

CALDERDALE COUNCIL /PENNINE HOUSING 2000

CHOICE BASED LETTING SCHEME

KEYCHOICE

Scheme Overview

Review of Policy February 2010

If you would like this information in another format (eg. Braille, large print audio type or computer file), or another language, please contact **Gillian West** on

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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دوسری زبان
یا شکل میں چاہئے تو رابطہ کریں:

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন মাধ্যম অথবা ভাষায় চান
তাহলে দয়া করে যোগাযোগ করুন :

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INTRODUCTION

In 2007, Calderdale Council (CMBC) in partnership with Pennine Housing 2000 (PH2K) launched a Choice Based Letting scheme (CBL scheme) known as '**KeyChoice**'. This scheme has seen most of the available Pennine Housing 2000 homes being widely advertised and people wishing to be considered for a particular property, expressing their interest by placing a 'bid'. Expressions of interest are prioritised by a transparent system that uses four Priority Bands to reflect need, and a 'Relevant Date' that usually reflects the time spent in a particular band, to differentiate between households with the same level of need. At the end of each bidding cycle there is a 'Unique Queue' for each property and unless there are valid reasons not to, an offer of a tenancy is made to the member who is at the top of this queue.

Several other Registered Social Landlords (RSL) operating in Calderdale also make use of the 'KeyChoice' scheme to let their available homes and it is anticipated that Low Cost Home Ownership properties such as Shared Ownership and Shared Equity homes will also be incorporated in due course.

It is Calderdale Council's policy that wherever possible people wanting social housing should be able to choose the properties that they wish to be considered for from those that will be advertised. However there may be some circumstances that mean it will be necessary for the Council to ask a Registered Social Landlord to make a 'direct offer' of a property to a particular household, without that property having been advertised. Such circumstances will include offers made to discharge the Council's duty to homeless households.

OBJECTIVES OF THE KEYCHOICE SCHEME

- To enable customers to play an active role in choosing a home by introducing a system that is easy to use, transparent and gives a realistic picture of re-housing prospects.
- To comply with statutory and regulatory requirements
- To make best use of available homes and help to create and maintain stable communities
- To continue to support vulnerable customers through partnership working.
- To promote efficient use of housing and minimise void turnaround times

PARTICIPATING LANDLORDS

The following Registered Social Landlords have agreed to let the majority of their vacant properties in Calderdale in accordance with the 'KeyChoice' scheme:

- **Pennine Housing 2000**
- Jephson Housing
- Sanctuary Housing Association
- Connect Housing

Other Registered Social Landlords have been invited to advertise the properties for which they are seeking nominations from CMBC within the scheme.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHEME

The 'KeyChoice' Scheme is administered by Pennine Housing 2000 and in doing so the Company manages Calderdale Council's Housing Register, and nomination rights. Pennine Housing 2000 also makes nominations in accordance with the 'KeyChoice' eligibility and prioritisation system on behalf of CMBC, to Registered Social Landlords not advertising properties within the scheme.

The Council and Pennine Housing 2000 work together to monitor scheme outcomes and effectiveness.

Appropriate Information about scheme membership and lettings activity is shared between the Council and participating landlords in accordance with agreed protocols.

The 'KeyChoice' scheme is complemented by detailed procedural guidance for officers.

ELIGIBILITY TO JOIN THE KEYCHOICE SCHEME

Anyone aged 16 or over is eligible to join the scheme unless:

- They are someone from abroad who the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government has deemed ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation.
- They, or a member of their household, have been guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour and they are not considered by Calderdale Council to be suitable to be a tenant.

The type of unacceptable behaviour that may lead to an applicant being considered ineligible includes:

- Owing serious rent arrears.
- Causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors.
- Being convicted of using a home for illegal or immoral purposes; for example prostitution or drug dealing.
- Conviction for an arrestable offence in or near home.
- Being violent towards a partner or family member.
- Allowing the condition of a rented property to deteriorate.
- Damaging/destroying or disposing of furniture provided by a landlord.
- Obtaining a tenancy by deception; for example, by giving false information.
- Paying money illegally to obtain a Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord tenancy.

Each application to join the 'KeyChoice' scheme is considered individually and in deciding whether an applicant is ineligible, Calderdale Council can only consider behaviour that would have entitled the Council to seek a possession order had the applicant been a secure tenant at that time. In addition the behaviour must have been serious enough that the Council would have gained an outright order for possession. **N.B. it does not matter**

whether or not the applicant was in fact a secure tenant or not, this is a notional test.

The Council must also consider whether at the time of the application the applicant is still unsuitable to be a tenant, because of that behaviour.

The decision that an applicant is ineligible is made by a Pennine Housing 2000 Housing Services Manager, on behalf of Calderdale Council.

Pennine Housing 2000 (on behalf of Calderdale Council) will write, giving reasons to people deemed ineligible to join the scheme. People who are considered to be ineligible because of serious unacceptable behaviour have the right to request a review of that decision. This review will be undertaken by the CMBC Housing Options Manager or Housing Access Manager.

Assets & Income

Some of the Registered Social Landlords advertising properties in the scheme are charitable organisations. This means that they must let their homes to people in 'necessitous circumstances' and people who have capital assets or income above certain levels may not be eligible for an offer of a property from those organisations.

16 & 17 Year Olds

People age 16 & 17 are eligible to join the 'KeyChoice' scheme but will not be offered a property by Pennine Housing 2000 or another Registered Social Landlord unless they have support from a recognised support provider and can satisfy the prospective landlord that they are able to meet the responsibilities of a tenancy or licence.

Any tenancy granted to a young person aged 16 or 17 must be held in trust for them, by an adult or an organisation until they reach the age of 18. This means that any tenancy created will be an equitable tenancy and will require an appropriate person or organisation to act as a trustee.

If appropriate a landlord may offer a licence rather than a tenancy

Ability to Sustain a Tenancy.

Calderdale Council and the participating landlords will need to be satisfied that new tenants of RSL homes in Calderdale are able to sustain a tenancy. If either Calderdale Council, Pennine Housing 2000 or another Registered Social Landlord participating in or advertising properties in the 'KeyChoice' scheme considers that an applicant is likely to have difficulties in sustaining a tenancy, they may be eligible for membership, but may not be offered a property unless and until the landlord is satisfied that the applicant will be able to sustain a tenancy with support

JOINING THE KEYCHOICE SCHEME

Applicants can apply to become members of the 'KeyChoice' scheme by:

- Completing a membership form that can be obtained via the Calderdale Council website, PH2K website, the KeyChoice website and the websites of some participating landlords. The form can also be obtained from any PH2K office, Calderdale Council 'Doorways' service and other community venues.
- On –line by accessing a dedicated website:www.KeyChoice.org.uk

The membership form requires applicants to provide information that will enable Pennine Housing 2000 staff to determine eligibility and assess priority for re-housing. The form includes sections on equal opportunities issues and availability of information in other languages and formats. It also seeks to identify customers who may require assistance with the bidding process and those who may require support to sustain a tenancy.

Prospective members are also asked whether or not they are interested in Low Cost Home Ownership schemes, such as shared ownership.

The membership form requires applicants to sign a 'declaration' to:

- confirm that the information given is correct and that the applicant will notify PH2K of any changes in circumstances.
- confirm that applicants will allow full enquiries to be made into their circumstances for verification purposes.
- give consent to provide information to another RSL participating in the scheme.

The 1996 Housing Act makes it a criminal offence to give false information, or to knowingly withhold relevant information in a housing application. If a tenancy is granted on the basis of provision of false information, the landlord may take action to gain possession of the property through the courts.

Calderdale Council's Housing Register consists of all members of the 'KeyChoice' scheme.

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Calderdale Council and all participating landlords are keen to ensure that vulnerable people are able to access and make full use of the 'KeyChoice' scheme. The membership form includes questions about using the system and placing bids and the 'KeyChoice' Team, based at Pennine Housing 2000 will assist vulnerable people and partner agencies to use the scheme. The 'KeyChoice team will also train support agencies in use of the system so that they can then assist their clients.

