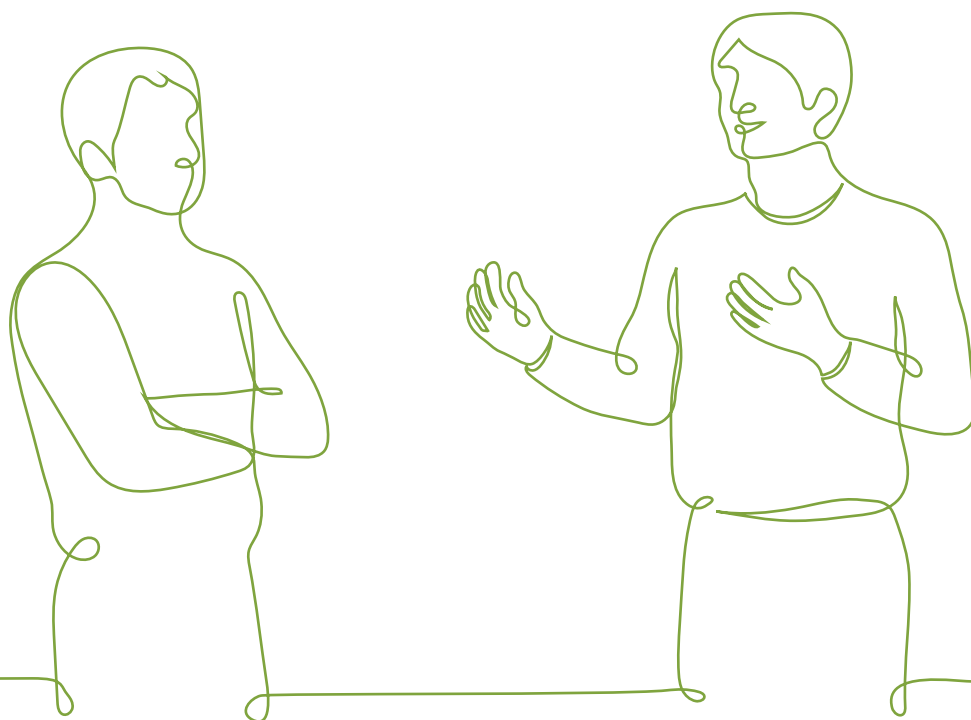




Broadacres

Allocations Policy

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VERSION CONTROL AND DOCUMENT GOVERNANCE

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1.0	October 2021	Policy adopted and implemented
2.0	October 2024	Inclusion of a policy statement Eligibility Homeowners Eligibility Colleagues, Board Members and their Close Relatives Applicants who are not eligible, housing related debt Applicants who are not eligible, other breaches of tenancy conditions Applicants who are not eligible Properties subject to an age criteria Applicants who are not eligible, previous ineligibility Verification of circumstances Section 106, and planning conditions and local authority allocations Cancelling applications Vulnerability Statement Annex A – Financial criteria

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Introduction

Broadacres owns almost 7,000 properties within the areas covered by:

- Darlington Borough Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Leeds City Council
- Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
- North Yorkshire Council
- Stockton Borough Council
- Westmorland and Furness Council
- York City Council

We are a partner with North Yorkshire Council in North Yorkshire Home Choice. Beyond Housing and Yorkshire Housing are also members of North Yorkshire Home Choice. We have adopted the North Yorkshire Home Choice common allocation policy. This policy outlines additional criteria specific to Broadacres:

- On eligibility, due to our charitable status.
- On allocations which are not made through North Yorkshire Home Choice and where the general principles of the North Yorkshire policy are not applied.

This policy does not cover allocations to properties let at intermediate, sub-market or market rent.

We will always allocate out properties in a fair and transparent way, taking into account the needs of tenants and prospective tenants into account and, once allocated a property, will support tenants to maintain their tenancy. We will provide the most suitable type of tenancy, and accommodation required for the applicant's circumstances.

Eligibility

Broadacres has charitable status which means that applicants must meet certain criteria in order to be eligible to be allocated one of our properties.

