – Suitable Accommodation.....	3
	Moving Into a Home ('Sign Up').....	5
3.	External Applications for Re-housing (LA Nominees, Local Lettings and Referrals)	5
	Eligibility for Housing	6
	Additional Eligibility for Older Peoples Housing	7
4.	Internal Applications for Re-housing (Transfers)	8
	Eligibility for Transfer	8
	Additional Eligibility for Older Persons Housing	8
	Purchase Incentives	8
	Review of Transfer Applications	9
	Transfer Banding System	9
	New Generation Lettings	11
	Advertising Available Properties.....	14
	Bidding for a Home.....	14
	Accepting an offer of a home.....	15
	Emergency Situations.....	15
5.	Legal and Regulatory Information.....	16
6.	Key Definitions	17
7.	Relevant Procedures	18
8.	Relevant Policies	18
9.	Relevant Forms/Letters.....	18
10.	Monitoring and Performance Information	18

1. Policy Objectives

- 2.1 This policy sets out Peabody's approach to letting its general needs, supported and older people properties. This policy covers all allocations to general needs stock made by Peabody including local authority nominations, internal transfers and other referrals.
- 2.2 This policy does not cover allocations made to cost or market rented stock or to former Crown Estate homes on Millbank, Lee Green, Victoria Park and Cumberland Market. This information is held in separate documents. Information about transfer options for current market or cost rent residents and residents in former Crown Estate homes, is also held in separate documents. Residents can access alternative tenures such as home ownership and market and key worker rent through Selections, Peabody's Choice Based Lettings service. This policy does not include mutual exchanges, other assignments or succession within general needs stock. These are covered in the Tenancy Changes policy.
- 2.3 The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- lettings and allocations are fair and that they comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements;
- lettings and allocations are undertaken as quickly and efficiently as possible in the interests of both the residents and the use of stock;
- access to housing and mobility for all groups is promoted through the use of transfers, Local Authority agreements, referrals, formal move-on agreements;
- local lettings policies and the exclusion criteria are clear open and used for the purpose of achieving sustainable tenancies and stable communities;
- an effective appeals process is in place to give residents the right to appeal decisions made under this policy;
- regular performance monitoring is in place and the policy is evaluated to ensure best practice;
- performance monitoring information is made available to relevant local authorities; and
- the collection, storage, access to and provision and disclosure of data are done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

2.4 Peabody will work closely with local housing authorities in the boroughs in which it operates and consults and co-operates with other statutory, voluntary and local agencies in meeting housing need. Peabody will participate in Choice Based Lettings schemes (CBLs) where these have been agreed with a local authority to assist in meeting housing need.

2. General Information for all Lettings (external and internal)

Local Area Agreements

2.1 Local area agreements are the way in which Peabody enters into partnership with London Boroughs and they set out the accommodation we expect to become available for letting and how it will be allocated according to strategic housing need in that area.

Priorities for Letting Housing

- 2.2 Peabody will let homes based on the following priorities;
- Priority Moves – Decants, Management Transfers, under occupying successors and those who are statutorily overcrowded.
 - Local Authority Agreements – Residents from local authority waiting lists.
 - Contractual Referrals (including RSI) – Contractual agreements to house specific client groups where Peabody has taken over land and/or management of the relevant properties or received specific grant funding.
 - Transfers – Existing residents needing or wanting to move to a more suitable home.
 - Move On from Supported Housing – Supported housing residents who no longer need support and are ready to live independently.
 - Referrals from partners which help residents move
 - Local Area Agreements – Residents for certain homes who meet the specific criteria for the local area agreement.
 - Other Referral Agencies - Local agreements with referral agencies to house certain residents in need of support within the community.

Lettings Standards

- 2.3 Peabody aims to provide a fair and equitable lettings service. To ensure this Peabody will take the following steps.
- All residents who apply for re-housing will be interviewed, at offer stage, by a member of staff to obtain comprehensive, reliable and comparable information.
 - Standard forms will be used at all stages of the lettings process so that all residents are assessed on the same basis.
 - The lettings process will involve more than one member of staff and will be made on the basis of the following written criteria.
 - i) Peabody's overall priorities for letting.
 - ii) Local area agreements.
 - iii) Peabody's CBL service.
 - iv) Peabody's home/household size standards.

Housing Minors

- 2.4 We may grant a tenancy to someone who is under 18 years old. This will only happen in the following circumstances.
- Where the minor succeeds to the tenancy following the death of the former tenant or the minor is given an additional right or a discretionary offer of a new tenancy following the death of a former tenant. See Tenancy Changes Policy for more information.
 - Where a 16 or 17 year old is nominated by a local authority or partner agency for housing with Peabody where additional support is being given. In these cases the nominating agency must act as guarantor to protect the interests of the minor.
- 2.5 Peabody will grant an equitable tenancy which is held in trust until the minor turn 18 years of age. At this point the tenancy will become a full assured (or secure for succeeding minors).

Rejections

- 2.5 An application may be rejected at any stage in the lettings process for the following reasons.
- The resident has failed to provide the proofs we need to meet our eligibility criteria within the stated time limit or when requested.
 - The resident wants a home in an area or with features that Peabody does not have.
 - The application was not returned by the set date.
 - The numbers of household members would overcrowd the property as set out in the Housing Act 1985.
- 2.6 A resident has the right to appeal Peabody's decision to reject their application as set out in the Appeals section of this policy.

