

Rehousing Policy

1. This policy outlines our approach to rehousing (transferring) social tenants across the Peabody Group. Our priority is to make sure our residents have access to clear and relevant information about their housing options.
 - 1.1 The Policy sets out our eligibility criteria, how priority is awarded, and our home matching standards and other relevant info. We will only directly rehouse residents who are in high priority need for alternative accommodation.
 - 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 We aim to prioritise those who have an urgent need to move. We will also prioritise particular cases where a resident is under occupying, as this enables our larger homes to be allocated to more suitably sized households.
 - 1.4 Where we are unable to support Peabody Group social tenants with their request to move, there are other options available, these options are set out on Peabody's website. Residents can also contact their relevant local authority to explore housing options.
 - 1.5 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
 - Tenancy Policy
 - 1.6 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, excluding Town and Country Housing.
- 2.2 This policy does not apply to:
 - Overcrowded households, due to the limited homes available for transferring tenants. We would advise residents who are overcrowded to seek other housing options, including contacting the local Council for advice, mutual exchange or other rehousing options. We may consider households that meet the statutory definition of overcrowding (overcrowded by 2 or more rooms), where there are additional exceptional circumstances.
 - Transfers within:
 - sheltered and supported housing,
 - market rent and intermediate market rent,
 - properties let through the Regency Choice Based Lettings scheme,

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- 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

3. Our approach

Transfers

- 3.1 When deciding how to let properties, we must first fulfil local area agreements, contractual arrangements and prioritise the need for our existing tenants to move home.
- 3.2 We will assess all applicants to determine whether they are in high priority need for an internal transfer.
- 3.3 This will be determined through our Priority Moves Panels; Peabody Group will consider management transfers and other social welfare cases through this process. Panels are overseen by the regional Allocations and Lettings Teams.

1	Priority Move	A resident who is experiencing violence, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, harassment or hate crime A resident needs to move due to medical reasons where there are also exceptional circumstances A resident who needs to move due to repairs needed in a resident's home
2	Other Schemes that alleviate overcrowding and make available family sized homes	Next Steps Under occupation

Priority Moves

- 3.4 We define a Priority Move;
as a management transfer where a resident is experiencing:
- Violence
 - Domestic abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Harassment or hate crime (including where threats have been made and are likely to be carried out)
- or as a social welfare transfer, where a resident is experiencing:
- Medical reasons where they are also exceptional circumstances (see Section 3.6 and 3.7 - Medical)
 - A need to move due to repairs needed in a resident's home (see Section 3.5 - Permanent and Temporary Moves to Alternative Accommodation) ^(OBJ)

Permanent and Temporary Moves to Alternative Accommodation

- 3.5 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 exceptional circumstances, and other housing alternatives have been explored. Our Alternative Accommodation (Decants) policy has more information on this.

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Medical

- 3.6 We will only consider medical applications to be independently assessed where we believe that the applicant may have a disability need or medical need. This is in addition to other exceptional circumstances and where their current housing is having a severe adverse impact on their daily life. The panel will also consider if the tenant has sought housing through their local authority's allocation policy or if there are other options that could be explored.
- 3.7 We will award 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 3.22 to 3.25 for more information).

Non-priority moves

Succession Cases

- 3.8 Where permitted in discretionary tenancy/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 the successor and their 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.

Overcrowding

- 3.9 We will not consider all cases of overcrowding; we will direct residents to their local authorities to be considered under their allocations policies or local schemes. We will only consider households that meet the statutory definition of overcrowded (i.e. overcrowded by 2 or more rooms), where there are additional exceptional circumstances. These types of cases will be assessed on a case-by-case basis through the Priority Move Panel.

Next Steps Scheme

- 3.10 The Next Steps scheme provides a child of Peabody tenants, if they are aged 21 or over and in employment or training, a one-bedroom home of their own to help alleviate overcrowding.
- 3.11 We will consider an adult child of a Peabody tenant 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.
- 3.12 The applicant for the Next Steps scheme will need to be in employment, actively seeking work or on a training scheme. Applicants will need to provide proof of their employment or training status, both at application and offer stage.
- 3.13 In addition to the above, to be considered for the Next Steps scheme, the main tenant will need to be overcrowded by two or more bedrooms.
- 3.14 Applicants for the Next Steps scheme will only be eligible for studio flats and one-bedroom properties and must accept the first offer they receive.

