

Local Lettings Policy

Studio upgrade enhancement

Introduction

1. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the City Corporation has temporarily housed approximately 70 people who were sleeping rough into hotel accommodation. This accommodation is only available in the short term, and therefore alternative solutions must be found for those accommodated. The City Corporation is committed to provide an offer that prevents a return to the streets for any individual.
2. Allocation of suitable social housing provides an opportunity of settled housing for some in hostels or temporary accommodation. This serves both to meet the City Corporation's housing responsibility to some, and to create voids in specialist hostel accommodation for those with support needs.
3. Where the allocation of a City of London tenancy is to a single person, the City Corporation's *Housing Allocations Scheme* states that they normally qualify for a studio property only.
4. The allocations scheme provides for some preference (in addition to reasonable preference criteria) to be given to tenants of studio properties who qualify under the terms of the "studio upgrade" provisions (see appendix).

Purpose of the Local Lettings Policy

5. This Local Lettings Policy (LLP) sets out a temporary change to apply to a property type (studio properties) through introducing changes to the studio upgrade provision of the allocations scheme.

Objectives of the Local Lettings Policy

6. The LLP will deliver the following policy objectives:
 - To increase the availability of studio properties for allocation to those who had been sleeping rough and housed into hotel accommodation, for whom the City Corporation has a responsibility to house
 - To target allocation to create voids in supported housing or specialist hostel accommodation to provide for those with support needs
7. In doing so it will support the City Corporations objective that all those housed temporarily from its streets will have an offer that prevents their return to rough sleeping.
8. The consequent voids will be available to allocate to eligible households through our direct lettings policy set out in the *Housing Allocations Scheme*.

11.2.II. Managing temporary accommodation

One direct offer may be made to homeless households where this is necessary to manage the use of temporary accommodation and to enable the City Corporation to meet its statutory homeless duties.

9. This quota of allocations will be managed so that it does not prevent other urgent needs being met and can respond to other housing management needs and considerations. The limitation of time and the proportion of properties placed into the quota will be such as to ensure overall compliance with the Section 166(A) of the 1996 Housing Act.

Lettings arrangements

10. The current allocations scheme provides for studio upgrades, permitting some tenants to transfer from a studio flat to a one-bedroom property.
11. Minimum eligibility for studio upgrade is secure tenancy. Single tenants must be over 45 and in a studio property – they would have no arrears at time of transfer and priority would be given to those who have been registered the longest. Couples inhabiting a studio will get higher priority than single adults in line with existing policy.
12. This policy will provide for studio upgrade applicants to be awarded 100 additional points for the duration of the policy and will apply only to bids for transfer moves made while the policy is in place.
13. In the event of applicants bidding for a property with the same level of points, priority will be given in the first instance to a household releasing a studio, and in all other circumstances to the applicant whose need has been registered for the longest.
14. Applications will be excluded where there is a history of damage to property or other persons, or other breaches of tenancy that have caused formal action from the authority's housing services to be taken within the last 2 years

Duration

15. This LLP will be valid **until 31 March 2021** from the date of its approval. At which point it must either be renewed or replaced, or the allocation of homes will be governed by the City's Allocation Policy.

Appendix – City of London *Housing Allocations Scheme* (extract): Studio upgrades

III. Studio upgrades

- 6.17 City Corporation tenants occupying studio accommodation and with no other identified housing need will be able to apply for a transfer to a one-bedroom home in three circumstances:
- (a) The tenant is aged 45 or over.
 - (b) The tenant is a parent whose child does not live with them, but who visits regularly and would stay overnight if there were space. Applications will be prioritised with an award of secondary points for a low welfare need (see 9.45.IV).
 - (c) The tenant lives with a spouse, a civil partner, or a partner who has lived in the property continuously for at least one year. Applications will be prioritised with an award of secondary points for one bedroom lacking (see 9.18).
- 6.18 Child, for the purposes of 6.17(b), 8.11 and 9.45.IV, is defined as a person under 18 years old, or as a person under 25 years old who is in full time education or who has special educational needs.