These criteria are:

- they are aged 16 or over and are having difficulty finding or sustaining suitable accommodation because of their financial circumstances; or
- they need specifically designed or adapted accommodation because of a mental or physical need and are unable to buy or rent such a property within their means; or
- they need supported accommodation; or
- they are an existing tenant of Broadacres.

Financial circumstances

Applicants can only be allocated accommodation if they do not have the resources to obtain accommodation on the open market which meets their reasonable housing needs. We have set general levels of income and assets based on the private rented market in the local authority areas where we have properties. Annex A gives the current figures. However, we reserve the right to carry out further investigations into an applicant's financial status in order to determine whether they are a proper charitable beneficiary.

16 and 17 year olds

We will only make an allocation to a 16 or 17 year old if:

- they are a 'looked after' child as defined by section 20 of the Children's Act 1989 or a care leaver ready for independent living; and
- they have an identified trustee who can hold any tenancy on their behalf until the age of 18 (trustees can be a person or an organisation and will not have a financial liability); and
- they have an appropriate support package or have been assessed as being able to sustain a tenancy.

Properties subject to an age criteria

We have certain accommodation where an age restriction may apply due to its design, facilities and proximity to amenities. If this applies, it will be clearly defined within the property advert.

Where accommodation is allocated with a specific age criterion, we may also allocate to applicants outside of this age criteria if, because of their health and wellbeing, they particularly need the facilities of this type of accommodation. Such persons are likely to be in receipt of high-rate Disability Living Allowance / higher component of Personal Independence Payment for mobility. This may be waived in exceptional cases.

Specifically designed or adapted accommodation

If applicants have a physical or mental need and their own home is unsuitable and cannot be adapted to meet those needs, we will assess whether they have sufficient resources and whether there are suitable properties to meet their needs on the open market. Such applicants may not be required to meet the financial criteria outlined in Annex A.

Owners

If an applicant currently owns or jointly owns a property whether they reside in the property or not, or resides with a household member who is a homeowner,

and the homeowner is included in the application , they will not normally be eligible to be allocated one of our properties unless they need specifically designed or adapted accommodation as outlined above. However, in certain exceptional circumstances we may be able to consider such an applicant who is unable to resolve their housing need.

Examples of such circumstances are:

- Severe financial hardship – for example, if repossession is imminent.
- Relationship breakdown – for example if the applicant has left or has to leave the property and would be determined to be statutory homeless or where the applicant is unable to sell their property due to their legal responsibilities to their children.
- Overcrowding – if the applicant is unable to sell the home they own due to market conditions/negative equity and purchase a suitably sized property.
- Health and wellbeing – if the applicant has a serious and enduring illness which makes it impossible for them to live in the home they own.
- Other cases of exceptional proven hardship.

In all cases evidence of the applicant's circumstances and that rehousing is the only option will be required from appropriate agencies. We may also require the applicant to have an affordability assessment undertaken by a Broadacres colleague. We will only grant a fixed term tenancy.

Supported accommodation

We have a number of schemes such as extra care, sheltered, a women's refuge, and schemes for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems. Applicants for these schemes must need the support provided and will undergo a separate support assessment.

Existing tenants

Existing tenants will not normally be allowed to move if they are currently in breach of their tenancy conditions, such as owing money, engaging in antisocial behaviour or failing to look after their home. These may only be overlooked in exceptional circumstances where we consider such a move is the best option to resolve an issue affecting either the tenant who is moving or neighbouring residents.

Colleagues, board members and their close relatives

Colleagues, board members and their close relatives will be considered in the same way as all other applicants. However, in order to ensure probity:

- all applicants must declare any such status or relationship; and
- the applicant/relative of the applicant must not influence the allocation process; and
- any allocation will be approved by a senior officer and
- any allocation will be included in the register of payments and benefits;
- the board of Broadacres will make the final decision (in the case of a board member or person connected to a board member) in accordance with the conflicts of interest provisions in our constitution and our conflicts of interest policy

Applicants who are not eligible

Some applicants may not be eligible to be allocated a property because:

- they owe money (by way of rent arrears or other debts) to ourselves or other landlords (including social housing landlords and private landlords) and have not made or are not maintaining an appropriate agreement to repay; or
- they have breached the terms of a current or previous tenancy (such as causing antisocial behaviour) with us, or they have breached the terms of a current or previous tenancy with another landlord (including a social housing landlord or private landlord) and that landlord has started formal action against them; or
- they have been violent or threatened violence towards our colleagues, board members or contractors working for Broadacres or other agencies; or
- they have an unspent criminal conviction which may threaten the stability of a community; or
- they are currently on a demoted, starter or introductory tenancy; or
- they are deemed to have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances with the intention of increasing their housing priority; or
- they have knowingly or recklessly provide false information in relation to the claim of housing need, including knowingly withholding information, and which would have rendered them ineligible had this information been provided or not omitted; or
- they have been offered two suitable properties within a 12 month period and have refused those offers without reasonable cause; or
- they are assessed as needing support to enable them to hold and maintain a tenancy and there is no appropriate support in place; or
- they are within the first year of a social housing tenancy, unless there has been a significant change in circumstances which makes the current accommodation unsuitable to remain in, which will be subject to assessment and approval by us; or
- a financial assessment determines that they are unable to sustain the tenancy.

We will consider individual circumstances in making any decision not to allocate a property.

Multiple applications are not allowed and an applicant can only appear on one application. If an applicant is already registered, they will have to decide which application they wish to continue and all others will be cancelled.

If an applicant has previously been assessed as ineligible, they may make a further application if they believe their circumstances have changed.

Waiting list

We will not normally hold our own waiting list. In addition to North Yorkshire Home Choice, we also participate in other choice-based lettings schemes including:

- Tees Valley Home Finder which covers Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton on Tees.
- Leeds Homes which covers the Leeds local authority area.

In the areas where choice-based lettings schemes exist, applicants will register and bid for our properties which will be advertised through the scheme. In those local authority areas where there are no choice-based lettings scheme applicants will register with the local authority who will then nominate applicants to Broadacres.

Allocation of properties

In the local authority areas covered by North Yorkshire Home Choice we will allocate our properties according to the common allocation policy.

In other local authority areas, the local authorities have nomination rights to a certain percentage of our properties. We will aim to have nomination agreements with these local authorities which set out the principles and procedures for the nomination rights. However, in accordance with section 170 of the Housing Act 1996, allocations will be made subject to the eligibility outlined in this policy and in accordance with the local authority's allocation scheme (or that adopted by the choice based letting scheme).

In these areas we will also normally allocate properties over and above the nominations rights percentage in accordance with the local authority's or choice based lettings scheme, but reserve the right to allocate the properties to other applicants. If this is the case the properties will be allocated in accordance with the North Yorkshire common allocation policy.

Size and type of accommodation offered

Annex B shows the size of property that applicants are eligible for based on

the household composition.

Verification of circumstances

We will verify an applicant's circumstances prior to making them an offer. This will usually include a home visit undertaken by ourselves or an agency acting on our behalf.

If the applicant is not a current Broadacres' tenant, we will also seek references from current or former landlords and make enquiries with other agencies, as required. This will include a credit reference. The purpose of the credit reference is to verify circumstances and identify if further support is required to sustain the tenancy.

It is the responsibility of an applicant to notify any change of circumstances which may affect their application and/or eligibility.

Mutual exchanges

We will consider requests from tenants to exchange their home with another tenant of Broadacres or another housing association or local authority. A separate policy covers mutual exchanges in more detail.

Local lettings initiatives

We may adopt a local lettings initiative for a defined area or group of properties. A local lettings initiative is introduced to take account of local circumstances. Examples of this may be the initial letting of a new housing development to ensure a balanced and sustainable community or to address problems of anti-social behaviour in an area.

Section 106, planning conditions and local authority allocations

Certain properties are covered by section 106 agreements or other planning conditions. Some agreements specify a minimum age. Other agreements initially restrict offers to applicants with a local connection to the area. The local connection is defined in different ways and is specific to the property. We will let our properties in accordance with such agreements.

Some local authorities' own allocations policies may include a local connection provision and if we are providing accommodation in an area where this is the case, and where we are in partnership with such local authority, we may let our properties in accordance with the terms of such allocation policies.

