

Rehousing Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines our approach to rehousing (transferring) social tenants across the Peabody Group and supporting tenants who wish to downsize from properties that they are under-occupying. It sets out our eligibility criteria about who can apply, how priority is awarded, and our matching standards.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to ensure allocations are fair and transparent, and all priority transfers are undertaken as efficiently as possible in the interests of our residents, whilst making best use of stock and meeting Peabody Group's strategic needs.
- 1.3 As a landlord, we aim to use our housing stock in the most effective way to meet housing need. We aim to prioritise certain types of under-occupying household who wish to move to a smaller property within our internal transfers. This enables our larger homes to be allocated to more suitably sized households.
- 1.4 This policy has links to some of our other policies, and we've thought about these links when reviewing the policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:
 - Lettings policies
 - Mutual Exchange Policy
 - Alternative Accommodation (Decants) Policy
 - Succession and Assignment Policy
- 1.5 If there is any variance between this policy and individual tenancy agreements, then the tenancy agreement will take precedence.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy outlines our approach to rehousing social tenants across the Peabody Group, including:
 - Housing let to our internal transfer applicants and to supported housing move-on cases, including those nominated via partner agencies
 - How we will support under-occupying households who wish to transfer to a more suitably sized home. It includes details of the financial incentives and practical support provided to under-occupying households who transfer to a smaller property.
 - Management transfers
- 2.2 This policy does not apply to:
 - Transfers within sheltered and supported housing, market rent, intermediate market rent, properties let through the Regency Choice Based Lettings scheme, or shared ownership properties
 - Schemes where we are demolishing and rebuilding, or where we are selling blocks and relocating the residents (see Alternative Accommodation (Decants) Policy)
 - Properties allocated externally through the local authority or any housing mobility schemes
 - The legacy Catalyst North Counties area. There is no transfer list currently in place for these residents due to the way the nomination agreements with local authorities in this area are set up, but this will be reviewed in future. Legacy Catalyst North Counties residents will still be considered for management and medical transfers where necessary.

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- 2.3 Residents of sheltered and supported housing schemes, both directly and agency-managed, may apply to join the internal transfer list to move-on to general needs housing. These applicants will also be advised of other suitable rehousing options.
- 2.4 Our under-occupation offer will only apply to sheltered and supported housing where it does not qualify as 'exempt accommodation' such as one-bedroom units under housing benefit regulations.

3. Our approach

Transfers

- 3.1 We will have regard to local area agreements, contractual arrangements and the need for our existing tenants to move home when deciding how to let properties.
- 3.2 We will assess all applicants to determine whether they fall into one of our priority bands for an internal transfer.
- 3.3 Where there is more than one applicant within a priority band that meets the matching standards for a property, we will allocate the property to the applicant with the earliest priority date – the priority date is the date we award the priority band to an applicant.
- 3.4 If an applicant's circumstances change at a later date and they qualify for a higher band, their priority date will change to the date they became eligible for that band.
- 3.5 Where an applicant meets the criteria for more than one priority band, we will place them in whichever band has the highest level of priority.
- 3.6 Permanent and temporary moves to alternative accommodation (decants) will be considered on assessment and recommendation by a Peabody Building Surveyor, the Repairs team or the Neighbourhoods team who determine it will be unsuitable for the tenant to remain due to the works required or other extenuating circumstances, and other housing alternatives have been explored.
- 3.7 We will arrange for medical applications to be independently assessed where we believe that the applicant may fall within our health and disability or medical priority bands.
- 3.8 We will award health and disability or medical priority to an applicant whose household needs to move due to a medical condition which will cause permanent damage or disability if they do not move, and which will not, or is significantly less likely to, cause permanent damage or disability if they do move. This will include any agreed household members but will not include guests (see sections 3.32 to 3.35 for more information).
- 3.9 In succession cases where the property is considered unsuitable, for example, if the property is too large for the successor's housing needs or it has disabled adaptations no longer needed by current household, and the recipient only has a right to the tenancy, an offer of suitable alternative accommodation may be made. Our Succession and Assignment Policy outlines further details on this.
- 3.10 Any tenant who has transferred to a smaller home within the last five years who has received an incentive payment will not be eligible to re-join the transfer list unless there are a change of circumstances which mean they are eligible to be considered for a management transfer.
- 3.11 We will only consider overcrowding by two bedrooms or more where the property has not been intentionally overcrowded. This includes all household members joining the household after the tenancy start date, with the exception of children born to the tenant, or to those originally housed.