The Council's 'Doorways' staff will assist customers to apply for membership of the scheme and to place bids. Members may also appoint an advocate to place bids on their behalf

The 'KeyChoice' website and the dedicated telephone line used to make 'bids' have the facility to offer key information in different languages and formats

IDENTIFYING PEOPLE LIKELY TO REQUIRE SUPPORT TO SUSTAIN A TENANCY.

The 'KeyChoice' membership form includes sections that help to identify people who may require support to sustain a tenancy. Further enquiries are subsequently made to establish the level and nature of support required.

VERIFICATION OF MEMBER CIRCUMSTANCES

Verifications checks may be carried out at any stage of the lettings process by Pennine Housing 2000, CMBC Housing Advice Centre & Participating landlord staff to:

- Confirm that eligibility criteria are met
- Confirm identity and household details
- Confirmation of current and previous housing circumstances
- Confirmation that banding criteria are satisfied
- Confirm that lettings criteria are satisfied
- Obtain information about the conduct of current or previous tenancies
- Confirm ability to sustain a tenancy.
- Obtain information about anti social behaviour activity
- Assess risk

Verification may involve the member or an organisation providing additional information or supplying documentation and may involve a home visit by PH2K or CMBC, Housing Advice Centre staff.

Support providers and key agencies working with vulnerable people (eg Adult Care Services) are expected, with the member's consent, to provide details of his/her needs and a risk assessment. This is to assist with verification as to whether the member will be able to sustain a tenancy. For members with complex needs, Pennine Housing and other participating landlords may request further supporting information e.g. specialist mental health assessments. The key information required to substantiate a member's ability to sustain a tenancy may be provided to Pennine Housing 2000 via the KeyChoice Support Assessment form.

Many Housing Associations are likely to carry out home visits and may require additional information before an offer of a tenancy is made, to ensure that their own lettings policies are complied with.

Suspensions & Other Restrictions

Members will be given 'less preference' in the 'KeyChoice' scheme and their membership will be suspended if they or any member of their household

- Has engaged in anti-social behaviour, whether or not they were at the time a tenant of a Local Housing Authority or Registered Social Landlord and has not made and maintained a satisfactory undertaking to address that behaviour.
- Is a tenant of Pennine Housing 2000, or any other Social Landlord and is or has been the subject of action for breach of tenancy.
- Owes rent arrears or any other housing related debt to Pennine Housing or any other Social Landlord and has not made and maintained a satisfactory arrangement to repay the debt.
- Has deliberately or negligently caused damage to a property whether the tenant of that property or not.
- Has been convicted of using their home, or allowing it to be used, for immoral or illegal purposes.
- Has in the view of Pennine Housing 2000 or any other participating landlord engaged in behaviour that affects his suitability to be a tenant and would prejudice their ability to maintain their responsibilities to their existing tenants.

These categories may be extended, but in all cases there must be satisfactory evidence to support the suspension of the member and examples of such evidence will be set out in detailed procedural guidance for officers.

Members who are suspended from the 'KeyChoice' scheme will not be able to bid for advertised properties.

Participating landlords may restrict the type or location of properties that they are prepared to offer a member of the scheme in the following circumstances:

- The member or someone else in their household has been involved in conduct likely to cause a nuisance in a given locality.
- The member or someone else in their household has been convicted of an offence which affects or is likely to affect the well being of the neighbourhood or any individual member of the community in a given locality.
- The member or someone else in their household has a conviction which is not spent for a serious crime and there could still be a significant risk to some members of the community in a given locality.
- The member or someone else in their household cannot be offered a tenancy in a given locality under the provisions of the Landlord's domestic violence policy.

- The member is the subject of a court order that restricts the areas in which they can live or enter.

Pennine Housing 2000 will write to members suspended from the scheme or restricted in their ability to access a tenancy. The letter will explain:

- That membership has been suspended, or restricted and the reasons for this.
- That there right to a review of this decision and the process for making such a request.
- What the member must do before a suspension or restriction will be reconsidered.
- Suspension of membership will not affect registration or relevant dates

Risk Assessment

Pennine Housing 2000 and other participating landlords may carry out, or arrange for a risk assessment during the verification process or before making an offer of accommodation, if they consider it to be appropriate.

ASSESSING PRIORITY FOR RE-HOUSING

Under the Housing Act 1996 Local Authorities must give reasonable preference to the following categories of people when determining priorities for re-housing:

- a) People who are homeless within the meaning of Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act. This includes people who are intentionally homeless and those who are not considered to be in priority need.
- b) People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- c) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to a disability)
- d) People who need to move to a particular locality of the district where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

Local Authorities can frame their allocation schemes so that additional preference can be given to certain people falling into the reasonable preference categories who have urgent housing needs.

In the 'KeyChoice' Scheme, priority for re-housing will be achieved by a combination of a **Priority Band** and a **Relevant Date**. The Priority Banding system reflects the reasonable preference groups set out in the 1996 Housing Act.

Priority Band

There are four priority bands:

Band Description	Level of Priority	Legal Description Of Priority Level
Bronze Band	- Desire to move	- No Preference
Silver Band	- Housing Need priority	- Reasonable Preference Priority
Silver Plus Band	- High Housing Need Priority	- Multiple Need Priority
Gold Band	- Very High Housing Need Priority	- Additional Preference Priority

An outline of each priority band is given in the table below

Gold Band–Very High Housing Need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households that have been accepted by CMBC as unintentionally homeless and in priority need with a local connection with Calderdale People who need to move urgently on medical or welfare grounds (See Appendix 1). 16& 17 year old care leavers & ‘children in need ‘who will continue to be supported by the Calderdale Leaving Care Team, Foundation Housing or other recognised support agency Existing tenants of CMBC or Registered Social Landlords in Calderdale who are required to leave their property to allow for major improvement work, disposal or demolition. Also people in owner occupied and privately rented homes in Calderdale who will be displaced by renewal area or regeneration schemes. (Decants) People with a local connection with Calderdale leaving the armed forces and required to vacate service accommodation within the following 6 months People living in a property that has been served with a clearance order or closing order by CMBC. People who occupy properties served with a Prohibition Notice by CMBC and where discussions with the relevant Environmental Health Officer support the decision to award priority.
Silver Plus Band –High Housing Need
<p>People who qualify for both of the following categories in Silver Band</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who fall into categories a,b or c of ‘need to move on medical or welfare grounds’. People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
Silver Band - Housing Need Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households that have been accepted by CMBC as homeless, but are either non- priority or intentionally homeless. Standard medical or welfare cases (See Appendix 1) People living in unsatisfactory housing (See Appendix 1) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship (See Appendix 2) Homelessness prevention- Households accepted by CMBC as in priority need and unintentionally threatened with homelessness within 4 weeks Homelessness prevention -Households likely to be in priority need who are considered by the CMBC Housing Options Team to be at strong risk of homelessness within the

<p>next 2 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PH2K/Participating landlord Management Transfers (See Appendix 1)
Bronze Band - Standard Priority
All other eligible members

When a member joins the 'KeyChoice' scheme, Pennine Housing 2000 staff or in some cases, CMBC Housing Options staff will assess priority for re-housing and place the member in the appropriate band.

If Pennine Housing Officers or CMBC staff feel that they need more information before deciding which band is appropriate they will contact members directly. Until enquiries are completed, the member will usually be placed in Bronze Band.

Relevant Date

General

On joining the 'KeyChoice' scheme, members will be allocated a "relevant date". The relevant date will determine a member's 'place' within a band and will be a major factor in how long a member will have to wait for an offer of a new home. This will be the date of acceptance onto the scheme.

Members awarded Gold, Silver Plus or Silver Band priority

Most members eligible for Gold, Silver Plus or Silver Band priority will have a 'Relevant Date' of the date the priority band was awarded. Members eligible for Silver Band priority because they are 'moving on' from supported housing will have a 'Relevant Date' of the date they moved into that supported housing scheme.

Moving up a band

If a member moves up a band, then their 'Relevant Date' will be the date they enter the higher band.

Moving down a band

If the member moves to Bronze Band, the Relevant Date will revert to the membership date or PH2K/ participating landlord current tenancy commencement date. If a member moves from a higher band to either Silver Plus or Silver Band, then the Relevant Date will revert to the date that applied when they were previously in that band. If the member had not previously been in the lower band, they will retain their former Relevant Date.

