

Local Lettings Policy for Specialist Accommodation (Older People)



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1. Introduction

This local lettings policy is for the allocation of Independent Living, Extra Care (also referred to as Flexicare) and designated Older People accommodation and will outline the allocation process.

The policy will work alongside Stevenage Borough Council's Allocations scheme.

2. Independent Living

The aim of Independent Living accommodation is to maintain a resident's independence in their own home. The schemes are a mixture of properties either 'all under one roof' where the front door leads to an internal corridor or dispersed out in the community e.g. small flat blocks or bungalows. All our properties are linked to or have a communal lounge where residents can take part in various activities should they wish to.

The assessment will be carried out by the Specialist Support Team usually in the applicant's current home in person.

We may consider applicants over the age of 55 for 1st floor un-lifted properties in a dispersed scheme, subject to a suitability assessment. There will be also be schemes/ properties which are designated for over 55.

2.1 Property Allocation

The process for allocating Independent Living accommodation is set out below;

- Applicant joins the Housing Register (applicant must be eligible for the Housing Register meeting all the requirements as set out in the Allocations Scheme);
- An assessment will be carried out to assess suitability and identify support needs;
- If assessed as suitable, applicant will join the Independent Living waiting list
- Properties will be allocated as outlined in Table 1 below;

Criteria	Reason	Description
1	Allocations scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priority of banding (as per the allocations scheme);• Length of time in band;
2	Medical / Welfare Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suitability of accommodation as identified in the assessment e.g. requirements for a lift, level access shower or scooter storage.• Adapted properties - any property identified specifically for wheelchair access will be allocated on medical priority

Once a property is on notice we will actively review our waiting list in the priority order as stated above to identify potential applicants. If an applicant refuses the property we shall go to the next applicant in line with the above.

Assessments will be reviewed approximately every 6 months to ensure we are supporting applicants to meet their most suitable housing and support need.

2.2 Two bed property allocation

The two bedroom priority is not always captured by a medical need alone as per the Allocations Scheme; therefore we shall take into consideration the best use of our housing stock and supporting our older residents to move to more manageable accommodation to maintain their independence.

Therefore two bedroom Independent Living properties will be allocated in the priority order of the criteria set out in Table 2 below;

Criteria	Reason	Description
1	Allocations scheme	A 2 bed priority awarded through the allocations scheme. 'Couple with medical recommendation for separate bedrooms, single person or couple with verified need for full time live in carer'
2	Welfare Needs	Non-medical but has an impact on either physical or mental wellbeing as identified at Independent Living Assessment.
3	Downsizing	A resident or couple downsizing from General Needs and considered best use of our housing stock.

2.3 Exceptional circumstances

We may consider applicants below the age of 55 and 60 as stated in 1.1 depending on the property types if there is a diagnosed long term illness or disability and demonstration of a support need where they would benefit from the support provided from the Specialist Support Team. Receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence payment is not in itself evidence of a support need. The final decision on individual cases will be made by the service manager.

2.4 Out of Area Applicants

Applicants with a local connection e.g. family living in Stevenage, where the applicant would benefit from the support of family and our services to support them, will be considered for a low demand property subject to the outcome of the suitability assessment. The applicant will need to be available in Stevenage for the assessment in person.

2.5 Management Moves for existing residents within our accommodation

Consideration will be given for moves to existing residents within our service by recommendation of the Specialist Support Services Team. Where there is a clear demonstration that their current accommodation is affecting their health or wellbeing e.g. resident currently lives on 1st floor with lift access, however the distance from their property to the lift means they are unable to leave their property without support due to their mobility or living on 1st floor with no lift access. The Specialist Support Officer makes the recommendation providing the reasons for requesting the move to the service manager, who is responsible for approving the request. This will be providing the current housing register waiting list has been exhausted and subject to availability of suitable properties.

3. Extra Care (also known as Flexicare)

The aim of Extra Care accommodation is to maintain a resident's independence in their own home with the support of the Specialist Support team and the commissioned on site care provider.

Our schemes are a mixture of properties either 'all under one roof' where the front door leads to an internal corridor or a few bungalows within the scheme grounds. They have a communal lounge where residents can take part in various activities should they wish to.

Extra Care accommodation will normally only be allocated to applicants over the age of 60. In all cases a joint assessment with the care provider will be carried out to assess that the applicant:

- Is able to live independently within Extra Care
- Would benefit from living in an Extra Care scheme and receiving the housing related support service.
- Has a personal care need which can be met by the care provider

The assessment will be carried out by the Specialist Support Team and the care provider usually in the applicant's current home in person.

In exceptional circumstances people below this age may be considered, for example those with a long term physical illness

3.1 Referrals

Referrals can be made by a professional, self-referral or from a family member/friend of the applicant and an adult care assessment should have been carried out within the last 3 months; however we can support the applicant with a referral to the social worker team if this is not yet in place.



3.2 Property Allocation

Extra Care accommodation is allocated through a multi-disciplinary panel which meets every month and includes representatives from Stevenage Borough Council (Specialist Support Team), Hertfordshire County Council, home care agency and any other professionals involved in cases.

The panel will discuss cases referred to them and will make a joint decision to allocate properties once the following has taken place;

- Applicant joins the housing register (applicant must be eligible for the Housing Register meeting all the requirements as set out in the Allocations scheme);
- An assessment has been carried out to assess suitability and identify housing related support needs;
- A care assessment has been carried out to identify personal care needs to ensure care needs can be met.