Definition of Household

- 2.7 A household for the purposes of new lets will be defined as family members originally housed, plus any dependent children and/or carers. Other residents such as sub-tenants, lodgers or authorised occupiers will not normally be taken into consideration. See the Tenancy Changes Policy.

Pregnancy

- 2.8 For the purposes of the matching standards and overcrowding, Peabody will take account of an unborn child after 28 weeks of pregnancy provided documentary evidence is supplied.

Matching Standards – Suitable Accommodation

- 2.9 Peabody will offer a home which meets the resident's household size as set out in the table below.
- 2.10 Peabody will consider offering a home below the matching standards where the level of overcrowding will be reduced and the living conditions of the household members will be significantly improved. A home below the matching standards will only be offered with the agreement of the household and where there are two reception rooms and one of them could be reasonably used as a bedroom. If residents choose to be re-housed this way they must agree not to apply for a transfer on the grounds of overcrowding for 12 months.

Household Size	Bedrooms required	Bedspaces required
Single Person	1 or Bedsit	
Couple (no children)	1	2 bedspaces
2 adults not living together as a couple	2	2 bedspaces
1 or 2 adults and 1 child	2	3 bedspaces
1 or 2 adults and 2 children (where 2 children can share)	2*	4 bedspaces*
1 or 2 adults and 2 children (where 2 children cannot share)	3	4 bedspaces

1 or 2 adults and 3 children (where 2 children can share)	3	5 bedspaces
1 or 2 adults and 3 children (where 2 children cannot share)	4	5 bedspaces
1 or 2 adults and 4 children (where 2 pairs of children can share)	3	6 bedspaces*
1 or 2 adults and 4 children (where 1 pair of children can share)	4	6 bedspaces
1 or 2 adults and 4 children (where 4 children cannot share)	5	6 bedspaces

* note these applicants will be registered to bid for larger properties to allow greater access to the limited number of larger properties we have. Applicants for 2/4 beds will be registered for 3/4 on Selections, and applicants for 3/6 beds will be registered for 4/6. Applicants can then bid for both categories.

- 2.11 Children are not expected to share a bedroom in the following circumstances.
- Children of different sexes: Where the eldest child is 10 years old or more.
 - Children of the same sex: Where there is an age difference between children sharing of at least 10 years.
- 2.12 The size of the home is defined by the physical size not the household size. Peabody's minimum room sizes meet statutory requirements.
- 2.13 Peabody's standard for room sizes is as follows.
- Rooms below 50 sq. ft. are not counted as a bedroom.
 - Rooms between 50 sq. ft. and 110 sq. ft. are counted as a single person room
 - Rooms over 110 sq. ft. are counted as a two person room

Provision for Children of Separated Parents

- 2.14 Peabody will only consider children who are living elsewhere as part of the household if the child meets the following criteria.
- They are under 16 years of age.
 - They stay at the home for at least 4 nights week or for the majority of the year.
- 2.15 Each child who fulfils these criteria will be counted as a household member for the matching standards.

Provision for Adopted Parents

- 2.16 Residents who have been accepted as adoptive parents will not be entitled to additional bedroom/bedspaces until the adoption is approved.

Provision for Carers

- 2.17 Peabody will offer an additional single bedroom where the person looking after the resident is a carer. Peabody defines a carer as someone who fulfils the following criteria:
- They are the principal carer and need to be a permanent resident.
 - They are in receipt of Carer's Allowance for the resident they are looking after.
 - The resident they care for is in receipt of higher rate Disability Living Allowance

Offers

- 2.18 Residents being decanted from their home will be made two offers of accommodation. All other applications (both internal and external) for re-housing will be made one offer.
- 2.19 Peabody defines a reasonable offer as one that:
- meets Decent Homes and the Peabody Lettable Standard of quality of accommodation; and
 - is consistent with Peabody matching standards and any known special requirements (for example, level access).
- 2.20 For residents bidding for a new home through Selections, an offer will be made at the time of viewing to the shortlisted applicant with the highest priority.

Moving Into a Home ('Sign Up')

- 2.21 Tenancy start dates commence on the Monday following the offer and acceptance of the property. Applicants must bring with them all the documents requested to the viewing in order to successfully sign the tenancy agreement and arrange moving in.
- 2.22 At the Sign Up appointment, if relevant details are not provided, we reserve the right to reject the application, and offer the property to the next qualifying applicant.
- 2.23 At the Sign Up appointment, we will ask applicants about recorded or new support needs and provide information and advice on who to contact with any future queries
- 2.24 We will also explain how to pay the rent and advise on welfare support issues as set out in our Financial Inclusion Strategy (insert link).

Supported Housing Appeals – Internal and External Applications

- 2.25 All residents and prospective residents can appeal against any decision made about their case if they believe we have not acted in line with our published policies.
- 2.26 Appeals must be made to the Support and Social Inclusion Project Manager within four weeks of the decision they wish to appeal against. The resident's appeal must explain in detail why they believe the decision was not in line with Peabody's published policy.
- 2.27 At Stage 1 appeal, the Project Manager will prepare and consider the information about the appeal and inform the resident or prospective resident of their decision within 10 working days from the date of the request as well as their right to appeal further.
- 2.28 At Stage 2, appeals are made to the Support and Inclusion Manager, who will inform the resident or prospective resident of their decision within 15 working days.
- 2.29 Stage 3 appeals can be made to the Complaints Panel. Residents or prospective residents should make their appeal to the Director of Resident Services within 4 weeks from the date of the Stage 2 reply. The resident or prospective resident will be informed of the Panel's decision and their right to appeal to the Independent Housing Ombudsman within 10 working days of the Panel meeting.