Gold Band – Additional Preference Priority

All members awarded Gold Band priority will be supported with their KeyChoice application. For members who are homeless, leaving the armed forces or who are 16&17 year old Care Leavers/children in need, this will be a member of CMBC Housing Options staff. All other members with Gold Band priority will be supported by a member of Pennine Housing 2000 staff.

With the exception of members awarded Gold Band priority because they are being required to move from their existing home, to allow for major improvement work, disposal or demolition (Decants), Gold Band priority will be valid for 3 months. During this period the member will be expected, actively to bid for suitable properties. CMBC Housing Options staff may place bids on suitable properties for members who are homeless and for 16&17 year old Care Leavers/children in need.

At the end of the 3-month period, the priority status will be reviewed. If a member has been actively bidding, but not been made an offer, Gold Band priority may be extended for a further 3 month period.

Members awarded Gold Band priority because they are being required to move from their existing home, to allow for major improvement work, disposal or demolition (Decants), may take part in the bidding process, but will also be considered for direct lets. (See section on properties available for letting). The Gold Band priority will be reviewed on a six monthly basis.

Gold Band priority will only be awarded when it has been determined that the member is able to sustain a tenancy either with or without appropriate support.

Silver Plus Band –Multiple Need Priority

Silver Band priority recognises ‘multiple need’ and is awarded to members who fall into both of the following categories of need in the Silver Band:

- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (categories a, b or c only)
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.

Silver Band - Reasonable Preference

Silver Band priority awarded on homelessness or homelessness prevention grounds will be valid for a maximum of 6 months and will be removed if the member resolves their housing need

Silver Band priority awarded because a member needs to move to a particular location in Calderdale to avoid hardship, will only be valid for bids made on properties in that area.

Appendix 2. summarises the prioritisation system

Re-Assessment Of Priority

Each member's preference band will be kept under review and altered to reflect any agreed change in circumstances.

Confirmation of Membership.

When an application to join the KeyChoice scheme has been accepted, members will receive written confirmation and be notified of:

- Their unique membership number
- Their current priority band status
- The current relevant date
- The date membership of the CBL scheme commenced.

If a member feels that any details are incorrect, they should contact Pennine Housing 2000. If a member feels that they have been placed in the wrong band, they will be given the opportunity to ask for a review of the priority awarded.

PROPERTIES AVAILABLE FOR LETTING

It is the intention of CMBC & the participating landlords, that the majority of properties becoming available in Calderdale will be let advertised and let via the 'KeyChoice' scheme. There are however situations when a direct letting of a property will be made.

Properties that may be let directly and not via the 'KeyChoice' scheme include:

- Direct lets to people who are required to leave their present home because of a regeneration/refurbishment scheme approved by CMBC or where they are existing tenants of an RSL and their home is due to be demolished, sold or improved.
- Direct lets in circumstances where there would be a risk to the member by being required to take part in the bidding process.
- Direct lets to members awarded Management Transfer priority
- Direct lets made as 'final offers' to members accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need.
- Properties that have been fitted with 'level 3 Sanctuary' target hardening measures
- Homes that have been significantly adapted for a disabled person.
- New build wheelchair accessible homes
- Homes that are suitable for adaptation for an identified member with a disability and it has not been possible to identify an existing suitably adapted property.

- Homes that are suitable for Supported Living arrangements, for people with a learning disability.
- Lettings made under the Temporary to Settled' scheme
- Lettings made in partnership with the Young Person's Accommodation & Support Service (YPASS)
- Extra Care/Very Sheltered Housing.
- Succession of tenancy, mutual exchanges and transfers of interest made under a court order.
- Lettings made to a person who lawfully occupies accommodation let on a family intervention tenancy

New Build Properties Designed To Wheelchair Standard.

Some new properties in the social housing stock will be built to wheelchair standard and will be designed and built specifically for individual households on the Housing Register. Such households are likely to include someone with a complex disability where it has not been possible to adapt the existing home or identify an alternative suitable property in the existing stock.

Extra Care Properties

Extra Care housing schemes are specifically designed to meet the needs of older people who are frail and less able to manage. Whilst people interested in such homes can make an initial application and be awarded a relevant degree of housing priority within the Choice Based Lettings scheme, available homes will be let outside the scheme.

The current letting scheme for Extra Care properties is given in Appendix 3.

HOW PROPERTIES WILL BE LET

Advertising Properties Available For Letting

Most homes are advertised when a notice is received from the present tenant. New build homes are likely to be advertised at least 6 weeks before completion.

Homes are advertised and let on a weekly basis. Properties are currently advertised from 00.01hrs Wednesday until 21.59hrs on the following Sunday and bids may be made at anytime during this period as illustrated in the diagram below. The advertising and bidding period may change in the future if the need arises. Some properties may also be advertised mid cycle for a limited period.

Week 1							Week 2						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
		Advertising and bidding period							Advertising and bidding period				

Available homes are advertised on the KeyChoice website, in all PH2K housing offices, Calderdale Council Housing 'Doorways' Centre and at a number of community venues including Calderdale Council libraries and Customer First Offices. Members who wish to do so are able to subscribe to receive a weekly newsletter containing all available homes.

The advert for each property includes:

- The location of the property
- A description of the facilities in the property
- Local information
- Rent and other charges
- Local Connection criteria if applicable
- Lettings criteria
- Lettings basis - ie whether the property will be let on the basis of priority band and relevant date or is considered to be an 'open let'

Wherever possible the advertisement includes a photo of the property or a similar property.

Advertisements also remind members about how bids should be made.

Members are able to bid for a specified number of properties in each letting cycle. The number of bids that a member can make will be clearly stated on the KeyChoice website, and on relevant publicity material

Local Connection Criteria in Rural Areas

In many of the rural areas of Calderdale, a combination of high house prices, shortage of social housing and loss of stock due to Right To Buy & Right To Acquire, have made it increasingly difficult for local people, to find affordable accommodation. As a consequence people seeking affordable housing have increasingly had to move away from their families and support networks and rural areas have been rendered socially and economically poorer.

The 'KeyChoice' scheme therefore provides for people with a local connection with certain rural areas to be given preference for a proportion of the lettings made in those areas.

A local connection is defined as:

- Having lived in the area for the previous 12 months
- or
- Having lived in the area previously for a continuous period of 10 years
- or
- Having permanent employment in the area
- or

- Having immediate family in the area, who have lived there for the previous 5 years,
- or
- Needing to live in the area to provide essential support to a permanent resident and there is no other person able to do this.
- or
- Needing to move into the area to receive essential support from a permanent resident and there is no other way of receiving such support

The Parish Council areas of Blackshaw, Erringdon, Hebden Royd (part only), Heptonstall, Ripponden and Wadsworth are subject to local connection provisions and 3 out of 4 properties advertised give preference to members who have such a local connection. This proportion is reviewed regularly for different property types on the basis of supply and demand.

In addition all Pennine Housing 2000 and Housing Association homes becoming available on developments that were granted planning permission subject to a condition restricting occupation to local people, are advertised on the basis that lettings (or sales) will be restricted to people with a specified local connection.

Local Connection- members due to leave the armed forces within the following six months.

A local connection is defined as the serving member of the armed forces or their spouse/civil partner:

- Having lived in Calderdale for the previous 12 months
- or
- Having lived in Calderdale previously for a continuous period of 10 years
- or
- Having secured permanent employment in Calderdale that will be available on discharge from the armed forces
- or
- Having immediate family in Calderdale, who have lived in the Borough for the previous 5 years,

Other situations will be considered on a case by case basis.

Lettings Criteria.

Lettings criteria are the rules the participating landlords make to decide who an available property is offered to. Every advertisement states the Lettings Criteria for that property

Purpose of the Lettings Criteria:

- To assist applicants in making informed choices from the properties available
- To make best use of the available housing stock
- To ensure community sustainability
- To ensure that supported housing schemes include a balance of needs.

- To help the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to people in need.