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Next Steps scheme (legacy Peabody)

- 3.12 The Next Steps scheme provides a child of legacy Peabody tenants, if they are aged 21 or over and in employment or training, a one bedroom home of their own to help to tackle overcrowding.
- 3.13 We will consider an applicant eligible for the Next Steps scheme where they are at least 21 years old and have occupied the property continuously as their sole or principal home. This scheme is also eligible to those who have returned to their home after full-time education or returned from the armed forces. The main tenant's household will need to consist of those originally housed.
- 3.14 The applicant for the Next Steps scheme will need to be in employment, actively seeking work or on a training scheme. Applicants will need provide proof of their employment or training status, both at application and offer stage.
- 3.15 In addition to above, to be considered for the Next Steps scheme, the main tenant will need to have applied to move on the grounds of overcrowding by two or more bedrooms. We will re-assess the remaining household's priority where a household member moves through the Next Steps scheme.
- 3.16 Applicants for the Next Steps scheme will only be eligible for bedsits and one bedroom properties.

Targeting and allocations

- 3.17 We will target specific bands when advertising properties to make best use of stock and to ensure all priority bands have a reasonable chance of moving. For example, adapted properties, properties developed for a specific group (e.g. people with medical housing needs, people who need ground floor access or lifts with mobility needs), or to assist with urgent cases. We may set annual rehousing targets for specific groups.
- 3.18 Where we have been unable to successfully offer a property to a tenant in one of our priority bands, we will seek to allocate the property to other Peabody residents, other social housing tenants, and applicants in housing need. Any applicants who are not already a Peabody resident will need to satisfy any additional eligibility criteria as per our Lettings Policy.

Management transfers

- 3.19 For legacy Peabody residents we will consider a management transfer through the Priority Move Panel for tenants who need to move due to violence, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, harassment or hate crime (e.g. where threats have been made and are likely to be carried out). We may also consider exceptional needs such as social, educational or economic circumstances.
- 3.20 For legacy Catalyst (North Counties and North West London) residents we will consider a management transfer where the safety and wellbeing of a tenant or a member of their household are at serious risk. A management transfer gives a tenant priority to enable an emergency / urgent move to a property of a similar size to their current accommodation.
- 3.21 For legacy Catalyst resident we may authorise management transfers in exceptional circumstances where there is no arrangement to repay arrears due to the urgent need to move. Management transfer cases are reviewed every three months. For North Counties residents, direct offers are made for management transfers. For North West London residents, tenants will need to bid for an alternative home. Priority will be withdrawn if the tenant is not bidding for properties or they're no longer at risk. We may withdraw management transfer priority if an

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applicant refuses one reasonable offer of a suitable home. An additional offer may be made in exceptional circumstances if authorised by the relevant Allocations Manager or Area Manager.