Older Peoples Housing – Internal and External Application

- 2.30 All residents and prospective residents can appeal against any decision made about their case if they believe we have not acted in line with our published policies.
- 2.31 Appeals must be made to the Older Persons Project Manager within four weeks of the decision they wish to appeal against. The resident's appeal must explain in detail why they believe the decision was not in line with Peabody's published policy.
- 2.32 The stages of this appeal are as above. Stage 1 appeals are made to the Older Persons Project Manager, Stage 2 appeals are made to the Older Persons Scheme Manager and Stage 3 appeals will be made to the Complaints Panel.

3. External Applications for Re-housing (LA Nominees, Local Lettings and Referrals)

- 3.1 Peabody provide re-housing to external applicants through a number of referral partners and agencies. All lettings to external applicants will be through a direct offer of accommodation except for applications for older persons housing who will be registered to bid for a home through Selections.

Local Authority Nominations

- 3.2 Peabody has a statutory duty to assist local housing authorities in meeting their housing obligations. Peabody does this through:
- Partnership Agreements – Peabody makes agreements on nomination rights where a local authority has subsidised a particular scheme.
 - Local Authority Agreements – Peabody enters into nomination agreements with individual local authorities. These are negotiated by staff in the Lettings Service with each individual borough and are based on a proportion of ‘true voids’. Peabody defines a ‘true void’ based on the following:

True Void	Non True Void
Void created as a result of new build and newly acquired properties	Void created through resident moving within Peabody (regardless of location)
Void created by the death of a resident where there is no statutory right of succession	Void created by resident moving to another landlord where no reciprocal arrangement applies
Void created when resident buys a property	Void created by temporary and permanent decant
Void created by eviction or abandonment	

Agency Referrals

- 3.3 Peabody has contractual agreements with a number of agencies to re-house specific client groups into permanent accommodation. Each scheme has a different referral procedure which is set out in each individual agreement. The referral procedures vary depending on the client group and the agencies working with that client group.

Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI and RSI 55)

- 3.4 Peabody takes part in the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI), an initiative run by the CLG in partnership with the voluntary sector. The partnership facilitates access to a range of hostels, move-on accommodation and support services for homeless people of all ages sleeping rough on the streets of central London. For more information about the Rough Sleepers Initiative see the [RSI Policy](#).

Move On from Supported Housing

- 3.5 Peabody provides a number of properties for move on accommodation for supported housing residents who are ready for independent living.

Other Referrals

- 3.6 Peabody has agreements with a small number of agencies working in London to re-house specific client groups into accommodation. Each scheme has a different referral procedure depending on the client group and the different agencies that work with the clients.

National Witness Mobility Service (NWMS)

- 3.7 Peabody provides housing to residents who are referred through the NWMS. Peabody will normally re-house two residents a year through this scheme. Residents referred by the NWMS will be given priority move banding and will be made a direct offer.

Eligibility for Housing

General

- 3.8 All new external applications for Peabody must fulfil the following lettings criteria
- A resident may be excluded from re-housing for any of the following reasons.
 - The resident owns, or has a legal interest in a home elsewhere.
 - The resident's income limit is above Peabody's stated maximum limit. Residents applying for supported housing are not subject to this eligibility criteria.
 - The resident has unmet support needs which cannot be supplied by or arranged through Peabody

- The resident has provided false or misleading information in support of their application.
- The resident has failed to satisfy Peabody that they have the means to meet the rent charged. Peabody may waive this requirement where an appropriate third party or agency has agreed to guarantee or underwrite the rent liability.
- Legal action has been started by a Peabody or another landlord on the grounds of serious breach of tenancy conditions, nuisance, harassment, or under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act. (Legal action in this context means a Notice of Seeking Possession has been served.)
- The resident has outstanding rent arrears with Peabody or another landlord and is not taking reasonable steps to make sure the debt is repaid.
- The resident has acted in a way that is considered to be 'antisocial behaviour' in the last two years and it is reasonable to exclude them. (*)
- The resident has an unspent conviction for a serious crime against the person (for example, violence against the person, drug dealing etc).
- The resident does not have a valid immigration status because their visa, permit or leave has expired or they do not have leave to remain. (**)

* 'antisocial behaviour' is defined in the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 as 'conduct which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person and which directly or indirectly relates to or affects the housing management functions of a relevant landlord'. Evidence of a resident's antisocial behaviour might include the previous eviction of a resident or a member of their household for ASB, or a previous injunction or ASBO taken out against the resident or a member of their household.

** If there is any doubt over the immigration status of the resident further investigation should be carried out and advice sought from the Policy Team.

Income Limits

3.9 Peabody has an income limit which is applied to all new applicants to Peabody (not current Peabody residents). Income limits are based on the retail price index and the rent setting policy each September and approved by the Executive Committee.

Credit Checking

3.10 Peabody will undertake credit checks of newly nominated or referred residents. The information from the check will be used to check eligibility for housing and identify appropriate support and advice which can be offered to the resident to minimise the risk of them falling into arrears. All residents will be informed of the check and a copy will be shown to the resident free of charge.