Targeting and allocations

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- 3.15 We will target specific residents when advertising properties to make best use of stock and to ensure all residents who need to move urgently have the best chance of finding an appropriate home. For example, adapted properties or properties developed for a specific group (e.g. people with medical housing needs, people who need ground floor access or lifts with mobility needs).
- 3.16 Where we have been unable to successfully offer a property to a tenant in priority need, we will seek to allocate the property to other Peabody residents, other social housing tenants, and applicants in housing need.
- 3.17 There will be occasions where we would consider direct offers to tenants who are registered on our rehousing transfer list and a suitable property becomes available that suits their needs. This will be done upon recommendation of the Allocations and Lettings Manager to a Regional Managing Director. Direct offers can be made where a property has been refused by other residents.
- 3.18 A management transfer gives a tenant priority to enable an emergency / urgent move to a property of a similar size to their current accommodation. Priority will be withdrawn if the tenant is not bidding for properties or they're no longer at risk.
- 3.19 We may withdraw management transfer priority if an 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

3.20 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, where applicable
- 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 a breach of tenancy, unless we no longer consider the notice to be valid. A notice served for rent arrears may 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 – this would be assessed on an individual basis.
- 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 and medical cases.
- Applicants affected by the spare room subsidy who owe arrears and are not a payment plan for their arrears.
- 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.
- 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

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- 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 good condition, with exceptions if there are vulnerabilities or safeguarding concerns.

3.21 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.

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

3.23 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 Care and Support: Specialist Housing.

Transfer eligibility for those with purchase incentives

3.24 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)
- Wild Street

3.25 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.

3.26 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

3.27 We will regularly review those applicants who require a priority move to ensure they still wish to move and meet the eligibility criteria. We encourage all applicants to be active in expressing interest in available homes.

3.28 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.

3.29 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.

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Household members

- 3.30 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 that the child also stays there for at least half of the year
 - Any additional child over the age of 18 who is returning from university or the armed forces
 - 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. Evidence of needing a live in carer will need to be provided at the time of verifying an application.
- 3.31 We will only consider adding household members who can prove that they live with the household permanently in the last 12 months, 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.
- 3.32 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.

Matching standards

- 3.33 We will match an applicant's household to a property in accordance with the following matching standards.
- 3.34 One bedroom each 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
- 3.35 A bedroom will assume the maximum occupancy of two people for any bedroom. An adult is defined as 18 and over.
- 3.36 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.
- 3.37 Where properties have two reception rooms, the second reception room will be counted as a bedroom.

Room sizes

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

Housing minors

3.39 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 Succession and Assignment Policy for more details).

Appeals

3.40 We will consider appeals from all applicants made in relation to an independent medical assessment, or the reasonableness of an offer of accommodation, providing the appeal is made within four weeks of our decision being made.

3.41 For 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.

3.42 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.

3.43 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

3.44 Applicants who have been rejected for an urgent move 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.

3.45 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.

3.46 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.

3.47 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.

3.48 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.

3.49 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 over instalments where there is financial hardship.

3.50 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.

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- 3.51 We will offer a tenancy equivalent to the security of tenure already held.
- 3.52 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. Cases will be reviewed on an individual basis.
- 3.53 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

- 3.54 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.
- 3.55 An alternative property will be offered to under-occupiers who qualify for a transfer in accordance with the eligibility criteria and matching standards.
- 3.56 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.
- 3.57 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.
- 3.58 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 be considered for a priority move unless there has been a change of circumstances that has led to their current home being underoccupied. In these cases, a management transfer will be considered via the respective regional Priority Moves Panels.

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

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- 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
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018

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.

Approval

Version number	2
Effective from	October 2024
Policy owner	Managing Director London South