Eligibility criteria for internal transfers

3.22 We will consider the following applicants ineligible for a property:

- Applicants who provide false or misleading information in relation to their application
- Applicants who do not provide evidence to confirm they have the right to rent (proof they have UK or EU citizenship), they have been granted indefinite or limited leave to remain in the UK or that they have applied for an extension of their leave to remain if it has expired
- Applicants who own or have a legal interest in a property anywhere in the UK or abroad
- Applicants who have previously committed anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse in the last 24 months
- Applicants who we have served a notice on due to breach of tenancy, unless we no longer consider the notice to be valid. A notice served for rent arrears will not be considered valid where the tenant has repaid their arrears.
- Applicants who we have obtained a possession order against, unless the order is for rent arrears and they have repaid their arrears, or the order is for another breach of tenancy but we are no longer pursuing legal action
- Applicants who have an outstanding debt with us, or our managing agents, (excluding a debt which is the result of housing benefit payments being made in arrears), unless the applicant has maintained an agreement to repay this debt for the last 12 weeks, with exception to tenants on management transfers
- Applicants affected by the spare room subsidy who owe arrears of more than £500
- Applicants who do not provide evidence to confirm they have the means to pay the rental charge. This requirement may be waived where an appropriate third party or agency has agreed to guarantee or underwrite the rent liability.
- Internal applicants who have not resided in their property for a minimum of 12 months and passed their starter tenancy probationary period. This does not apply to management transfers, decants or supported housing move-ons.
- Any internal applicants whose tenancy agreement does not allow a right of internal transfer or any tenant who has not successfully completed the probationary period of their starter tenancy (except supported housing move-ons)
- Supported Housing move-on applicants who have not engaged with their support service or have not been assessed as ready for move on
- Any tenant with a fixed term tenancy which Peabody Group has determined will not be renewed and has served a S21 notice to this effect
- Any internal applicant with a preserved right to buy who wishes to transfer to a reverter clause estate
- Any tenant found to have failed to keep their current home clean and in a good condition.

3.23 We will reject or suspend an application where an applicant is deemed ineligible by the above criteria. We will cancel an application which has been suspended for 12 consecutive months.

3.24 All offers are subject to verification of the applicant's circumstances and household composition at shortlisting, and before a formal offer is made.

3.25 We may decide, on a case by case basis and where there are exceptional circumstances, to rehouse an applicant who does not meet the eligibility criteria following approval by the relevant Assistant Director of Customer Services or Director of Specialist Housing.

Transfer eligibility for those with purchase incentives

3.26 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

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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)
- Wild Street

3.27 We 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. See the Succession and Assignment Policy for more details.

3.28 The Right to Acquire is a home based right. The scheme gives a discount on the sale price to public sector tenants who qualify. We tell all new residents if their home qualifies for the Right to Acquire. We 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.

Lettings policy

3.29 We will regularly review those applicants in our priority bands to ensure they still wish to move and meet the eligibility criteria. We encourage all applicants to be active in expressing interest in available Peabody properties but reserve the right to make direct offers where appropriate.

3.30 Any internal applicant will need to provide access to their home to allow a pre-termination visit and viewing for future lets, upon an offer of rehousing.

3.31 All transfer applicants will be expected to take reasonable steps to look after their home, keeping it clean and in good condition. Failure to do so may result in an application being refused, suspended or ended. We will consider whether the cause relates to a resident's vulnerability status or a safeguarding concern.

Household members

3.32 We define a household for the purpose of a transfer as family members we originally housed, and:

- Any additional child under the age of 18 who has joined the household from another address, providing the tenant can demonstrate they have full formal parental responsibility for the child
- Any additional child under the age of 18 where proof can be provided to demonstrate shared parental responsibility, and the child stays there for at least four nights of the week for most of the year
- Any additional child over the age of 18 who is returning from university or the armed forces
- Any grandchild if they are born to a household member whilst living in the property
- A tenant's partner – someone who is married to or in a civil partnership with the applicant, or living in a permanent relationship with the applicant and can prove they have done so for at least twelve months, and does not hold a tenancy or own property elsewhere
- A permanent carer – someone who the applicant needs to live with permanently who receives Carer's Allowance for the applicant. The applicant must be in receipt of the enhanced daily living component of Personal Independence Payment. This would also include a spouse or partner where the person meets the above criteria.

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- 3.33 We will only consider adding household members who can prove that they live with the household permanently, or where the property is their permanent home, but they are on a course of education or armed forces service that necessitates living away from home.
- 3.34 We will not give consent to people who want to move into one of our properties where it would lead to overcrowding, except dependent children and resident carers where no other option is available.
- 3.35 We will consider the following as guests of a household:
- A tenant's partner of less than 12 months
 - Other immediate adult family member (mother, father, brother, sister etc.)
 - Any non-related adult or adult partner of a household member
 - A child of a guest
 - Any adult child returning home that was not in the armed forces or returning from university