Succession and assignments

We may allow an existing occupier to succeed, take over the tenancy or become a joint tenant of the property that they currently live in. Other than the statutory right of succession (for example to a spouse or civil partner where there hasn't already been a succession) any person who is allocated a tenancy in this way must meet our eligibility criteria. A separate policy covers succession and assignments in more detail.

Equality and diversity

We will not treat any person (or group of people) applying for housing less favourably than any other person (or group of people) because of their sex, sexuality, marital status, responsibilities for dependents, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or faith, political beliefs, age, social class, disability, or unrelated criminal convictions.

Cancelling applications

Applications will be cancelled in the following circumstances:

- A failure to provide verification information within the relevant timescale
- A failure to advise of a change of address within the relevant timescale
- At the applicant's request
- An applicant has been rehoused by another landlord
- An applicant has purchased a property and is now a homeowner
- A sole applicant has died
- Contact lost with an applicant as they have moved address
- An applicant has provided false information and/or deliberately withheld information
- An applicant has been found to have deliberately worsened their circumstances
- An applicant has declined two suitable offers of accommodation

Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision to cancel their application. Please see below for the review procedure.

Review procedure

Any applicant who believes their application has not been dealt with in accordance with Broadacres allocations policy, can request a review. This will be undertaken by a colleague more senior to the person who made the original decision. Following this decision, if they remain dissatisfied, they can seek a further review, which will be dealt with by either the Head of Customer Experience Housing and Support or Customer Experience Director.

Any applicant who believes their application has not been dealt with in accordance with a choice based lettings scheme that we allocate under, such as North Yorkshire Home Choice, may request a review in line with the relevant schemes Allocation Policy.

We will advise the applicant of the correct procedure to follow or if they need to follow our complaints procedure should the matter relate to a failure to deliver the actual service expected.

Vulnerable customers statement

We are committed to developing an equal and diverse culture where people are valued from all sections of society. We therefore oppose any form of discrimination in service delivery and employment practice. We aim to treat all customers fairly and we will look to tailor our policies, procedures and services to meet the needs of all our customers.

Where we identify a customer who is vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, we will look to make reasonable adjustments to our services accordingly to meet the needs of those individuals. This may include altering the way we communicate with a customer or adjusting the service we offer to that person. Each case will be judged on its individual merits to avoid a one size fits all approach. We will monitor our services regularly to ensure we are meeting all our customers' needs and make any adjustments required to improve and enhance the service we deliver.

Annex A

Financial criteria

Applicants will not be eligible to be considered for a property if a combination of their gross income and savings/equity means they could afford to rent or buy a property on the open market, other than the exceptions outlined in this policy.

The North Yorkshire Allocation policy has determined that applicants with a combination of income, savings and equity in excess of £60,000 will not normally qualify to join the register. Broadacres has the same eligibility criteria.

If you apply to another partner Local Authority, they may have their own financial eligibility criteria which you will need to satisfy.

All offers will be subject to an affordability assessment, we may refuse an offer of accommodation on the grounds of affordability.