Examples of Letting Criteria

- Size and composition of household that is eligible to bid. (See below)
- Minimum age for some flats and bungalows.
- Preference given to member with a mobility difficulty who needs ground floor accommodation
- Preference given to an applicant who needs any adaptations installed in the property – e.g. Level Access Shower.
- Whether or not some pets may be kept in the property
- Sheltered need identified
- Preference given to members who are economically active

Participating landlords often have lettings plans for estates and neighbourhoods that aim to promote community sustainability. Lettings criteria may also include factors linked to such lettings plans

As demand for available housing greatly exceeds the supply, the Lettings Criteria also normally state the minimum number of permanently resident members in a household for a bid to be considered an eligible bid. Some properties however, are advertised on the basis that members with visiting children or the need for an occasional carer to stay overnight will be eligible to bid.

Properties That Have Been Fitted with Major Adaptations For Someone With A Disability Or Mobility Difficulty.

Properties that have been adapted for someone with a disability may be advertised via the 'KeyChoice' scheme, or may be offered directly to members known to require the adaptations concerned. If advertised, the property will be offered, following discussion with the Accessible Homes Service to the member identified as most suitable for the property. This may not be the person with the highest priority and oldest Relevant Date.

Accessible Properties

Accessible accommodation will be let to people with access needs as reflected in the banding scheme. This is particularly relevant to ground floor flats and bungalows, thus making best use of the available stock

Sheltered Properties

Before making an offer of home in a sheltered housing scheme, landlords will need to be satisfied that the member has a need for such a property and that their support needs can be accommodated at that time and to ensure that a 'balance' is maintained within the scheme.

Priority Status And Waiting Time

Most properties are let on the basis of priority for re-housing. A proportion of properties are however let on the basis of waiting time only. These are known as Open Lets.

The proportion of properties advertised as Open Lets is regularly reviewed on the basis of supply and demand.

Priority basis

The majority of homes are let on the basis of priority and length of time with priority. The property advertisement will indicate which priority band will be given preference and the order of other bands.

Example: gold- silver plus- silver - bronze

For such lettings members in Gold Band will be considered before those in Silver plus Band and subsequently Silver Plus Band members will be considered before Bronze Band members etc. If more than one member from each band bids for the same property, the member with the oldest relevant date will be considered first.

Example: silver- bronze-gold - silver plus

For such lettings members in Silver Band will be considered before those in Bronze Band and subsequently Bronze Band members will be considered before Gold Band members etc. If more than one member from each band bids for the same property, the member with the oldest relevant date will be considered first.

The proportion of lettings giving preference to each band reflects the number of members in each band requiring a specific property type and location. This ensures that Calderdale Council is able to meet its statutory duties to homeless households and others in acute or urgent housing need within a reasonable timescale. The proportion of lettings giving a preference to each priority band is closely monitored by Pennine Housing and Calderdale Council.

Enabling a proportion of lettings to give preference to households in Silver Plus, Silver and Bronze Bands as well as Gold Band, ensures that other households in need have an opportunity to secure a home and helps to prevent 'band chasing' as well as helping to ensure community sustainability.

Open Lets

For properties advertised as open lets, bids are ranked in order of membership date.

Placing A Bid

Members indicate their desire to be offered a particular home by placing a bid for the property. Before placing a bid for a property, members should ensure that they meet the relevant lettings criteria.

Members who wish to 'bid' for a property can do so by:

- Completing the on line form,
- Telephoning on a dedicated phone number
- Calling in at any PH2K office or Calderdale Council 'Doorways' service.

Before confirming a bid, members will be told their relative position in the 'Unique Queue' for the property at that time. It is also possible for members to check their position at any time before the close of the advertising and bidding cycle.

Process At Close Of Bidding

At the close of bidding there is a Unique Queue of members for each property. This will be ordered by either priority band and relevant date, or by membership date, depending on the basis on which the property is being let.

The landlord of the property then checks the application details of the member who is at the top of the queue to ensure that Lettings Criteria appear to be satisfied. If the criteria do appear to be satisfied the landlord will contact the member to invite them to view the property. Some of the participating landlords carry out home visits before inviting to view and may also require members to provide additional information to establish that their own lettings policies are satisfied.

Landlords may also ask members to provide documentation to verify the priority band status and household circumstances.

If everything is in order, the member should subsequently receive an offer of the property.

Circumstances That Will Result In No Offer Being Made

In most cases the member who is at the top of the Unique Queue for a property at the close of bidding will be made an offer of that property. There are however circumstances that may result in an offer not being made.

These are:

- If since joining the scheme a member has become ineligible for membership.
- On verification of membership details, the priority band was found to have been incorrectly awarded.
- The member's current circumstances are such that suspension of membership is appropriate,
- The member's current circumstances are such that it is considered that the member should be restricted from bidding in the neighbourhood in which the property is located.
- The member's circumstances have changed since the priority band was awarded and the member is no longer entitled to the same level of priority.

- The property is subject to a local connection criteria and the member does not meet those criteria.
- The members circumstances do not accord with the local lettings policy in operation
- The member does not satisfy the advertised lettings criteria for the property
- The member has been assessed as needing support to sustain a tenancy and such support is not in place or cannot be arranged before the proposed tenancy commencement date.
- The member is assessed as needing support to sustain a tenancy but is not willing to positively engage with the support provider
- The neighbourhood or scheme in which the relevant property is located has *currently* a need to maintain a community balance and that the circumstances and/or behaviour of the member is in the view of the landlord of the property, unlikely to contribute to the required balance.
- The level of support needed to sustain the tenancy at the relevant property would seriously undermine the support provider's ability to support other residents in the same neighbourhood or scheme.
- The member has qualified for an offer of more than one property and been offered their highest ranked choice.
- The member could not be contacted by the landlord of the property

After the close of the bidding cycle, scheme members are able to find out their position in the unique queue for each property for which they have placed a bid. If they were at the top of a unique queue for a property but were not contacted by the relevant landlord or made an offer, they should contact that landlord to ask for an explanation.

When a member has accepted an offer of a property, their scheme membership will be cancelled and it will be necessary to re-apply, should they wish to move again in the future.

REFUSAL OF AN OFFER BY A MEMBER

All Members

An adjustment may be made to the relevant date and membership date if a member refuses three offers in a sixth month period for the following reasons:

- Area unsuitable
- Failure to respond to offer
- Personal circumstances

A member will be invited to discuss the matter before the sanction is applied

The categories of refusal resulting in the possibility of a sanction may be extended and the timescales triggering a possible sanction may be amended in the future if the need arises

Members Awarded Gold Band Priority Because Of Homelessness or Homelessness Prevention

Members awarded Gold Band priority because of homelessness or if they are serving members of the armed forces who are required to vacate service accommodation will lose this priority status if they refuse an offer of suitable accommodation, whether made within the CBL scheme or directly by a landlord. This includes offers of tenancies resulting from bids placed by a member of CMBC Housing Options Staff.

Members Awarded Gold Band Priority Because They Are A 16/17 Year Old Care Leaver

Members awarded Gold Band priority because they are a 16/17 year old Care Leaver/Child in Need will lose their priority status if they refuse an offer of accommodation for which they or their proxy has bid and which is considered by the CMBC Housing Options Team, following discussion with the Action for Children Leaving Care Team, to be appropriate for the young person concerned.

Members Awarded Gold Band Priority On Medical/Welfare Grounds

Members awarded Gold Band priority on medical/welfare grounds will lose their priority status if they refuse an offer of accommodation for which they or their proxy has bid and which is considered by PH2K staff to meet their needs. A property will be usually be considered to be a reasonable offer for this purpose if it:

- Is of sufficient size to accommodate the members household
- The physical access to the property and the internal layout and facilities are appropriate
- The property was accurately described in the property advert.

Members Awarded Silver Band Priority Because Of Homelessness

Members awarded Silver Band priority because they are homeless but not in a priority need group, or because they are intentionally homeless will lose their priority status if they refuse an offer of accommodation for which they or their proxy has bid and which is considered by PH2K staff to meet their needs. A property will be usually be considered to be a reasonable offer for this purpose if it:

- Is of sufficient size to accommodate the members household
- The physical access to the property and the internal layout and facilities are appropriate
- The property was accurately described in the property advert.

