Allocations policy

Contents

Allocations policy 1
1. Introduction 3
2. Scope of this policy 3
3. Eligibility to be housed by the Charity 3
3.1 The Charitable Scheme requirement 3
3.2 Financial circumstances 4
3.3 Community considerations 4
3.4 Minimum age 4
3.5 Support needs 4
3.6 Previous licence breaches 4
3.7 Household size and composition 5
3.8 Pets 5
3.9 Adaptations 5
4. Transfers 5
5. Equalities impact statement 6
6. Disputes and resolution 6
7. Policy review 6

1. Introduction

1.1 The Charity of Mrs Mabel Luke (the Charity) aims to provide high quality and well-managed almshouses that are allocated according to the Charity's Charitable Scheme and using a process that is transparent, fair, efficient and keeps void times to a minimum.

1.2 The Charity is committed to working in partnership with West Berkshire Council (WBC) to assist the Council in meeting their statutory obligations to people with housing needs.

1.3 The Charity's Allocations Policy is supported by detailed procedures and takes into account statutory and regulatory requirements, the current Local Lettings Plan and Nominations Procedures agreed with WBC and WBC's Housing Allocations Policy.

1.4 Successful applicants will be allocated a specified property with a licence to occupy under conditions set out in a letter of appointment and will be required to pay a Weekly Maintenance Contribution.

2. Scope of this policy

2.1 The Charity owns three blocks of flats on a single site at Mabel Luke Place, Mill Lane, Newbury. This allocations policy applies to the flats not covered by the nominations agreement with WBC and which will be advertised and allocated directly by the Charity.

2.2 The Charity will invite applications to flats 1 to 4 in block 1 and flats 12, 15 and 17 in block 2. If the Charity is unable to find a suitably qualified applicant, the flat will be offered to West Berkshire Council for nominations.

2.3 West Berkshire Council retains nomination rights for flats 5 to 11, 14 and 16.

3. Eligibility to be housed by the Charity

Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria set out in this section.

3.1 The Charitable Scheme requirement

Under its Scheme, the Charity may house only people who are in housing need and who are resident in, or have a connection to, Newbury or the parish of Greenham.

Applicants will usually be expected to have lived in Newbury and/or Greenham parish for the last two consecutive years to qualify as resident.

Connection to Newbury or the parish of Greenham will usually mean:

- **either** the applicant or their partner has an immediate family member who has been living in Newbury and/or Greenham for the last five consecutive years. Immediate family means a child (including step-child or adopted child), parent, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling

- **or** the applicant or their partner has been in meaningful, paid employment in Newbury and/or Greenham for the last two consecutive years.

The Charity might take other forms of connection into account, at the discretion of the Directors.

3.2 Financial circumstances

The Charity provides homes for people in housing need. Applicants will only be considered if their household income is sufficient for them to pay the Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC) but they have insufficient resources to secure suitable accommodation in the private sector. This will usually mean that their household income is less than £60,000 a year and/or they have capital of £16,000 or less. These figures are the same as those in WBC's Housing Allocations policy and are subject to change in line with that policy.

The Charity will not normally offer accommodation to anyone who has and will continue to have an interest in a property elsewhere, either in the United Kingdom or abroad. This might be ownership, lease or tenancy.

Applicants must agree to disclose fully their financial circumstances and consent to a credit check being carried out.

Should a resident's financial circumstances change subsequently, the Charity may set aside their appointment and require the household to vacate the property.

3.3 Community considerations

The Charity intends to create and maintain a sustainable, balanced and settled community at Mabel Luke Place and to reduce the likelihood of future management problems caused by nuisance, anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Short-listed applicants will be visited at home for a discussion about their application and what it means to be an almshouse resident.

References are usually requested before an offer is made.

3.4 Minimum age

The Charity will not normally offer a licence to someone under 18 years of age unless WBC has agreed to be a guarantor.

3.5 Support needs

Applicants with support needs must have an established support package and be prepared to continue to accept support until the provider agrees that it is no longer necessary.

3.6 Previous licence breaches

The Charity will not normally accept an applicant who has previously been an almshouse resident and breached their licence conditions. Under these

circumstances, an applicant who is otherwise eligible will, though, be given an opportunity to show that their behaviour has been suitably amended over a reasonable period of time.

3.7 Household size and composition

To avoid under-occupancy or over-crowding in its homes and to maintain a sustainable and balanced community at Mabel Luke Place, the Charity will take into account the size and composition of the applicant's household.

The Charity's two-bedroom flats comprise one double and one single bedroom and would normally be allocated to a household made up of:

- A couple and one other adult; or
- One adult or an adult couple with two children of the same sex aged 16 or under; or
- One adult or an adult couple with two children of different sexes under 10 years of age; or
- One adult or an adult couple with a child under 16 years of age

Children will not usually be taken into account on an application if they have a suitable home available to them elsewhere. Applicants who wish to have a child included on their application will be asked to prove that they provide the child's principal home.

The Charity will, however, consider individual circumstances.

Should the composition of the household change subsequently, the Charity may set aside the appointment and require the residents to leave the property.

3.8 Pets

Pets are not permitted. Applicants who already have pets will be required to give an undertaking that their pet(s) will be suitably rehoused.

3.9 Adaptations

A new resident has to be able to live in the property as it stands at the time of allocation. If minor adaptations are needed subsequently, the Charity will assist the resident to access the services required but will not provide any funding itself. Where a property has an existing adaptation, preference will be given to households assessed as in need of such an adaptation.

4. Transfers

4.1 The Charity has a policy for dealing with requests from residents to transfer to a different flat at Mabel Luke Place. The policy is available on request.

5. Equalities impact statement

5.1 The Charity strives to meet the needs of all eligible applicants and residents and is committed to reducing inequality, eliminating discrimination and promoting good relations between people of different groups. The Charity will be sensitive to the specific needs of all new applicants.

5.2 The Allocations Policy does not discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of race, ethnicity, gender or disability.

6. Disputes and resolution

6.1 If an applicant is not satisfied with the way their application has been handled, he/she may request a review.

6.2 The review will be conducted by two Directors who were not involved in the allocation process. Their decision is final, although if the applicant believes there has been a breach of policy or process he/she may subsequently use the Charity's complaints procedure.

7. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or in response to a change in regulatory guidance, best practice or legal precedent.