Additional Eligibility for Older Peoples Housing

3.11 In addition to the general eligibility criteria, residents for older people's housing will be assessed using Peabody's Needs Assessment Framework, which incorporates Supporting People criteria and best practice.

3.12 Applicants will have their needs assessed by Support Officers and the application will be reviewed by the Older Peoples Housing Manager. Points are awarded to residents depending on their housing need and housing is then allocated accordingly.

3.13 Applicants can request re-assessment if their circumstances change.

3.14 Peabody sets a minimum age of 60 for all of its older people's schemes. Where demand housing is low, Peabody may consider applications from residents under 60 years of age but over 50 years of age. This decision will be made at the discretion of the Supported Tenants Manager in consultation with existing residents and the relevant local authority.

3.15 Residents are expected to agree to an appropriate support provision throughout the tenancy.

3.16 We will inform the applicant of the reasons behind our refusal decision, and we will refer applicants to other agencies where appropriate, such as the Elderly Accommodation Council.

4. Internal Applications for Re-housing (Transfers)

- 4.1 All existing residents in general needs housing and older persons' housing can apply to Peabody for re-housing and where eligible will be registered on Selections and be able to bid for a new home.

Eligibility for Transfer

General Transfer Eligibility

- 4.2 Peabody residents who want to apply for re-housing must fulfil the following criteria.
- They have no outstanding debt to Peabody, except for any Housing Benefit paid in arrears, or an agreement to pay the debt which is being maintained and has been maintained for a minimum period of 12 weeks.
 - No legal action is being taken by Peabody for any breach of tenancy.
- 4.3 Where a Notice has been served for a breach of tenancy, the resident will not normally be eligible to apply for a transfer until the Notice has expired (one year) or is no longer valid. Where a Notice has been served for rent arrears and the arrears have subsequently been cleared, the Notice will be considered no longer valid for the purposes of applying for a move.
- 4.4 Peabody has been granted a suspended possession order, the resident is only eligible to apply for a new home when:
- the order is for rent arrears and all debts have been cleared and the order discharged; or
 - the order is for another breach of tenancy and has been discharged.
- 4.5 Residents who have been given Priority Move status must satisfy different criteria (See Priority Moves).
- 4.6 In exceptional circumstances residents who do not meet the above criteria may apply for re-housing if the Head of Lettings is satisfied that a transfer is justified.
- 4.7 Residents' eligibility will be assessed at the point of their application as well as at the point of offer to ensure they are still eligible to be re-housed.

Additional Eligibility for Older Persons Housing

- 4.8 All existing residents applying for re-housing in supported housing with Peabody must meet the Lettings Criteria and additional eligibility criteria set out in 3.9 and 3.13.

Purchase Incentives

Residents with the Preserved Right to Buy

- 4.9 Residents who have the Preserved Right to Buy are not allowed to transfer to any of the reverter clause estates. Local authorities are able to repurchase estates that have a reverter clause at the original price if Peabody sells any properties on these estates. The reverter clause estates are:
- Abbey Orchard Street (Blocks A to Q);
 - Bedfordbury;
 - Clerkenwell;
 - Islington (Blocks E to I);
 - Old Pye Street (Blocks F to I);
 - Roscoe Street (not Fortune House or St. Mary Tower);
 - Whitechapel (not Block L);
 - Whitecross Street (not Dufferin Court); and
 - Wild Street.
- 4.10 Peabody will tell residents who have the Preserved Right to Buy that they will lose any additional contractual rights if they move from their current home, for example, additional contractual succession rights.

Residents with the Right to Acquire

- 4.11 The Right to Acquire is a home based right. The scheme gives a discount on the sale price to public sector tenants who qualify. Peabody will tell all new residents if their home qualifies for the Right to Acquire. Peabody will tell residents with the Right to Acquire that they will lose this right if they are moving to a home which does not qualify for the Right to Acquire.

Review of Transfer Applications

- 4.12 Any residents who have outstanding debts to Peabody which are not being reduced by a payment plan which has been maintained for over 12 weeks, will have their application suspended. Applications will only be reactivated when all outstanding debts have been cleared or when an agreement to pay has been made and maintained
- 4.13 If legal action is started for any breach of tenancy the residents' application for transfer will be suspended. Applications will only be reactivated when residents are complying with their tenancy conditions.
- 4.14 Applications will only be reactivated when the resident informs Peabody that there is no longer any outstanding debt to Peabody or a breach of tenancy.
- 4.15 Applications which have been suspended for less than a year can be reactivated. Applications which have been suspended for more than a year will be cancelled and the resident must make a new application.
- 4.16 Where a resident is registered on the transfer list and has not bid for suitable properties that have been advertised over a 12 month period, we will remove them from the list and their application will be cancelled. These residents must reapply and be reassessed to become active again.

Transfer Banding System

- 4.17 All applications for a transfer will be assessed for their housing need. Applications will be put into Priority Band A, B, C or D depending on their housing need. Applications are assessed on the following criteria.
- Need for a priority move (on the grounds of the property requiring major work, to protect a resident's safety or to make best use of stock).
 - Need to move on medical grounds.
 - Need to move because of overcrowding or under occupation.
 - Need to move to give or receive support.
- 4.18 Applications will be placed in Band A, B, C or D depending on the following criteria.

