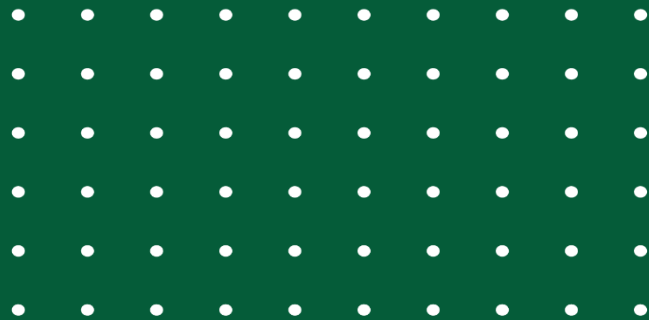




POLICY

ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS



November
2024

Policy	ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS POLICY			
Version Reference	2.0			
Tenant Focus Group Approval Needed	Yes			
Approved by Board	Yes			
Date Approved	5 November 2024			
Review Due	November 2027			
Policy Champion	Senior Housing Officer			
Who this Policy Affects	Staff	Tenants ✓	Contractors	Members of the Public ✓

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Allocating and letting homes is a core landlord function. It is important that we let empty homes as efficiently as possible, so as to minimise rent loss and to support Kildare County Council in its duties and responsibilities to rehouse people from the waiting list.
- 1.2 We recognise that social housing is a public resource and that we have responsibilities in managing it fairly, efficiently and with transparency.
- 1.3 Ensuring that our empty homes are allocated and let efficiently and appropriately is an important contribution to creating sustainable tenancies and communities.
- 1.4 We have developed this policy to direct and support service delivery in line with our vision and mission:

... to provide quality homes and services for people in housing need and we are proud to play a role in supporting the development of safe and sustainable communities where people are proud to live.

2.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Cill Dara Housing Association empty homes which are available for reletting.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The aims and objectives of this policy are to:
- a) Maximise our rental income by minimising the length of time our homes are empty
 - b) Contribute effectively to national and local objectives to make the best use of social homes to reduce housing waiting lists
 - c) Minimise security costs/risk of damage to empty homes
 - d) Ensure that new tenants understand their rights and responsibilities.

4.0 POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Nominations

4.2 All of our empty homes are let by local authority nomination.

We will:

- a) Request nominations in good time so as to minimise rent loss as well as trying to avoid applicants having to wait an excessive length of time before the property is ready to let
- b) Provide complete and useful property details to the local authority to assist in them making an appropriate allocation

4.2 DETERMINING HOUSING NEED

4.2.1 Housing need and prioritisation of applicants is usually determined by the local authority. Where this is not the case, we will prioritise using the following criteria:

- Suitability of the home to meet the applicants housing need
- Security of tenure of the applicants current housing
- Length of time on waiting list.

4.3 TRANSFERS

4.3.1 Cill Dara Housing Association does not maintain its own transfer list. Cill Dara Housing Association tenants requesting a transfer will need to make a housing application to the local authority.

4.4 MUTUAL EXCHANGES

4.4.1 Although a mutual exchange is not technically an allocation, it is, effectively, a letting, hence it is being covered by this policy.

We will:

- a) Promote mutual exchanges as a means for tenants with lower housing need to be able to move
- b) Promote mutual exchanges as an additional method of moving home for our tenants with greater housing need
- c) In considering mutual exchange requests, we will withhold our consent where there are tenancy breaches by either the outgoing or the incoming tenant
- d) Withhold our consent where the mutual exchange would lead to overcrowding or under occupancy

- e) Usually not give approval for a mutual exchange where there is domestic abuse (as the incoming tenant may be at risk from the person abusing the outgoing tenant)
- f) Provide a tenancy reference to the requesting landlord, detailing any tenancy breaches
- g) Carry out a property inspection before giving consent and will require the tenant to make good any damage caused before we give consent
- h) We will carry out all required gas and electrical safety checks before the new tenant moves in.

4.5 LETTINGS

- 4.5.1 The lettings process is a key time for us to establish a good relationship with a prospective new tenant. It is an opportunity to talk about the services that CDHA offers and the way in which we operate.
- 4.5.2 It is also an opportunity to be clear about tenant rights and responsibilities as well as our landlord obligations.

