

Allocations policy

Objective

The purpose of this policy is to describe the basis on which the Charity of Mrs Mabel Luke allocates flats at Mabel Luke Place.

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 according to the Charity's current Local Lettings Plan, the Nominations Procedures agreed with WBC, and WBC's Housing Allocations Policy.

2. Scope of this policy

2.1 The Charity owns sixteen one-bedroom (4) and two-bedroom (12) flats in three blocks on a single site at Mabel Luke Place, Mill Lane, Newbury. This allocations policy applies the eligibility criteria set out in the Charitable Scheme to all allocations, whether to flats covered by the Nominations Agreement with WBC or to flats not so covered which will be advertised and allocated directly by the Charity. The designation of flats is set out in the table below.

Direct application to the Charity	Flats: 1,2,3,4,12,15,17
Applications through WBC	Flats: 5,6,7,8,9,10,11,14,16
Flats 9, 10, 16 and 17 are one-bedroom, the others are two-bedroom.	

2.2 The Nominations Agreement, together with the Local Lettings Plan, makes clear that while the allocation of a flat under the Agreement must be on WBC's Housing Register and be prioritised through Homechoice, WBC's choice-based lettings scheme, the Charity is able to reject households that do not comply with the eligibility criteria set out below.

3. Eligibility to be housed by the Charity

Applicants – whether direct or nominated – must meet the eligibility criteria set out in this section.

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The Charity of Mrs Mabel Luke

Charity Commission Reg. no: 236518

Registered Provider no: 4840

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 who have lived in Newbury and/or Greenham parish for the last two or more consecutive years will qualify as resident. Brief gaps in residency may be accepted.

Connection to Newbury or the parish of Greenham can be demonstrated as follows:

- **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.

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.

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, whether by 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, such that they no longer comply with the Charity's criteria, the Charity may set aside (terminate) their appointment and require the household to vacate the property, as set out in the Licence To Occupy.

3.3 Community considerations

The Charity aims to 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.

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

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

The Charity does not provide direct support services to residents. 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 reserves the right to not accept an applicant who has breached a tenancy or licence agreement in the last three years. References are usually requested before an offer is made.

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 would normally be allocated to a household made up of:

1. A couple and one other adult; or
2. Two adults; or
3. One adult or an adult couple with two children of the same sex aged 16 or under; or
4. One adult or an adult couple with two children of different sexes under 10 years of age; or
5. 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.

The Charity's one-bedroom flats are allocated to single adults or adult couples.

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

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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 prior to taking up residence.

3.9 Adaptations

A new resident is normally expected to be able to live in the property as it stands at the time of allocation. but the Charity will support the resident in installing minor adaptations, at that time or subsequently. Where a property has an existing adaptation, preference will be given to households assessed as in need of such an adaptation.

4. Transfers

The Charity has a policy, available on request, for dealing with requests from residents to transfer to a different flat at Mabel Luke Place. As an Almshouse Charity, the right to external transfer or to a mutual exchange does not exist.

5. Equalities impact statement

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.

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

6. Disputes and resolution

Applicants who are not satisfied with the way their application has been handled may request a review which will be handled in line with our Complaints Policy.

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.

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