Annex B

Guide to the size of property offered

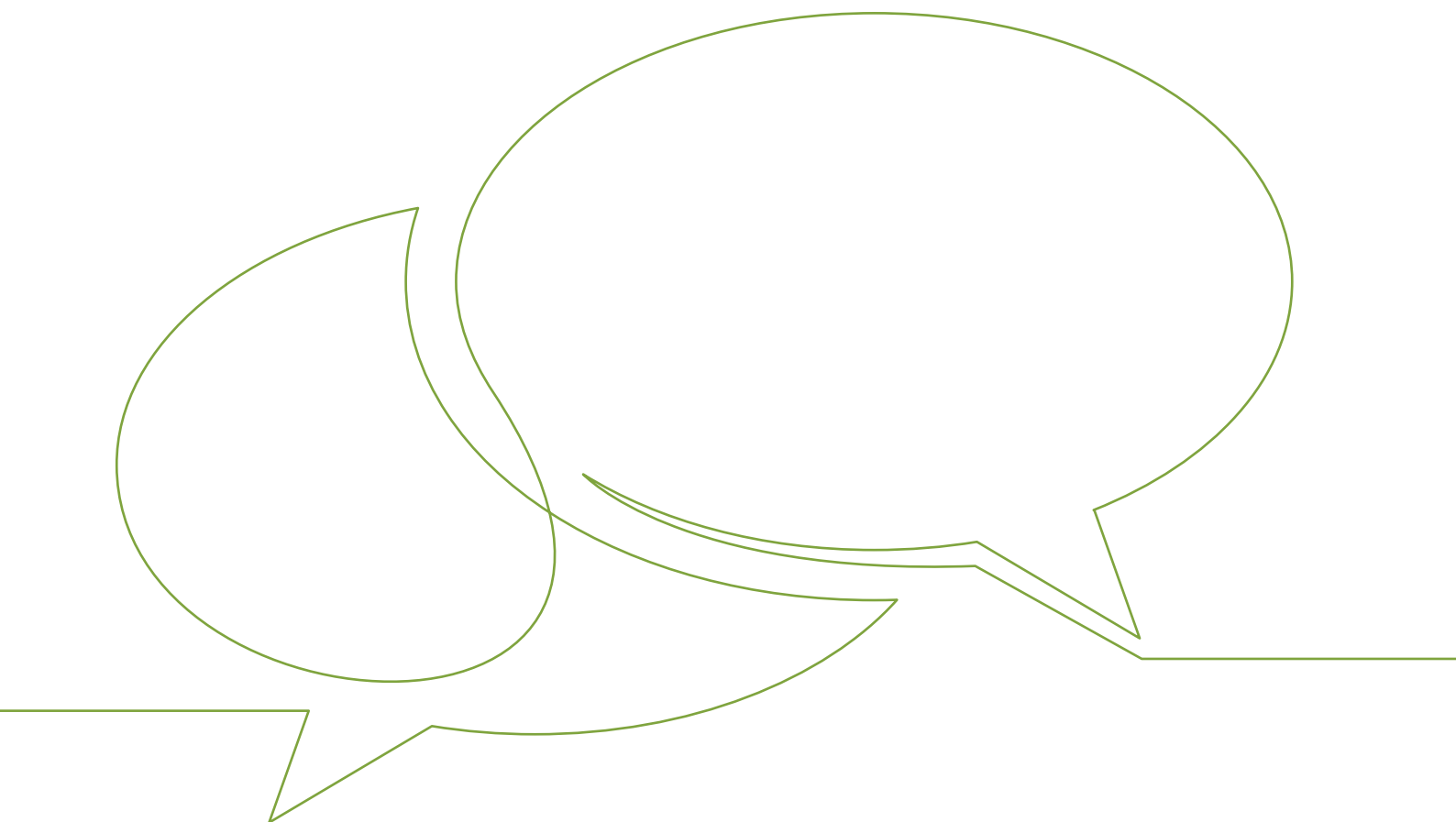
The table shows the minimum size of properties that applicants are eligible for based on their household composition. Applicants may bid/be offered a property with one bedroom more than the minimum if this ensures that we are still able to make the best use of our housing stock. Flexibility will be used as follows:

- Single people and couples may be offered 3-bedroom properties above ground floor.
- If the size of the bedrooms are particularly large or small.
- If there is a health need for a member of the household to have their own room.
- If the applicant requests smaller accommodation and it will not result in overcrowding.

In cases of joint custody of a child or children, such as where children have special needs, or if there is little demand, we will offer a property of a size that allows children who already have an existing home with one parent to be provided with another to live with the other parent.

Our policy aligns to the North Yorkshire HomeChoice size criteria, any changes will be reflected in our own policy.

	Bedsit/ studio	1 bed home	2 bed home	3 bed home	4 bed home
One adult.	✓	✓			
A couple	✓	✓			
Two adults (not a couple)			✓		
Three adults.			✓	✓	
One / Two adults with one child.			✓		
One / Two adults with 2 children, both the same sex or both aged under 10.			✓		
One / Two adults with 2 children of different sexes, one aged 10 years or over.				✓	
One / Two adults with 3 children				✓	
One / Two adults with 4 children				✓	
One / Two adults with 5+ children					✓



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Broadacres Housing Association Limited is an exempt charity. It is a registered provider of social housing (**registration number LH4014**), regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing, and is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, **society number 27656R**.