If agreed as suitable the applicant will join the waiting list and properties will be allocated by the panel using the criteria outlined below in Table 3:

Criteria	Key Area	Requirement
1	eligibility	Applicant joins the housing register (applicant must be eligible for the Housing Register meeting all the requirements as set out in the Allocations scheme);
2	Support needs	An assessment has been carried out to assess suitability and identify housing related support needs
3	Care needs	A care assessment has been carried out to identify personal care needs to ensure these can be met

It is important to note that properties are allocated by housing need in the first instance, not the time on the housing register.

3.3 Two bed property allocation

The two bedroom priority is not always captured by a medical need alone as per the Allocations Scheme; therefore we shall take into consideration the best use of our housing stock and supporting our older residents to move to manageable accommodation to maintain their independence.

Therefore two bedroom Extra Care properties will be allocated in the priority order of the criteria set out in Table 4 below:

Criteria	Reason	Description
1	Allocations scheme	A 2 bedroom priority awarded through the allocations scheme. 'Couple with medical recommendation for separate bedrooms, single person or couple with verified need for full time live in carer'
2	Welfare Needs	Non-medical but has an impact on either physical or mental wellbeing as identified at the extra care assessment.
3	Downsizing	A resident or couple downsizing from General Needs and considered best use of our housing stock.



4. Support Charge for Independent Living and Extra Care Accommodation

There is a support charge for living in Independent Living and Extra Care accommodation which covers the support provided by the team including the 24/7 emergency response service. This is subject to a review. Refer to the service charging policy for the most up to date information on support charges.

Applicants are made aware of the support charge at the assessment and there is no opting out of the support service or related charge, this includes regular contact with specialist support staff and the support planning process we provide to our residents to capture any support needs to enable our residents to live independently.

Reviews of support plans are undertaken with existing tenants to identify changing needs throughout their tenancy.

5. Low demand properties

Low demand properties are where we have exhausted our current active waiting list at the time the property is ready to let. (The team would have actively been trying to find an applicant on the waiting list for a minimum of 6 weeks at the point of ready to let) This excludes Extra Care accommodation.



6. Future Older People Accommodation

Stevenage Borough Council may designate some accommodation specifically for older people over the age of 55 to build a retirement community. The applicant may not have a support need. This accommodation may not have access to communal facilities, the housing related support or the 24/7 emergency response service however these can be provided through the Specialist Support teams' Careline and Community Support services should they be needed on an individual basis.

6.1 Property Allocation

The process for allocating designated older people accommodation is set out in Table 3 above. If assessed as suitable, the applicant will join the Older People accommodation waiting list and the properties will be allocated based on the factors outlined in Table 5 below;

Criteria	Property Allocation basis
1	Priority of banding (as per the allocations scheme)
2	Length of time in band
3	Taking into consideration applicants wishes for area and type of accommodation as identified at the assessment (applicants can change this at any time)
4	Suitability of accommodation as identified in the assessment e.g. requirements for a lift, level access shower or scooter storage
5	Adapted properties - any property identified specifically for wheelchair access will be allocated on medical priority

Once a property is on notice we will actively review our waiting list in the priority order as stated above to identify potential applicants. If an applicant refuses the property we shall go to the next applicant in line with above.

6.2 Two bed property allocation

The two bedroom priority is not always captured by a medical need alone as per the allocation scheme; therefore we shall take into consideration the best use of our housing stock and supporting our older residents to move to manageable accommodation to maintain their independence.

Therefore two bedroom properties will be allocated in the priority order of the criteria set out in Table 6 below:

Criteria	Reason	Description
1	Allocations scheme	A 2 bedroom priority awarded through the allocations scheme. 'Couple with medical recommendation for separate bedrooms, single person or couple with verified need for full time live in carer'
2	Downsizing	A resident or couple downsizing from General Needs and considered best use of our housing stock.
3	Welfare Needs	Non-medical but has an impact on either physical or mental wellbeing

7. Best use of Stock Specialist Accommodation

We are constantly reviewing the demand of our accommodation and in the circumstances set out below we will approach residents to move into more suitable accommodation:

- When a resident has moved in with a partner and only that partner had an identified care or support need and they leave the accommodation on a permanent basis e.g. moving to residential. The remaining tenant will be supported to either move out of specialist accommodation or transferring to more appropriate accommodation e.g. from extra care into independent living based on their current needs.
- When a couple moves into a 2 bed accommodation and their circumstances change e.g. one move into residential care, we will support the remaining resident to downsize to a 1 bedroom home, if there is demand for 2 bedroom homes.

This ensures our accommodation is available for those that need the appropriate care and support and in both of these circumstances; this will be handled sensitively and in a timely manner.

8. Appeals process

The final decision on the suitability of an applicant for Independent Living accommodation will be made by the service manager and if there is a need for escalation this will be to the Operations Manager for Managing Homes

To appeal a decision, please contact specialist.support@stevenage.gov.uk



Appendix A

What accommodation you can expect from us

Your circumstances	What you will be considered for
Downsizing	If you are an existing council tenant, you will be eligible for a 1 bedroomed home and may be considered for a 2 bedroom home (see relevant section in policy)
Homeowner	<p>The Right-to-Buy-back policy is where Stevenage Borough Council may re-purchase accommodation previously sold by the council under the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme.</p> <p>https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/housing-policies-and-strategies/right-to-buy-buy-back</p> <p>This is subject to suitability assessments.</p>
Under 60 years old	1 st floor un-lifted if 55 years old and over unless exceptional circumstances.
Future Older People Accommodation	Stevenage Borough Council may designate some accommodation specifically for older people over the age of 55 to build a retirement community. The applicant may not have a support need.
Out of Area	Low demand properties as per section 1.4

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