Matching standards

- 3.36 We will match an applicant's household to a property in accordance with the following matching standards.
- 3.37 One bedroom will be allocated to:
- A single adult person or couple
 - Children of the opposite sex where both are under 10 years old
 - Children of the same sex where both are under 18 years old
 - A household member who requires their own bedroom due to medical needs, providing sufficient medical evidence is submitted to confirm this
 - A foster carer who has been granted permission to adopt or foster a child or children, providing sufficient legal evidence is submitted to confirm this.
- 3.38 A bedroom will assume the maximum occupancy of two people for any bedroom. An adult is defined as 18 and over.
- 3.39 We will take account of an expectant mother with a maternity certificate (MAT B1) provided there are no other children in the household. Subject to available properties, we will do our best to provide these households with an additional bedroom for the child. In all other cases, we will take account of the child after birth.
- 3.40 Applicants will only be able to apply for properties that meet their housing need and household make-up based on our matching standards.
- 3.41 We will consider offering a property below or above the matching standards where the level of overcrowding / under-occupation will be reduced and the household's living conditions improve. This will only be done with the applicants' approval, and where it will not result in being affected by the spare room subsidy. Properties with two reception rooms will be considered where one of the rooms could reasonably be used as a bedroom.
- 3.42 Those applicants who agree to accept a property below or above the matching standards in these circumstances will not be able to apply for a transfer on the grounds of overcrowding or under-occupation within 12 months of the move.

Room sizes

- 3.43 We define bedroom sizes for properties in accordance with the relevant legislation and as outlined in our Lettings Policy.

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Housing minors

- 3.44 We will not grant an agreement for a tenancy to a minor (a person under the age of 18 years old) unless they have a contractual right to succeed to a tenancy and in this situation they would be granted a minor's agreement for tenancy (see Tenancy Policy for more details).

Appeals

- 3.45 We will consider appeals from all applicants made in relation to a medical banding assessment, or the reasonableness of an offer of accommodation, providing the appeal is made within four weeks of our decision being made.
- 3.46 For legacy Peabody management transfers, only one offer is presented to the resident and the appeal is taken to the Priority Move Panel to determine whether the offer was reasonable.
- 3.47 We will endeavour to make a decision on an appeal within 15 working days from the date we receive the appeal, except for appeals relating to medical assessments where we will make a decision within 20 working days. We will let the applicant know if our consideration will take longer.
- 3.48 In line with our Complaints Policy, matters that have been determined under another Peabody policy appeal process will not be dealt with through our Complaints Procedure.

Additional Information

- 3.49 Applicants who have been rejected from our transfer list because they do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be allowed to make a new application until six months after the last application date, except where their circumstances have significantly worsened.
- 3.50 We will consider an applicant to have refused an offer of accommodation sent to them through their preferred method of communication where they do not respond to the offer within two working days.
- 3.51 We will cancel an application where an applicant refuses their final offer of accommodation. An applicant will not be able to make another application until 12 months after the cancellation date.
- 3.52 An offer will be considered reasonable if it meets an applicant's bedroom need and any essential features as assessed by our Health and Disability Advisors or an Occupational Therapist, and in cases of domestic abuse is outside of their recognised area of risk.
- 3.53 We will undertake affordability assessments for all applicants before an offer of accommodation and may conduct credit checks where necessary. This is to assess whether we need to provide support and advice to help manage their tenancy, and to carry out fraud enquiries.
- 3.54 We will only allow an applicant to sign a tenancy agreement where they provide the documentation and identification we request, and where they pay the rent in advance as outlined in their tenancy agreement. We may allow tenants to pay the rent in advance amount over instalments where there is financial hardship.
- 3.55 We will not offer an assured tenancy to an applicant who has been granted limited leave to remain in the UK, or who can provide evidence to confirm that they have applied for an extension of their leave to remain in the UK if it has expired.
- 3.56 We will offer a tenancy equivalent to the security of tenure already held.

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- 3.57 We will consider facilitating a sensitive let in exceptional circumstances. This may be because of ongoing anti-social behaviour, the vulnerability of the potential tenant, or where the new or current resident could pose a risk to their neighbours.
- 3.58 We will consider any reciprocal arrangement with other registered providers and partner local authorities where the arrangement will assist our own tenants in securing more suitable alternative accommodation.