Band A (Priority Move Panel applications)	
Priority Move – Decant (Temporary)	A1
Priority Move – Decant (Permanent)	A2
Priority Move – Management Transfer	A3
Priority Move – Statutory overcrowded households	A4
Priority Move – Underoccupying successors or someone with an additional right to a tenancy following the death of the resident	A5
Priority Move – Best use of stock	A6
Band B (General Needs Applications)	
Medical Priority 1 – Urgent move	B
Overcrowding by 3 or more bed spaces	B
Underoccupation by 2 or more bed spaces	B
Resident who meets at least two categories in Band C	B
Band C (General Needs Applications)	
Medical Priority 2 – Essential move	C

Overcrowding by 2 bedspaces	C
Underoccupation by 1 bedspace	C
Proven need to move to give or receive support to or from an existing Peabody resident	C
Band D (General Needs Applications)	
Medical Priority 3 – Desirable move	D
Overcrowding by 1 bedspace	D
New Generation Lettings	D
All other applications	D

Band F (Supported and Older Persons Applications)	
Older Persons' Housing Assessment 301 - 500 points	F1
Older Persons' Housing Assessment 150 - 300 points	F2
Older Persons' Housing Assessment 100 - 149 points	F3

- 4.19 There a resident is assessed for older persons' housing and their needs/risk assessment score is higher than 500, they will not be eligible for older persons' housing because the nature of the housing will not provide adequate support to the resident. In these cases, Support Officers will work with the resident to identify alternative options for re-housing.

Priority within a Band

- 4.20 Applications within Band A will receive direct offers of accommodation via the Priority Move Panel and will also be able to bid for homes through Selections. Positions within Band A will be prioritised in order of A1 to A6.
- 4.21 Priority within Band B, C and D is based solely on date order. Residents who have been waiting the longest will have the highest priority within each band. Residents joining a band or whose change in circumstance mean they move up a band will join the band with the lowest priority. If a resident in Band C meets more than one criteria they will be moved up into Band B.
- 4.22 Applications within Band F will be prioritised as F1, F2 and F3 with application with 301 – 500 points having the highest priority. Priority within the sub-bands will be based on date order.

Appeals against a banding assessment

- 4.22 All residents and prospective residents bidding through the CBL service can appeal against their banding assessment if they believe we have not acted in line with our published policies. We will process all appeals in line with our step by step procedure as below.
- 4.23 Appeals must be made to the Lettings Team Manager (Tenancy Changes) within four weeks of the banding assessment decision. The resident's appeal must explain in detail why they believe the decision was not in line with Peabody's published policy.
- 4.24 The stages of this appeal are as below.

Stage 1 appeal to the Lettings Team Manager (Tenancy Changes). The Lettings Team Manager (Tenancy Changes) will prepare and consider the information about the appeal. The Lettings Team Manager will inform the resident or prospective resident of their decision within 15 working days from the date of the request. The Lettings Team Manager will also inform the resident or prospective resident of their right to appeal further.

Stage 2 appeal to the Head of Lettings. The Head of Lettings will inform the resident or prospective resident of their decision within 15 working days. The Head of Lettings will also inform the resident or prospective resident of their right to appeal further.

Stage 3 appeal to the Complaints Panel. If the resident or prospective resident remains dissatisfied they can ask the Complaints and Feedback Panel to review their case at Stage 3. Residents or prospective residents should make their appeal to the Director of Resident Services within 4 weeks from the date of the Stage 2 reply. The resident or prospective resident will be informed of the Panel's decision and their right to appeal to the Independent Housing Ombudsman within 10 working days of the Panel meeting.

Medical Assessment

- 4.25 Residents who have medical conditions which are being made worse by their housing will complete a self assessment form as part of their application for re-housing. This form should include details of any other household members who have medical conditions being made worse by their housing.
- 4.26 This medical information will be considered by an independent medical assessor who will decide the residents' medical priority. Peabody will contact the resident's or household member's GP if further medical information is needed to assess the application.
- 4.27 The residents' or households member's medical need to move will be put into one of three priority groups depending on the following factors.
- Band B - Medical priority 1 - Urgent re-housing is vital because of a medical condition which carries a significant risk of causing permanent damage or disability if the individual is not re-housed
 - Band C - Medical priority 2 - Re-housing is essential because of a medical condition which will cause a significant reduction in the quality of life if the individual is not re-housed
 - Band D - Medical priority 3 - Re-housing is desirable because of a medical condition which will be alleviated by re-housing.
- 4.28 Where a medical assessment has been made by an independent medical assessor the resident can appeal the assessment. This appeal must be made within four weeks of the initial assessment. The appeal will be reviewed by a different medical advisor employed by the independent medical assessor. This second review will take priority over the first assessment. Residents or prospective residents will have no further right of appeal. A resident may request a further medical assessment if they are able to demonstrate that their condition has worsened since the time of their previous assessment.

Assessing a Resident's Need to Give or Receive Support

- 4.29 Residents who need to move in general needs housing, to give or receive support will be individually assessed. The resident providing or receiving support must provide professional evidence of the need to move, for example, supporting information from Social Services, the Police, the Department for Works and Pensions.