Members awarded Silver Band on Homelessness Prevention Grounds.

Members awarded Silver Band because they have been accepted by CMBC as unintentionally threatened with homelessness and in priority need, will lose this priority

status if they refuse an offer of suitable accommodation, whether made within the CBL scheme or directly by a landlord. This includes offers of tenancies resulting from bids placed by a member of CMBC Housing Options Staff.

LETTINGS FEEDBACK.

Information about lettings made in the previous cycle is included in the weekly newsletter and is also available on the KeyChoice website. This facility enables members to gauge their chance of making a successful bid.

REVIEW PROCESS

Members can request a review of a decision made in relation to:

- Eligibility to join the scheme if they have been considered ineligible because of unacceptable behaviour.
- The priority band awarded.
- Loss of priority band status.
- Suspension or restriction of membership
- A decision by participating landlord not to make an offer to the member at the top of the Unique Queue for a property at the close of bidding.
- A decision to apply sanctions for refusal of offers

Members who wish to request a review of a decision that they are ineligible to join the scheme should contact the Housing Options Manager at Calderdale Council.

Members who wish to request a review of a decision that they have not been awarded priority on the grounds of homelessness or homelessness prevention should contact Calderdale Council Housing Options Team. If appropriate, requests for such reviews will be dealt with under the homelessness review process outlined in Part VII Housing Act 1996.

Members awarded Gold Band priority on the grounds of homelessness or awarded silver band because they have been accepted by Calderdale Council as unintentionally threatened with homelessness and in priority need, who subsequently lose that priority because they have refused an offer of accommodation should contact Calderdale Council Housing Options Team. Requests for such reviews will be dealt with under the homelessness review process outlined in Part VII Housing Act 1996.

Members who are awarded Gold Band priority because they are leaving the armed forces and subsequently lose that priority because they have refused an offer of suitable accommodation should contact Calderdale Council Housing Options Team.

Members awarded Gold Band priority because they are a 16/17 year old Care Leaver/child in need and subsequently lose that priority because they have refused an offer of accommodation should contact Calderdale Council Housing Options Team.

Members who are refused an offer despite being at the top of the Unique Queue at the close of bidding should contact the relevant landlord to request an explanation, and if not satisfied, should follow that organisation's complaints process.

All other requests for a review of a decision should be made to Pennine Housing 2000. The review will be undertaken by an officer who was not involved in the original decision.

A successful review decision will not result in an offer of the property involved in the appeal, if that property has been offered to another member of the scheme.

PROCESS FOR REVIEWING MEMBERSHIP OF THE KEYCHOICE SCHEME

'KeyChoice' membership will be reviewed on an annual basis and members, who have not bid for properties in the previous six months will be asked to confirm that they wish to remain in the scheme.

All members should notify Pennine Housing 2000 of changes in their circumstances, so that membership details can be kept up to date.

REVIEWING THE POLICY.

The KeyChoice Policy will be reviewed every two years or following a major change in legislation.

Appendix 1

Banding Criteria Descriptions

The descriptions below provide additional information about the criteria for awarding Gold and Silver Band priority to certain groups of member. Detailed guidance on operation of the scheme is available to staff.

People Who Need To Move On Medical Or Welfare Grounds

Gold Band

- a) An immediately life threatening or long term progressive condition which is seriously affected by the current housing and where re-housing would solve or alleviate that condition or make it easier to manage.

Or

- b) A member of the household seeking accommodation cannot be discharged from hospital or rehabilitation accommodation until suitable housing is provided and:

The household was a Calderdale resident prior to hospital admission.

Or

- c) A member of the household is elderly, disabled or has a progressive illness and is likely to require admission to hospital or residential/nursing care in the immediate future and re-housing would enable that person to remain living at home.

Or

- d) A member needs to move to suitably adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which he or she, or a member of their household has sustained as a result of service in the armed Forces

Or

- e) The household seeking accommodation has welfare needs so severe that the protection of **vulnerable adults or children** is only possible if the household were to move to a new home and where the present circumstances could deteriorate to such an extent as to place household members at risk, or in need of residential care unless re-housing is offered.

Or

- f) The household has been recommended for re-housing under the Housing Re-location Scheme

Or

- g) The member is aged 16 or 17 and is a child in need or is leaving the care of Calderdale Council, providing that:

In the view of the Leaving Care Team and staff in the Housing Options Team, the young person is able to meet the responsibilities of being a tenant and will continue to be supported by the Action for Children Leaving Care Team, Foundation Housing or another recognised support provider.

People Who Need To Move On Medical Or Welfare Grounds

Silver Band

a) The member has a physical or mental impairment , which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities and is caused, significantly affected by, or made difficult to manage by their current accommodation and where re-housing will solve or alleviate that medical condition, or make it easier to manage.

Or

b) A member of the household seeking accommodation is disabled and re-housing will enable that person to overcome physical barriers created by current accommodation eg steps and stairs

Or

c) A member of the household seeking accommodation is disabled and has been assessed by an Occupational Therapist to require adaptations that cannot be fitted in the existing home or it is not considered reasonable to do so.

Or

d) The household includes a member who has an assessed support need and requires supported accommodation (including accommodation with floating support). Priority will only be awarded if PH2K are satisfied that the member will be able to sustain a tenancy with support.

Or

e) The household is 'moving on' from certain supported accommodation in Calderdale

People Occupying Insanitary Or Overcrowded Housing Or Otherwise Living In Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions

Silver Band

Members are living in accommodation that is overcrowded. A home is considered to be overcrowded if there are insufficient bedrooms for the household having regard to the guidance below:

No more than two people should have to share a bedroom.

A separate bedroom is needed for:

- Each couple living together
- A parent in a single parent family
- Each permanently resident child aged 8 or over who is sharing a bedroom with a permanently resident child of the opposite sex
- Each single person aged 16 or over
- A resident carer where there is a confirmed need for such provision.

Or

A member is a licensee and is sharing a living room, kitchen, bathroom or WC with a household who will not be moving with them

(Licensees are lodgers, people staying with friends/relatives, people living in B&B, hostels, caravans, tents etc).

Or

The home occupied by the member is the subject of a notification of a Class 1 Hazard under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System and enquiries made with the relevant Environmental Health Officer support the award of reasonable preference priority.

Pennine Housing 2000 Management Transfers

In some very urgent circumstances the appropriately authorised officer in Pennine Housing 2000 may award 'Reasonable Preference' (Silver Band Priority) to their existing tenants.

Under this process the tenant will have the option to actively 'Bid' for properties being advertised under the choice-based letting scheme.

In exceptional circumstances the Housing Services Manager may remove a property from the normal choice based letting scheme to offer it as a management transfer letting.

The Housing Officer will then make a direct offer of a particular property to an applicant where there are specific or exceptional circumstances as to why the existing tenant may need to move, for example:

- Someone suffering serious anti-social behaviour which has not been resolved by the Pennine Anti-Social Behaviour Team;
- A tenant experiencing domestic violence
- Someone giving up a family home to move into a smaller property;
- Emergency re housing due to fire or flood;
- Someone giving up an extensively adapted property for a general needs property.

This list is not exhaustive as circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

Silver Band Priority awarded on Management Transfer grounds will be valid for 6 months. After this time if an appropriate property has not been offered, but active 'bids' have been made Pennine Housing 2000 will review the application and extend the priority time for a further 6 months where necessary.

People Who Need To Move To A Particular Locality In The District To Avoid Hardship To Themselves Or Others.

Each application for Silver Band Priority on this ground will be considered individually, however examples of circumstances that may result in the award of Silver Band Priority are:

The household includes a member who is unemployed and has been offered permanent employment in an area that they are unable to reasonably travel to.

The household includes a member who provides essential **care** to someone in another part of the Borough and they cannot deliver that care effectively from their current location.

The applicant is elderly or disabled and needs to move to a specific area to receive care or support from a close relative who lives there.

The Household includes a child or young person with a disability or learning difficulty, who needs to access specialist education or training facilities and cannot do so from their present home.

It is important to remember that this priority is only valid for bids made on properties within a designated area.