Under-occupation

- 3.59 We will prioritise certain types of under-occupying household who wish to move to a smaller property for internal transfers. This includes under-occupiers affected by the Welfare Reform Act (i.e. spare room subsidy) and those under-occupying by two bedrooms or more. Support may also be provided for those affected by the Welfare Reform Act, including advice about a range of other housing options.
- 3.60 An alternative property will be offered to under-occupiers who qualify for a transfer in accordance with the eligibility criteria, banding and matching standards.
- 3.61 Under-occupying households giving up a property with three or more bedrooms are eligible to be offered a two-bed property even if they would normally only be entitled to a one-bed property.
- 3.62 We allow tenants in need of a home with three or more bedrooms to bid for a home with one fewer bedroom even if this results in a low level of overcrowding.
- 3.63 We will allow a disabled tenant or household member to have an extra bedroom where they require a non-resident overnight carer. The applicant must be in receipt of the enhanced daily living component of Personal Independence Payment.
- 3.64 We will make a financial incentive payment for under-occupying households following completion of a move to a smaller property.
- 3.65 We will not offer incentives to mutual exchange tenants or tenants moving into the private sector, including where they are purchasing a property or moving into private rented accommodation.
- 3.66 Payment of a financial incentive will only be made where the outgoing tenant has left the property they are vacating in a clean and good condition. We also expect the outgoing tenant to provide access to their property for inspection.
- 3.67 Any outstanding rechargeable repairs worth less than the financial incentive for which the outgoing tenant is eligible will be deducted from the incentive payment. Where rechargeable repairs are equal to the financial incentive, the tenant will no longer be entitled to a financial incentive. Where there are rechargeable repairs worth more than the financial incentive payment the outgoing tenant will not be allowed to move until these have been settled. We define a rechargeable repair as any work order that responds to either a threat to health and safety or property and is identified as a resident's responsibility as a direct result of wilful damage, neglect or vandalism by a member of the household, or a visitor of the resident.
- 3.68 Where an under-occupier in rent arrears or with other outstanding debt to Peabody transfers to another property, we will use their incentive money to repay the arrears and/or debt they owe.

Decoration Allowance

- 3.69 We may pay a decoration allowance on a case-by-case basis to cover the costs of decorating one bedroom for under-occupiers who move into a smaller property. Outside of supported

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housing, empty homes will generally not be decorated. Exceptions to this will be for certain vulnerable residents, market and intermediate market rented properties, the Regency estate and some properties for permanent and temporary moves to alternative accommodation. This will not affect the tenant's eligibility for either an incentive payment or a rent refund.

Additional support

- 3.70 We will provide moving assistance to tenants on a case-by-case basis. This may include delivering packaging materials, arranging disconnection of gas supply, washing machine and dishwasher, arranging reconnection of these services, and transporting possessions from one property to another.
- 3.71 We will consider allowing a tenant to use their own removal company instead of us arranging the removal on their behalf. Where we agree to this, we will reimburse the removal costs to the tenant on receipt of proof of payment. The costs of the removal should not be greater than that which could be obtained if we arranged the removal on their behalf. Costs which we deem to be excessive may be withdrawn from their incentive payment.
- 3.72 We will signpost under-occupiers to lodger schemes and provide advice on complying with the terms of their tenancy should they take in a lodger.

4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) carried out on the previous Peabody Rehousing Policy identified three positive impacts and no negative impacts on any particular groups of people. As this is an integration policy and no significant changes have been made, the previous EIA still applies. A full EIA will be carried out when this policy is next fully reviewed.

5. Legislation and Regulation

- 5.1 The following legislation is relevant to this policy:

- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Schedule 1 of Housing Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Localism Act 2011
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1988 and 1996
- Transfer of Tenancies and Right to Acquire (Exclusion) Regulations 2012/696

- 5.2 This policy complies with the requirements set out in the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Managing Directors have overall responsibility for the delivery of and compliance with this policy and associated policies.
- 6.2 The Assistant Directors of Customer Service are responsible for training and monitoring that this policy is followed.

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Approval

Version number	1
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Policy owner	Managing Director London South