New Generation Lettings

- 4.30 To assist those residents requesting a move on the grounds of overcrowding, Peabody will consider offering separate bedsit or one bedroom accommodation to an adult member of a resident's family. Peabody recognises that overcrowding is more problematic when older adults, who are not a couple, have to share. Peabody will grant a new tenancy to a family member.
- 4.31 New Generation lettings will be considered in areas where there are specific lettings issues such as low demand or high turnover as part of any approved local area agreement. Residents who are being re-housed through new generation lettings will have their housing need assessed as a separate household and will be placed in the appropriate band.
- 4.32 The family member must fulfil the criteria for all new residents as well as the following additional criteria.
- The household must be overcrowded as defined by Peabody's matching standards and registered with Selections.
 - The household must consist of those originally housed by Peabody (including children born/adopted at a later date).

- Household members wishing to be housed separately must have occupied Peabody home continually as their sole or principal home since first being housed (for example a member of the original household who left home and returned after marriage breakdown would not be eligible).
- The household member is 18 years old or over.
- The household member must meet Peabody's lettings criteria.

4.33 Where a household member is re-housed under this service, the remaining household will be reassessed and their priority for a move changed where appropriate. If their priority band changes then they will enter the new band with the lowest priority.

Priority Moves

4.34 Certain transfer applications will not be assessed against the criteria above because of the circumstances around the need for moving. These cases are:

- decants;
- management transfers;
- households who are statutory overcrowded;
- underoccupying successors or someone with an additional right or discretionary offer of a tenancy following the death of the resident; and
- best use of stock.

4.35 All residents may be considered for a priority move where they fulfil the relevant criteria; this includes residents in supported housing, where Peabody has suitable alternative homes.

4.36 These residents will be placed in Band A and will have priority over the other Bands.

4.37 Band A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and A6 residents will receive a direct offer of accommodation via the Priority Move Panel and will also be able to bid for homes through Selections.

4.38 The decision to make a direct offer will be based on the recommendation of the Priority Move Panel and must be approved by the Director of Customer Support.

4.39 The Priority Move Panel will be made up of managers from the following teams:

- Community Safety Team;
- Asset Management; and
- Lettings Services.

4.40 A resident has the right to appeal the decision made by the relevant Head of Service to refuse their recommendation for a Priority Move. This appeal is considered by the service area that made the initial decision and has the following two stages.

Stage 1 appeal to another Head of Service within the same directorate. The Head of Service must respond within 15 working days.

Stage 2 appeals to the Director of the Service. This should be made to the relevant Director. The relevant Director must respond within 15 working days.

4.41 A resident has the right to appeal the decision made by the Priority Move Panel to reject the recommendation for a Priority Move and also has the right to appeal the reasonableness of a direct offer of accommodation made by the Priority Move Panel. These appeals have the following two stages.

Stage 1 appeal to the Chair of the Priority Move Panel. The Chair must respond within 15 working days.

Stage 2 appeals to the Director of Customer Support. The Director must respond within 15 working days.

Decants

4.42 For Peabody's policy on Decants see the Decant and Buy Out Policy.

Management Transfers

- 4.43 In cases where the safety and well being of a resident and/or a member of their household are at risk, they may be considered for a priority move. A priority move gives residents priority over other residents on the transfer list to enable an urgent move.
- 4.44 A priority move will only be given where Peabody's policies and procedures relating to nuisance, domestic violence, support for vulnerable residents and harassment have been followed.
- 4.45 A priority move will be only considered if the case falls into one of the following categories and there is clear evidence to support the case.
- Personal protection from threats of violence from inside or outside the home – This is defined as a threat of actual violence to anyone in the household resulting in a need to move for their safety.
 - Personal protection from sexual abuse – This is defined as any form of harassment or distress caused by sexual abuse to a member of the household resulting in a need to move for their safety.
 - Protection from harassment/hate crime – This is defined as behaviour deliberately intended to harm or intimidate a person. It is often motivated by prejudice on the grounds of race, colour, national origin, ethnic origin, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. The harassment must result in a need to move for their safety.
 - Exceptional cases – There may be other exceptional cases where there is a need to move for the resident's safety and all other options have been exhausted.
- 4.46 Cases will be referred by the Head of Neighbourhoods.
- 4.47 The purpose of a priority move is to move a resident, whose safety and well being is under threat, as quickly as possible. A priority move will not be used to meet other housing preferences. If the resident is under occupying or overcrowding their existing home they will be offered a suitable sized home in line with Peabody's matching standards.
- 4.48 A resident who has rent arrears must have made and maintained an agreement to clear the arrears before their case will be considered for a priority move. If a resident is given a priority move they must maintain this agreement and reduce the arrears before a formal offer will be made.
- 4.49 Residents referred to the Peabody through the NWMS will be given priority move status under the exceptional cases category of management transfers. They will be placed in the same priority band as other residents with management transfer status.

Statutory Overcrowded Households

- 4.50 Peabody will comply with our legal duty to give priority to applicants who are overcrowded as outlined in the Housing Act 1985. Those households who are defined as overcrowded based on the Space and Room Standards set out in the Housing Act 1985 will be given priority move status and placed in Band A4. Peabody will also comply with our legal duty to advise the resident of the permitted number of people allowed to live in the property and to notify the relevant local authority where we identify statutory overcrowding.
- 4.51 These standards are as follows.

A dwelling is statutory overcrowded when the number of people sleeping in the property contravenes either the Room Standard or the Bedroom Standard.
--

The Room Standard

The Room Standard is contravened when two people of the opposite sex have to share the same room unless they are living as husband or wife, or at least one of the occupants is under 10 years old.