APPENDIX 2

Summary Of Prioritisation System

	1996 HOUSING ACT REASONABLE PREFERENCE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY AWARDED BY
Gold Band– Additional Preference Priority			
<p>Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.</p> <p>Priority is removed if a suitable offer is refused</p> <p>Priority Band is valid for 3 months and will only be renewed if the member is actively bidding for properties</p>	People Who Are Homeless	Households that have been accepted by CMBC as unintentionally homeless and in priority need with a local connection with Calderdale who are considered to be able to sustain a tenancy	CMBC Housing Options Staff
<p>Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.</p> <p>Priority band is valid for 3 months</p> <p>Priority is removed if a reasonable offer is refused.</p>	People who are at risk of homelessness	People with a local connection with Calderdale who are leaving the armed forces within the following 6 months and are required to vacate service accommodation.	CMBC Housing Options staff
<p>Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.</p> <p>Priority is removed if a reasonable offer is refused.</p> <p>Priority Band is valid for 3 months and will only be renewed if the member is actively bidding for properties</p>	People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds	People who Need to move urgently on medical or welfare grounds (See Appendix 1)	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and Housing Services Managers) CMBC Housing Options staff
		16& 17 year old care leavers/children in need who will continue to be supported by the Calderdale Leaving Care Team, Foundation Housing or recognised support agency	CMBC Housing Options Staff
<p>Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.</p>	People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions	Existing tenants of CMBC or Registered Social Landlords in Calderdale who are required to leave their property to allow for major improvement work, disposal or demolition. Also people in owner occupied and privately rented homes in Calderdale who will be displaced by renewal area or regeneration schemes. (Decants)	PH2K Staff (Housing Officers and Housing Services Managers)

		People living in a property which has been served with a clearance order or closing order by CMBC	
		People who occupy properties served with a Prohibition Notice by CMBC and where discussions with the relevant Environmental Health Officer support the decision to award priority	
Silver Plus Band – Composite need			
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded.	People Who qualify for two or more of the following categories in Silver Band:	People who need to move because of categories a) b) or c) of the medical or welfare grounds. People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and Housing Services Managers)
Silver Band - Reasonable Preference Priority			
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded. Priority is removed 6 months following award or if an offer is refused	People Who Are Homeless	Households that have been accepted by CMBC as homeless, but are either non- priority or intentionally homeless.	CMBC Housing Options Staff
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded	People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds	Standard medical cases (See Appendix 1)	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and housing services Managers)
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded		People who have an assessed support need and require supported accommodation	PH2K staff following a standard assessment, that may have been carried out by a partner support agency
Relevant date is the date the member moved into supported accommodation		People 'moving on' from certain supported accommodation in Calderdale	PH2K staff on receipt of standard referral form. (Housing Officers and Housing Services Managers)
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded	People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions	People living in unsatisfactory housing (See Appendix 1)	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and Housing Services Managers)

Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded. Priority band is only valid for bids in a designated area	People who need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship	People who need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship (See Appendix 1)	PH2K staff (Housing Officers and Housing Services Managers)
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded – valid for 6 months. priority in (a) will be removed if the member refuses a suitable offer	People who are at risk of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Households in priority need who are unintentionally threatened with homelessness within 4 weeks b. Households likely to be in priority need who are at strong risk of homelessness within the next 2 months 	<p>CMBC Housing Options Staff</p> <p>CMBC Housing Options Staff</p>
Relevant date is the date the priority band awarded	PH2K/Participating Landlord Management Transfers (local preference category)	PH2K/Participating landlord Management Transfers	PH2K Housing Services Managers/ Participating landlord designated staff.
Bronze Band - Standard Priority			
The relevant date is the date of registration	Not applicable	All other eligible members	Ph2K Staff (Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers)

Appendix 3 Extra Care Eligibility And Allocations Process

Allocations Policy and Associated Procedures for Extra Care Housing
(Covering both apartments for rent and shared ownership)
Revised Dec 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

- This document is a joint policy as it forms part of the overall Joint Housing Allocations Policy between Pennine Housing 2000 (as a local housing provider) and Calderdale Council's Housing & Community Services Directorate (who has strategic responsibilities for housing in the Borough).
- It has also been agreed with Calderdale Council's Health and Social Care Directorate as it forms part of the overall Joint Operational Agreement for extra care housing which has been agreed by the two Organisations.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY/PROCEDURES

- The overall aim of the policy is to create a **balanced and sustainable** community for older people within the setting of extra care housing.
- And to make the best use of what is, in fact, a very valuable resource to both Pennine Housing and Calderdale Council.
- The associated procedures aim to ensure that all necessary assessments have taken place and allocations are well-managed and carefully monitored so that void times for both shared ownership and rented apartments are handled efficiently and effectively
- And that decisions are made in line with the Joint Housing Allocations Policy and are fair, equitable, transparent and consistent.
- And that those involved work collaboratively and seek to make decisions by consensus.

3. CREATING A BALANCED AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

- Whilst reasonable preference will be given to those who have the greatest housing, care and support needs, ultimately allocation decisions will be based upon achieving a balanced community. The key factors that will be considered when each vacancy arises are:
 - Those in greatest housing need (as the starting point)
 - Each of those person's individual needs/dependency
 - The overall mix and levels of dependency in the scheme at that point in time

If those who have the greatest housing need don't have the "right" level of needs to make the scheme balanced, then preference will have to be given to those in less housing need who do have the most appropriate level of need/dependency.

Therefore, it will be necessary to review the overall dependency needs of the scheme on a regular basis, including at the point each vacancy arises. This review will also need to include the availability of staffing resources to ensure there are sufficient resources to meet the needs of new occupiers.

- The “balanced community” will be based on achieving a mixture of care/support needs which will be measured on the basis of:
 - third of occupiers having high dependency needs
 - third having medium dependency needs
 - third having low dependency needs.

- As the above implies, “needs/dependency” will include “support” (as determined by the housing support assessment) as well as “care” needs (as defined by a Community care assessment). This ensures that applicants who have low or no formal care needs but could have high support needs/levels of dependency but no requirement for a formal package of care can be considered.

- Although it is recognised that the level of care input will not necessarily equate to the level of a prospective occupiers’ dependency level, the following acts as a guide:
 - High – over 20 hours per week
 - Medium – between 10 and 20 hours per week
 - Low – less than 10 hours per week

- Although the best use has to be made of the valuable resource that extra care housing provides, it is also imperative that sales of shared ownership apartments are maximised to ensure the financial viability of the capital investment. Therefore, for **allocations made to those buying the first sales apartments** (who meet the eligibility criteria - age and ability to purchase), preference will then be given to those with the appropriate level of care & support needs AND are in a position to complete a purchase within a reasonable timescale.. However in the event that applicant(s) with needs cannot complete a purchase then applications will be considered for those without care/support needs.

- Purchasers on subsequent sales will need to meet the age criteria only, as set out in the restricted covenant of the shared ownership lease. It is not possible to restrict subsequent sales other than on age.

4. **SUMMARY OF ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR RENTED APARTMENTS** (full details can be seen at section 7 below)

- 60 years or older.
- In housing need
- Have a care /support need

5. **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SHARED OWNERSHIP APARTMENTS** (further details can be seen at section 8 below)

- 60 years or older.
- Financially able to purchase

6. REVIEW

A review of this Policy and its associated procedures will be undertaken annually, as part of the wider review of the Joint Operational Agreement and to ensure that any changes in law, guidance or good practice are taken into account.

7. FULL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR RENTED APARTMENTS

It is likely that some of the criteria detailed below are covered within the housing allocations policy and banding guidance. However, given the unique nature of extra care housing, it is necessary to provide specific details on eligibility:

(A) Housing Need

As defined in the Council's Joint Housing allocations policy - criteria of banding and relevant date

(B) Age

1. at least one of the applicants must meet the minimum age criteria of 60 years or older. Only in exceptional circumstances, will applicants below this age will be considered.

