

Community & Children's Services Housing Service

Guidelines for Allocated Members

1. Background

- 1.1 The Allocated Members Scheme matches Members from the Community & Children's Services Committee to each of the City's social housing estates. There are eight Allocated Member positions, with some covering more than one small estates. It is possible for more than one Members to share the Allocated Member role on a large estate if they wish to do so.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Scheme is to:
 - Give residents and staff a named Member to 'champion' their estate;
 - Allow Members to take an interest in the estate, its residents and staff;
 - Develop a group of members with housing knowledge & experience to contribute to the CC&S Committee.
- 1.3 Allocated Members are appointed each year by the Chairman of the Housing Management Sub-Committee.

2. Role of the Allocated Member

- 2.1 The Allocated Member exists to champion the estate and its whole community, covering staff and all residents. This involves:
 - Making occasional visits to the estate and attending some events, to ensure familiarity with the estate, its residents and staff.
 - Promoting the interests of the estate within the City – raising its profile by drawing attention to new developments, initiatives and good practice.
 - Liaising with other departments, outside agencies, and home local authorities over matters which are of concern to the whole estate community. For example, a general rise in anti-social behaviour, affecting many residents on an estate might be helped by the involvement of the Allocated Member, working with managers, to encourage intervention from the police or home borough.
- 2.2 Allocated Members exist to champion the whole estate community, not the interests or issues of individual residents. If an individual attempts to raise an issue with an Allocated Member, they should be referred to local staff or managers. If the matter is a complaint, the resident must be referred to the formal complaints process.

Managers and staff cannot discuss individual residents with Allocated Members, for confidentiality reasons. Allocated Members should not normally meet privately with residents, or visit them in their homes, unless part of a formal visit with managers. The Allocated Member Scheme is not a forum through which residents can seek to challenge management decisions, and it is not appropriate for residents to request this of the Allocated Member, thus putting them in a difficult position.

- 2.3 There is a clear difference between the role of a Ward Member and that of an Allocated Member. A Ward Member has a democratic responsibility for protecting the interests of residents in his/her ward, and can, therefore, take up a matter with officers on behalf of an individual. Residents outside the City will have their own ward councillors whom they have elected to represent them, and who, therefore, can take up an issue on their behalf.

Allocated Members, however, have not been elected as democratic representatives, and, therefore, officers cannot discuss individual issues or complaints with them. The Allocated Member is selected to represent the estate as a whole, not individuals.

- 2.4 If an individual raises a personal issue with an Allocated Member, the Member will either:
- a) give the resident details of the appropriate local manager so that they can contact them, or
 - b) bring the matter to the attention of the local manager and ask them to contact the resident direct in order to resolve the issue through proper processes.

3. Responsibilities of Allocated Members

- 3.1 An Allocated Member makes an initial commitment to a familiarisation visit to the estate, to be shown around and to meet staff.
- 3.2 Following the familiarisation visit, the Allocated Member is expected to visit the estate on two occasions during the year. One of these occasions will be a formal estate walkabout, organised by the Area Manager and open to residents to take part. The other visit may be an informal one, or might be to attend the Annual General Meeting of a recognised Residents' Association, to chair an estate meeting, or to be at a social event for all residents.
- 3.3 Further visits to the estate are at the discretion of the Allocated Member. The Area Housing Manager should always be informed, as a matter of courtesy, when the Allocated Member proposes to visit the estate.
- 3.4 Officers will prepare a six-monthly report on activities on the estate and will circulate this to Allocated Members for comment in advance of it being presented to the Housing Sub-Committee, and referred to the Grand Committee. Allocated Members should be prepared to answer questions on any matter included in the estate at the appropriate Committee meeting.

3.5 The contact details for Allocated Members will be displayed on notices on the estate and in relevant publications. From time to time, Allocated Members may be asked to contribute a piece for the estate newsletter or other publication.

4. Support for Allocated Members

4.1 The Area Housing Manager responsible for an estate will contact the Allocated Member at least on a quarterly basis to discuss issues and activities on the estate.

4.2 The Area Housing Manager will also e-mail the Allocated Member at the end of each month with a short update on estate matters.

4.3 The Area Housing Manager will also contact the Allocated Member if there are any significant issues on the estate, over and above those which are purely management matters. Examples might be an emergency situation on the estate such as a fire, flood or major crime.

4.4 Allocated Members will be informed about forthcoming estate events as so as these are arranged, and will be given the dates of estate walkabouts at least six months in advance.

4.5 Briefing events will be held for Allocated Members at appropriate times. These might be to discuss matters of national housing policy and how they affect estates, or to talk about a general issue.