The Space Standard

The Space Standard is contravened when the number of people sleeping in the property exceeds the permitted number. Children under the age of one will not be counted and children under the

age of 10 will be counted as ½.	
The permitted number of people allowed to live in a property is the lesser number based on Table 1 and 2 below. Table 1 refers to the total number of rooms in the property and Table 2 refers to the floor area of each room.	
Table 1	
Number of Rooms	Number of People
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	7½
5 or more	2 for each room
Table 2	
Floor Area	How many people can sleep in this space
110 sq. ft. or more	2
90 sq. ft. or more but less than 110 sq. ft.	1½
70 sq. ft. or more but less than 90 sq. ft.	1
50 sq. ft. or more but less than 70 sq. ft.	½
Rooms that are counted as space for sleeping include living rooms, dining rooms and bedrooms.	

Underoccupying Successors or Someone with an Additional Right of a Tenancy

- 4.52 If a successor (except spouse or partner) or person being given an additional right or discretionary offer of a tenancy underoccupies the home they lived in with the deceased resident Peabody will offer suitable alternative accommodation which meets their needs. This is to enable us to make best use of stock. See the Tenancy Changes Policy for more information.

Best Use of Stock

- 4.53 Peabody wishes to make best use of its stock and may wish to release large family sized accommodation where underoccupation is evident, for example by re-housing the existing household into an alternative home and offering the home to an overcrowded family. Such moves require the approval of the Head of Lettings.

Advertising Available Properties

- 4.54 Home adverts will be published on the Selections website every week, from Monday to Thursday. Details of properties will also be available in Peabody's reception areas. There may be circumstances where a property may be advertised outside this cycle, for example, where a property is adapted and only suitable for a limited number of residents who have already placed a bid. In these cases Lettings Services may notify those residents registered on Selections who the property may be suitable for and bid on their behalf or set up automated bidding.
- 4.55 In addition to general needs homes which are available to let, homes for sale and rent through market and keyworker rent will also be advertised on the Selections website and residents will be able to access information and register an interest in these homes through the website.

Bidding for a Home

- 4.56 Peabody is committed to ensuring Selections is accessible to all residents.
- 4.57 Information about the homes and how to bid for homes will be available on the website in large print, audio and Peabody's five core languages. See the Communication Needs Policy for more information.

- 4.58 To assist residents in bidding for homes, Peabody provides additional assistance to residents who may be vulnerable. Residents who are vulnerable can request to be registered for automated bidding.
- 4.59 In addition staff working in sheltered and supported housing schemes can assist residents to access adverts on pc facilities and guide them through availability and the process.
- 4.60 Residents will only be able to bid on properties which they are eligible for. This includes the size of the home, any adaptations or any support which is provided. There is no limit on the number of properties a resident can bid for each week.
- 4.61 Residents can bid for a home through the website, on the phone or by text message. Residents can find out their position when they place their bid, although this position may change where residents with a higher priority subsequently place bids.
- 4.62 Bidding will open Monday at midday and close on Thursday at midday. Any bids placed after the published deadline will not be considered. It is the resident's responsibility to ensure their bid has been placed successfully. Bids will be confirmed as follows.

Bidding Method	Confirmation of Bid
Website	Listed under resident bidding history on the Selections website.
Phone	Confirmed at the end of the call and listed under resident bidding history on the Selection website.
Text	Confirmation text sent and listed under resident bidding history on the Selections website.

- 4.63 Residents will be able to check their bids during the bidding period on the website or on the phone.
- 4.64 After the bidding has closed, applicants with the highest banding priority will be invited to view the home. Applicants will be requested to bring certain documents as proof of eligibility. Applicants can register their continued interest in the property at the viewing.

Accepting an offer of a home

- 4.65 At or after the viewing, we will make a formal offer of the property to the interested applicant who has the highest banding priority who was present at the viewing. All offers are made subject to verification of eligibility.
- 4.66 If after acceptance of an offer an applicant / resident refuses or fails the eligibility criteria, the offer may be recorded as rejected and the resident's application may be suspended. The available property will then be offered to the next highest applicant who is interested and present until the property is let.
- 4.67 Where a resident has accepted a formal offer of a new home, they will not be considered for any other available homes.

Refusal of Offers

- 4.68 If a resident bidding for a new home through Selections refuses a reasonable offer their application will be removed and the resident must wait 12 months before being able to bid again. If a resident does not respond within the stated time periods it will count as a refusal unless a valid reason is given.
- 4.69 If a resident with Priority Move – Management Transfer status refuses a reasonable offer their application will be cancelled.
- 4.70 If a resident with Priority Move – Decant status refuses all reasonable offers Peabody will consider taking legal action to recover possession of the home in line with the Decant Policy.

Emergency Situations

Cases of ASB, Hate Crimes or Domestic Violence

- 4.71 If the resident is unable to remain in their home due to personal circumstances such as ASB/Hate crimes or domestic violence they should be dealt with by the relevant ASB/Hate crimes or domestic violence policy. This may involve referring to the local authority.

Cases Where the Home is Unfit

- 4.72 If the resident is unable to remain in their home as it is no longer habitable for example due to a fire or flood Peabody will contact the local authority concerned for temporary accommodation under the Homelessness provisions. Peabody will not normally provide emergency temporary housing in its own stock but will assist residents in finding temporary accommodation with the LA until they can return to their home.