We will:

- a) Carry out an accompanied viewing to show the applicant around the home
- b) We may carry out lettings visits with one applicant or, on occasion, multiple applicants
- c) Give clear messages about what the applicant will need to do if they accept the offer
- d) Give information relating to the rent assessment process and the need to pay rent in advance at the sign up
- e) Require the applicant to make a decision on whether or not to accept the offer within 24 hours.
- f) In the case of a letting in a leased house, the new tenants will be advised of the length of the lease remaining and that the maximum tenancy length is for that period. Any other legal tenancy restrictions (e.g., Tenancies of unlimited duration etc) will still apply.

4.6 PRE-TENANCY TRAINING

- 4.6.1 We provide pre-tenancy training for new tenants to Cill Dara Housing Association. This usually takes place between letting and signup, or, very shortly after a tenancy started.
- 4.6.2 Our pre-tenancy training is intended to give key information to new tenants regarding their tenancy and their home with Cill Dara Housing Association. This includes information on some of the practical aspects of their new home, for example, the location of water shut-off valve and

how to work the heating, as well as to spend some time explaining responsibilities of both landlord and tenant.

- 4.6.3 We also make sure that tenants know who to contact for a range of enquiries and how to make contact with us when they need to.

4.7 SIGN UP

- 4.7.1 The sign up is the legal part of the process, where landlord and tenant enter into a contract.
- 4.7.2 We will explain to tenants about the initial six-month probationary period and subsequent Tenancies of Unlimited Duration.

5.0 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

- 5.1 Cill Dara Housing Association aims to ensure that equality, fairness, dignity, and respect are central to the way we work and how we treat our customers. We support diversity and uphold equal opportunities in all areas of our work as an employer and service provider.
- 5.2 With reference to the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 Cill Dara Housing Association will not discriminate against tenants, staff, visitors, suppliers or others based gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveler community. In addition, the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 prohibit discrimination in the provision of accommodation services against people who are in receipt of rent supplement, housing assistance, or social welfare payments.

6 DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 6.1 This policy will be operated in line with our Data Protection Policy.

7 COMPLAINTS

- 7.1 We aim to provide excellent services but recognise that we do not always get things right. We have a Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy which we use actively to address service failures and to inform service improvements.

8.0 COMPLIANCE

- 8.1 We have developed this policy and associated procedures with due regard to Regulatory requirements.

8.2 As a registered Tier 2 Approved Housing Body, we work hard to ensure that we are fully compliant with the requirements of the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority.

9.0 LINKED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

9.1 The following Cill Dara Housing Association strategies, policies, procedures and guidance that relate to this policy are as follows:

- Tenancy Management
- Empty Homes

10.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1 All relevant employees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied as intended. Including, but not exclusively:

- a) Reporting any areas of concern or non-compliance to their manager.
- b) Keeping accurate records.
- c) Attend training to ensure they have the required knowledge and skills to deliver the service.

10.2 Board will ensure that:

- a) Cill Dara Housing Association has an overview of this policy and reviews it in a timely manner to assess its effectiveness and appropriateness.
- b) Cill Dara Housing Association has the necessary arrangements and resources to implement and monitor operational effectiveness.

10.3 Managers will ensure that:

- a) This policy is implemented through agreed operational procedures, monitored and reported.
- b) Resources are deployed and monitored effectively.

11.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Allocating** - the process by which an individual is nominated for an empty home.
- **Letting** - the process by which we let an empty home to the nominated individual.
- **Nomination** - the person nominated by the local authority for an empty home.
- **Ready to let** - indicates that all maintenance works have been completed and that the empty home meets our lettable standard.

- **Transfer** - where a current Cill Dara Housing Association tenant seeks to move (transfer) to another socially rented home.
- **Mutual exchange** - where two (or more) tenants of social housing swap homes with each other. This could be within Cill Dara Housing Association or between Cill Dara Housing Association and another AHB or with a local authority. Tenants must request and obtain permission from their landlord before completing mutual exchange.

12.0 POLICY REVIEW

- 12.1 The Abandonment Policy will be reviewed every three years, unless an earlier review is necessary following e.g., legislative, regulatory, and good practice requirements.