

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub-Committee	12/05/2022
Subject: The Provision of Alternative Accommodation to Families Where Children Have Died	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y/N
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Liam Gillespie, Head of Housing Management, DCCS	

Summary

Following the accidental deaths of two children in their homes in Hackney, the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) requested that relevant housing protocols were reviewed to ensure that sufficient regard was given to a household's circumstances when a traumatic child death occurs, specifically the mental health impact on the family in remaining in the home where the death took place.

The City's Housing Allocations Scheme already gave officers a wide discretion to assist families in such traumatic circumstances through the 'Management Transfer' route, however the Scheme has now been amended to explicitly state that families suffering a child bereavement will be eligible for Management Transfer, the highest category of priority on the housing register.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Following the tragic accidental deaths of two children in their homes, concerns were raised by professionals supporting their families about the impact on their

mental health and wellbeing from remaining in the home in which the accidents occurred.

2. The CHSCP requested that relevant housing protocols were reviewed and, where necessary, amended, to ensure that they have regard to the mental health impact on families when children die at home.
3. Under our Housing Allocations Scheme (“the Scheme”), officers have wide discretion to offer alternative housing in situations of urgent or critical need. Should a tragic event occur in the home, such as the traumatic death of a child, this would be deemed a pressing reason to offer alternative accommodation as soon as possible.
4. ‘Management Transfer’ status means that a household is awarded the highest priority for rehousing and would be offered a suitable alternative home as soon as one became available. This is outside the usual choice-based lettings system, meaning the household does not have to place bids and compete with other households for available properties.
5. If the household were unable to continue to occupy their current home while waiting, officers would ensure they received appropriate advice about their options and would do everything possible to assist them in the interim.

Current Position

6. In response to the request from CHSCP to review our housing protocols, and to further strengthen our current arrangements, the Scheme was amended and now specifically states that households suffering a child bereavement in the home will be offered Management Transfer status.
7. The practical implication of Management Transfer status is that the household will be transferred to a suitable alternative home as soon as one becomes available to let.
8. Officers will continue to exercise their discretion in awarding Management Transfer status, or additional welfare points, in circumstances not specifically covered by this amendment.
9. This change, and other minor unrelated changes to the Scheme, came into effect on 22nd February 2022.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

10. This amendment supports the following Corporate Plan outcomes:
 - 1: People are safe and feel safe
 - 2: People enjoy good health and wellbeing

Conclusion

11. In response to a request from CHSCP to review relevant housing protocols relating to the assistance provided to households which suffer the traumatic death of a child, the City's Housing Allocations Scheme has been updated. The Scheme now explicitly states that, in these circumstances, families will be offered a Management Transfer, which is the highest level of priority for rehousing under the Scheme.

Appendices

- None

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