5. Legal and Regulatory Information

Housing Act 1985

- 5.1 This Act sets out Peabody's obligation to publish rules on allocating properties, and Part 10 s.324/326 sets the minimum room standards, and space standards which determine overcrowding. Bedspaces are considered to be areas other than bedrooms, and children under 10 are not considered to need their own room/bedspace.
- 5.2 S. 331/333 set out Peabody's obligations to ensure that a resident is not statutorily overcrowded at the time of letting, that the permitted number allowed to occupy the property is provided to the resident and that Peabody notify the relevant local authority when we are made aware of statutory overcrowding.

Housing Act 1996

- 5.3 Part 6 sets out the legislative framework for the allocation of housing by local housing authorities. Section 167 sets out priorities to ensure that reasonable preference is given to certain groups. Part 7 defines homelessness, and threatened homelessness.

Housing Act 2004 Part 1

- 5.4 Part 1 of this Act changes the way local authorities assess housing conditions. They now look at the condition of properties using a risk assessment approach called the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Although the HHSRS is not in itself a standard, it replaces the Housing Fitness Standard. The HHSRS includes an assessment of space standards in a home and gives local authorities the power to take action where a home does not meet the agreed space standards.

The Regulatory Framework

- 5.5 The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) regulates social housing. This power will transfer to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) by April 2012.
- 5.6 Registered providers of social housing must meet six standards set by the TSA. These standards relate to Tenant Involvement and Empowerment, Governance and Financial Viability, Value for Money, Neighbourhood and Community, Home and Tenancy.
- 5.7 Within the Tenancy standard, there are specific requirements for the allocations service, where we will;
- co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing function to meet identified local housing needs via nomination agreements and choice based letting schemes.
 - develop and deliver services to address under occupation and overcrowding within the resources available to us to meet tenants needs
 - provide access to clear and relevant advice about tenants housing options including mobility schemes and mutual exchange schemes where these are available.
 - publish policies which include how we have made use of common housing registers, common allocations policies and local letting policies. We will clearly set out, and be able to give reasons

for, the criteria we use for excluding actual and potential tenants from consideration for allocations, mobility or mutual exchange schemes.

- develop and deliver allocations processes in a way which supports their effective use by the full range of actual and potential tenants, including those with support needs, those who do not speak English as a first language and others who have difficulties with written English.
- minimise the time that properties are empty between each letting. When doing this, we will take into account the circumstances of the tenants who have been offered the properties.
- record all lettings and sales in the Continuous Recording of Lettings system. (CORE conducted by the Centre for Centre for Housing Research) CORE records the following information:
 - Landlord details
 - Tenancy details
 - Household details/characteristics
 - Ethnic origin
 - Net weekly income of tenant and breakdown of income
 - Total savings/capital/investment of tenant or tenant and partner
 - Sources of income of tenant, or tenant and partner
 - Eligibility for Housing Benefit
 - Reason for re-housing
 - Previous tenure
 - Source of referral
 - Property details
 - Time a home was empty
 - Rent and Service Charge details

5.8 Peabody will also provide information on lettings via the annual Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR.) and National Register of Social Housing (NROSH).

6. Key Definitions

Void

6.1 A 'void' property is a residential dwelling that is not currently let to a tenant or licensee. When a property is void no rent is received and rent loss is incurred by Peabody (excluding decants). There are two types of void property: available and non-available.

Available void

6.2 An available void is a vacant property that is in a satisfactory condition for letting. An available void is likely to be either a new development or a property that requires minor work, re-decoration, repairs or maintenance to be undertaken between lets.

Non-available void

- 6.3 A non-available void will include:
- an unoccupied property that needs improvement, conversion or other works before a new tenant can move in;
 - an unoccupied property that is already undergoing improvement, conversion or other works, which must be completed before a new tenant can move in;
 - an unoccupied property that is awaiting sale (but was not originally developed for sale);
 - a property which is being held vacant to accommodate tenants being decanted from other schemes;
 - an unoccupied property awaiting demolition; or
 - where there are squatters or the property is occupied by persons without succession rights following the termination of the previous tenancy.
- 6.4 A non available void becomes an available void once major or improvement works are completed. Likewise, when Peabody has vacant possession (and there are no other major works) the property becomes an available void.

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

- 6.5 Peabody offers a choice based lettings scheme for re-housing residents and participates in local authority CBL services for letting through partnership working with local authorities. CBL advertises homes which are ready to let for registered residents to look at and bid for. Residents can bid for suitable homes and the household with the highest priority is offered the home.
- 6.6 Peabody's CBL service is called Selections. Selections provides residents with more information about Peabody's homes and the locations they are in and offers residents greater choice and transparency in how Peabody lets homes.

7. Relevant Procedures

8. Relevant Policies

Tenancy Changes Policy (includes Succession, Mutual Exchange, Assignment, Joint Tenancy)
Decant and Buy Outs Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Communication Needs Policy

9. Relevant Forms/Letters

10. Monitoring and Performance Information

- 10.1 Performance against this policy will be monitored through a range of ways including:
- feedback from ongoing resident satisfaction surveys;
 - feedback from resident complaints about the Lettings Service;
 - reviewing the nature and types of appeals against lettings decisions
- 10.2 The main key performance indicator (KPI) for the Lettings Service is shared with the Voids Team and is a turnaround target for all casual voids of 28 days.