(C) Needs/dependency (care/support)

2. Will normally require assistance with their daily living tasks and/or their personal care. However, applicants may be quite independent but would benefit from a safer and more supportive environment
3. Present living situation may no longer be suitable because of layout or that care and other facilities cannot be readily, practically or economically be provided there.
4. The setting of extra care housing will offer services not available in the applicant's current home or is not to the appropriate extent. For some, the key factors could mean the provision of more intensive, closer-to-hand care and/or support / continually supportive environment whereas for others it may be about helping to move towards a more independent lifestyle.
5. Those who are vulnerable and at risk which would make access to support/care invaluable but whose current care package is small or nonexistent. This may include those with anxiety, socially isolated, being abused or self-neglect.
6. Will have care and support needs because of frailty, long term illness or a range of physical difficulties or disabilities. This could include those whose needs may not be constant but would benefit from a supportive environment and access to support/care as and when needed e.g. those with Parkinson's Disease, prone to falling
7. Similarly have a degenerative condition where a move could prolong independent living and maintain/improve quality of life e.g. those with rheumatoid arthritis or multiple sclerosis.

8. Or have care and support needs because of dementia, mental health problems, learning disabilities or exhibit some other sort of cognitive impairment, provided they will be able to cope with the independent living aspects of extra care housing and if they still have capacity to take on the responsibilities of a tenancy, still to make relationships, function within a daily routine, have some knowledge of their surroundings, and/or be in a supportive relationship within the scheme. It must also be anticipated that they will not cause risk or serious disruption to others.
9. Are isolated or suffering from depression or some other long-term illness which is managed through appropriate treatment/ support and are likely to derive psychological benefits from the setting of extra care housing
10. Applicants who have informal carers who themselves would derive considerable relief and support from living in a supportive setting.
11. Couples are eligible to apply where one or both meet the above criteria.

The boundaries of the service must also be considered in the context of meeting the needs of applicants. In particular, the focus upon planned care (albeit with flexibility) and the fact that not all schemes have 24 hour cover but instead cover after 10pm - 7am is provided by off-site services i.e. planned out-of-hours care and the Careline Mobile Response Service.

8. SHARED OWNERSHIP APARTMENTS

For those who are eligible, preference will then be given to those who have a care/support need , as set out in section 7 above for rented apartments.

9. WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE

- Applicants who do not have care /support needs (**rented apartments only**)
- Applicants who are subject to exclusion from the Housing Register for reasons as set out in the Joint Allocations Policy e.g. evidence of serious rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, or criminal activity, for reasons of individual or community safety (**rented apartments only**).
- Applications that cannot be properly verified due to lack of sufficient information
- Applicants whose level of physical or mental frailty exceeds that which can be reasonably met by the care provision within the scheme (or be predicted to develop within a short time of entry).
- Or who require frequent nursing care beyond the level available from the Community nursing service
- Or have a requirement for specialist health services which cannot be met in a community setting
- Or who have a level of physical or mental frailty which is likely to either lead to violent or severely challenging behaviour or would be a serious risk or disruption

to others for example, people who persistently wander or are physically aggressive

- Or those who lack the capacity to take on the responsibilities of a tenancy / are not able to make an informed choice about extra care housing as their preferred option and are not felt able to settle in and manage in the scheme and its community

In considering someone's capacity, this must be done in line with the Mental Health Act 2005 and its associated Code of Practice, which assumes that each person has capacity to make a decision unless it is established otherwise and that they are supported to help make decisions which are in their "best interests".

10. MOVING ON

Whilst extra care housing aims to provide a *home for life* for those who live there, this is not a guarantee and the boundaries of the service must be fully explained to both applicants and their relatives or advocates as well as to other professionals.

The basis of the service is to be flexible and responsive to increasing needs of the occupiers and thus enable *ageing in place*. However, if an occupier's needs change to the point that they cannot be met, by a combination of the onsite staff and community-based services, then staff will need to review the situation with the occupier and, if appropriate, their relatives. Moving on accommodation will only be approved with the agreement of the occupier and others involved, including other professionals and relatives. All Agencies will work closely together to seek a mutually acceptable solution.

Tenants have a full Assured tenancy and, as such, can only be ended by a Court Order, using one of the grounds for possession available under the Housing Act 1988 (as stated in the Tenancy Agreement). The grounds for possession encompass a number of circumstances, including antisocial behaviour and non-payment of rent. This course of action would only be pursued by Pennine Housing as a last resort and with reference to Pennine Housing's guidance on supported housing, which includes ensuring that the provisions of the Disability Discrimination act are taken into account.

Shared owners have an interest via their leasehold agreement and this will determine their right to remain.

11. ALLOCATIONS FRAMEWORK

- Applications for rented apartments must be registered on Pennine Housing's/ Calderdale Council's joint Keychoice register
- For rented apartments, the relevant date will not be applied for first lets.
- Reasonable preference will be given to Members in line with the Joint Housing Allocations policy, including relevant date (note relevant date will not be applied for first lets/sales)

- In situations where applications (for sale and rent) are equal in terms of housing need & the appropriate level of care/dependency then preference will be given to those who have a local connection as set out below (and in line with that set out in the Council/Pennine's Joint Housing Allocations policy). When considering local connection, priority will be given to those in terms of strongest links as set out below:

1st) lived within the Borough for minimum of 12 months previously

2nd) immediate family in the Borough who have lived there a continuous period of 5 years

3rd) previously lived there for a continuous period of 10 years

4th) no local connection

- Allocation decisions for both sales and rented apartments will be made by the **Joint Allocations Panels (JAP)** for each scheme which will comprise:

Pennine Housing – Scheme Manager

Pennine Housing – Housing Officer

Social Services – Adult Care Team Manager

Care Provider – Home Care Manager

Pennine's Operation Manager (Shared Ownership) will attend for S/O lettings as appropriate

- The JAP will meet on a monthly basis or earlier if necessary as determined by voids thus ensuring the void period is kept to a minimum. This may mean at times meeting at short notice or communicating via telephone or email. Practically, most allocations can be handled efficiently and proactively via monthly meetings.
- The purpose of the meetings are to:
 1. **Assess new applications accepted onto the register**
 2. **Monitor applications already on the register**
 3. **Regularly review and agree the order of priority of applicants on the register**
 4. **Monitor overall profile of the schemes**
- The JAP will be chaired and minuted by Pennine Housing's Scheme Manager.
- Applications can only be considered by the JAP if all information is available and up-to- date(care assessments, specialist assessments and verification of housing and support needs).
- A specialist assessment will be required in addition to a care needs assessment for those with specialist needs e.g. mental health, learning disability, dementia etc
- Information should also be gathered at both assessments on the actual or potential care and support needs of any partner or co-tenant

- Ultimately, Pennine Housing 2000, as the landlord, has the final decision on any allocation. And the Executive Director of Pennine Housing (or nominated Officer) has the right to veto any decision made by the JAP.
- For a new build scheme, a shadow JAP will be set up approx 10 months prior to opening to:
 - coordinate all applications and the necessary assessments
 - monitor the progress of applications
 - begin building up a projected profile of applications
 - make decisions on any applications that are not eligible
 - build working relationships between Panel members
- For first sales, preference will be given to prospective purchasers who have a care/support need and local connection, subject to them being able to complete a purchase within a reasonable timescale
- If sales cause the scheme to be imbalanced, then rebalancing the scheme will be done via subsequent relets of rented apartments.

12. PROCEDURE FOR RENTED APARTMENTS

- 1) Applications / referrals can be made from a variety of sources e.g. Social Services, relatives, carers, self-referral, GP, Health professionals etc
- 2) A Pennine Housing KeyChoice application form must be completed on behalf of all those applying for the rented apartments (including the supplementary “Medical & Disability“ form).
- 3) Representatives from other Agencies who are involved with anyone applying to rent at that stage should also provide information about the client’s background, current circumstances, needs, and any risk issues etc. A KeyChoice Support Assessment proforma can be used by other Agencies to help ensure that the key information is given.
- 4) Applicants themselves should be given information about extra care housing at the initial enquiry stage so they have some understanding of what the service offers. Pennine Housing’s Information leaflets on Extra Care Housing explain briefly. Monthly viewing days are also held in schemes to allow prospective applicants, relatives and other professionals etc to visit and meet staff who can explain more thoroughly what the service can offer.
- 5) Once the application form has been completed, it should be returned to the local Housing Office. This will be registered onto the KeyChoice register and an initial banding given by the Housing Officer in terms of housing needs. The Housing Officer will notify the Scheme manager who will then undertake a KeyChoice Support Assessment

- 6) The Support Assessment will include gathering further information to build up a fuller picture about the applicant ie background, current circumstances, needs, risk issues, carer issues etc, both from the applicant and, if appropriate, from other Agencies, relatives etc
- 7) For newbuild schemes, care assessments will be carried out for all applicants, both for rented apartments and shared ownership. These will be prompted by Pennine Housing's Supported Housing's Service Manager or Scheme Manager as applications are received on the run up to opening.
- 8) Following first lettings ie for those who subsequently apply to go on the register (waiting list), the Scheme Manager will arrange for a community care assessment by Calderdale MBC for those applicants who have been assessed as having priority as per KeyChoice banding i.e. those who have some priority for housing. In effect, this means that full information is gathered, including all assessments of need for a shortlist of priority applicants. This avoids wasting Social Care resources to carry out care assessments for everyone who applies for extra care housing as many in low or no housing need will not ever be actively considered. All applications will be subject to the applicant meeting all the relevant criteria and having the appropriate level of dependency at the point of allocation.
- 9) A specialist assessment will be required in addition to a care need assessment for those with specialist needs e.g. mental health, learning disability, dementia etc
- 10) When an application is fully verified i.e. all information gathered, including assessments (or reassessments as the information needs to be up-to-date), the Scheme Manager will present these to the JAP for monitoring purposes. The JAP will continuously review its "priority" list, taking into account any new eligible applicants since the last meeting, based on the KeyChoice banding. For those applications, the dependency needs will also be verified. Alongside this, the JAP will also continuously review the overall need/dependency profile of the scheme so that it can provisionally identify what level of "need" is required when the next vacancy arises, to ensure a balanced scheme is maintained and that there are sufficient resources available.
- 11) When a vacancy then does arise (or a property is provisionally void), the JAP will meet to make a decision on allocating the forthcoming vacancy, using the shortlist of applications as determined by the KeyChoice banding i.e. those in priority housing need. Applicants whose assessments have not been carried out, or housing application form not fully verified will not be considered by the JAP.
- 12) For first lets, the relevant date will not be applied but will apply thereafter in line with the Joint Housing Allocations policy.
- 13) For out-of-borough applications, the host Borough will be required to provide comprehensive assessments. Again, in the absence of appropriate information, the application cannot be verified therefore cannot be considered by the JAP.
- 14) If all things are equal in terms of care need but the JAP decides to consider making an offer to an applicant with less housing need, there needs to be a justifiable

reason for doing so and this needs to be clearly documented in the decision-making records of the JAP.

- 15) The Scheme Manager or Housing Officer will update the housing application form on the KeyChoice system.
- 16) At any point in time (new build or current schemes), when ineligible applications are identified, the Scheme Manager will write to the applicant and the referrer, on behalf of the JAP, informing of the reasons for the decision and advising them of their right to appeal. And also how to reapply if circumstances alter. And how to appeal against the decision.
- 17) Appeals will be considered jointly by the Supported Housing Services Manager (Pennine Housing 2000) and the Home Care Services Manager (Social Services), neither of whom are JAP members. In the event that either have been party to the decision via attendance at the JAP, then the Heads of Services will consider the appeal.
- 18) When the JAP decides on whom to allocate to, the Scheme Manager will contact the applicant with an official offer of accommodation.
- 19) If this offer is refused, an offer should be made to the next reserve applicant, as already identified by the JAP.
- 20) Once the offer is provisionally accepted and the keys are available, the Scheme Manager will contact the applicant to arrange a joint viewing with the applicant. Introductions to other tenants and members of staff from both organisations should be made at the accompanied viewing unless the new tenant does not want to do so.
- 21) If the offer is then accepted, the tenancy will commence in accordance with the Association's allocations procedure.

13. PROCEDURE FOR SHARED OWNERSHIP APARTMENTS

Albeit the eligibility criteria and procedure for shared ownership apartments is different from that for rented apartments, the principles of the policy and allocations framework are the same, irrespective of tenure.

A) First Sales

- Prior to scheme opening, anyone interested in shared ownership will be asked initially to complete an Expression of Interest form.
 - An initial check on eligibility will be made on receipt of the Expression of Interest form i.e. that they meet the age criteria
 - At the appropriate time, (which will be determined by the sales & lettings programme), Pennine's Shared Ownership team will then contact those who have expressed an interest to arrange for a full shared ownership application to be completed. This will include full details of financial circumstances and ability to purchase.
- On receipt of a full application form, a 2nd check will be made by the Shared Ownership team re: eligibility in respect of financial ability to purchase. If this

appears to be met, then the S/O team will contact the Scheme Manager to arrange for a care assessment to be carried out.

- The Scheme Manager will monitor all applications via the JAP, in conjunction with the S/O team.
- If anyone is found to be ineligible during the initial verifications, then the Shared Ownership team will notify the applicant in writing and advise them what to do if their circumstances change.
- At the appropriate point in the sales and lettings programme (usually about 6 months prior to scheme completion), the JAP will meet to decide on allocations of shared ownership units (based on the formal applications). This will be done prior to allocations being decided for rented apartments.
- All applicants for purchase must meet the eligibility criteria for shared ownership (age and ability to purchase). The JAP will then prioritise on the basis of the following:

(a) Has a care/support need and that this need/dependency is of the most appropriate level to best achieve the overall aim of a balanced community.

(b) Has links to the locality, and within this category, priority about locality will be given to those with the strongest links as explained below:

- (c)
- 1st) lived within the Borough for minimum of 12 months previously
 - 2nd) immediate family in the Borough who have lived there a continuous period of 5 years
 - 3rd) previously lived there for a continuous period of 10 years
 - 4th) no local connection

- In situations where there is equal priority for a sale and both purchasers have the appropriate level of need, preference will be given to those who have resided or had local links for the longest period
- However, if a purchaser has been made an allocation but are not able to successfully complete the purchase within a reasonable timescale, then the allocation will be withdrawn and the JAP will reallocate, from the sales waiting list. Progress of sales will therefore be closely monitored and formally reviewed by the shared ownership team after six months following provisional allocation.

(B) Resale of Shared Ownership apartments

- Pennine Housing's shared ownership team will hold a waiting list for shared ownership apartments. This will be held using Expression of Interest Forms.
- Where the prospective vendor of a shared ownership lease notifies Pennine Housing under the relevant lease of his/her desire to assign the lease, the Shared

Ownership team will immediately contact all those on the waiting list via letter to ascertain if they are still interested and if so, request for a full application form to be returned within 5 working days.

- The Shared Ownership team will also contact the Scheme Manager immediately on receipt of assignment notification so that the Scheme Manager can schedule a date for the JAP to meet (this should be approximately 15 working days from date of notification to give sufficient time to gather all relevant information prior to meeting).
- On receipt of each completed application, the Shared Ownership team should notify the Scheme Manager who will then arrange for a Care assessment to be done. This assessment would have to be done promptly ie within 5 working days from receipt of request from Scheme Manager to ensure that the JAP could meet within suggested timescale as per para 3 above.
- The JAP will then meet to consider whether there is a suitable assignee for the shared ownership lease.
- Where the JAP makes a recommendation as to the identity of the prospective assignee, Pennine Housing shall promptly notify such decision to the vendor of the relevant shared ownership lease.
- If no such person is identified at the first meeting of the JAP which has been convened to make such a recommendation, the JAP shall meet weekly thereafter until the expiry of the 8 weeks period referred to in the lease.
- The members of the JAP must acknowledge that, if no prospective assignee is proposed by the landlord within the 8 weeks of the notification made by the vendor under the lease (or the proposed assignee does not complete within 12 weeks of the date of receipt of a draft contract) the vendor shall be free to assign the lease to any person aged over 60 years.

Date approved by Keychoice Steering group - 11th December 2008

Date approved by Joint Management Group (Extra Care) – 30th January 2009

Joint Allocations Panels briefed - February 2009

Willow Court Older People's group briefed – 26th January 2009