



Policy: Allocations Policy
(Including Nominations, Transfers & Mutual Exchanges)

First Approved: March 1997

This policy is reviewed annually at the January meeting of Management Committee.

Key Housing

Allocations Policy

1. Background

Key provides housing (and support) for people with a range of needs throughout a number of local authority areas in West and Central Scotland and also in the Highlands and Dumfries & Galloway.

Historically the majority of Key's tenancies have been allocated to people with learning difficulties, although there is an increasing trend for allocations to be made to a wider range of individuals. This trend is also reflected in a widening of the groups of people where Key is being asked to provide support services through tenders and framework agreements put in place by local authorities for support services of this type.

As at April 2015, within its own stock, Key provided a total of 780 tenancies in 712 properties (the difference in these numbers being a number of shared properties occupied by more than one tenant).

In total 660 of these tenancies are let to people who require support (supported by Key and other organisations).

The balance of Key's stock, totalling 120 properties (with the same number of tenancies), is let on an unsupported basis.

2. Housing with Support

Key offers nomination rights to local authorities for this accommodation once it has been determined that a vacancy will be offered for this form of allocation. Referrals are received from the social work department and allocations are made on the basis of the needs of the individuals as agreed with the local authority. Key expects that funding for a support service will be in place prior to an allocation being made.

Key owns accommodation in which other support agencies provide a support service. Vacancies which arise in those properties will initially be offered to the local authority for continued use as supported housing and again referrals and allocations will be made in agreement with both the authority and the other support provider.

3. Housing without Support

As context, Key's 120 unsupported tenancies are thinly spread across Scotland (with almost 50% located in the two local authority areas of South Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire). It is likely that as these unsupported tenancies become vacant and available for let over time they will be offered as housing with support to the relevant local authority.

On the basis of the above Key does not hold a waiting list for housing without support. Instead applications are sought from the relevant local authority (or common housing register) and any applicants approaching Key directly are advised of this.

Key acknowledges that it may be required to take nominations from authorities where individuals are deemed to be homeless and in need of urgent re-housing and, where required, enters into local protocols under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. As the majority of Key's tenant group is vulnerable, the agreements would reflect the sensitivity of allocations and nominations are selected accordingly.

In circumstances where Key has been unable to obtain nominations from either the local authority or a local housing RSL (with the agreement of the authority), and a protracted void period is anticipated, the vacancy may be advertised in the local press.

4. Nomination Arrangements for Housing without Support

Key normally gives the local authority all nominations on all re-let stock after any transfer or special management cases have been implemented.

Given Key's minimal housing stock, local authorities have in the main not sought to enter into formal nomination arrangements with each authority. The arrangements will clarify the circumstances under which nominations will be sought and will govern any situations in which the Association operates a veto on a nomination.

To minimise void periods Key asks the nominating authority (or RSL) to provide information on nominees within 5 working days (although more time may elapse before the information is obtained). This includes confirmation that it is a live application and the applicant is interested in the particular area.

For any one vacancy four nominations are normally considered appropriate,

although it is increasingly for fewer nominations to be made by a local authority and it is the practice of some authorities to solely refer one person at a time.

On receipt of the nominations, Key writes to the nominees and arranges a time to visit them in their own home. This enables Key to establish a clear picture of the current living situation and to give out as much information as possible. An application form is also completed at this stage. Points are then awarded in relation to the existing accommodation in line with Key's own allocation policy.

5. Allocation Procedure for Tenancies Allocated without Support

Key allocates on the basis of need as determined by its points system.

The successful applicant is asked to view the property and make a decision within 2 working days. Once the property has been viewed and accepted the tenant is expected to sign the tenancy agreement and move in as soon as possible.

Unsuccessful nominees are notified of Key's decision within one week of the visit where possible.

As Key mainly provides accommodation for people who are vulnerable because of their disability, it reserves the right to contact the existing or previous landlords for information which may be material to the allocation of the accommodation. This would include information on arrears and any history of anti-social behaviour, including harassment or violence, drugs misuse or criminal activities. Where there is evidence of the applicant having a record of anti-social behaviour, over a period of time, then the application will not be considered.

An allocation will only be made if the arrears are cleared prior to the tenant taking up the tenancy, or arrears do not exceed one months rent due or there is an arrangement in place with the previous landlord to clear the outstanding debt and there is evidence that payments are being made on a regular basis.

The applicant is asked to sign a mandate included in the application form, which confirms that the permission is given to access information held on previous tenancies. Where applicants are living at a care of address, they are asked to supply proof of residence at that address, e.g. benefit books, regular correspondence, letter from an employer or doctor. Where no evidence can be provided Key reserves the right not to pursue the application.

Where external reports or references indicate that the applicant has given

misleading information, an offer may be withheld or withdrawn.

If asylum seekers are nominated they have to confirm that they have the right to remain in the country.

6. Points System (Housing without Support)

In assessing each applicant their current housing circumstances will be taken into account and points awarded on the basis of the following criteria. Documentary evidence will be sought by Key as required to evidence these factors.

Criteria	Factor	Points
Lacking Amenities	Lack of a WC	15
	Lack of piped water	10
	Lack of cooking facilities	5
	Lack of bath/shower	5
Physical Condition of Property	Evidence of untreated dampness, where applicant cannot use a room or rooms	5
	Evidence of serious structural problems e.g. water penetration through room, subsidence or property not wind and water-tight	5
Overcrowding	Evidence of overcrowding:	
	Lacking 1 bedroom	3
	Lacking 2 bedrooms	5
	Lacking 2+ bedroom	10
	No access to permanent bedspace(s)	15
Sharing Amenities	Bedroom	10
	Kitchen	5
	Bathroom	5
	Living Room	5
Under-occupation	Where the applicant is under occupying their current accommodation	5
Insecurity of Tenure	Threatened with homelessness within 60 days	10
Social or Environmental Conditions	Harassment due to race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability or age	8
	Domestic Abuse	8
	Environmental conditions which are out with the applicants control such as extensive vandalism, drug abuse	6
	Where a medical condition is being exacerbated	

	by the applicant's current living arrangements e.g. heart condition, asthma, mental health	6
Family Commitment	Where an applicant needs to move to care for or receive care from a family member or relative	4
Employment	Where an applicant has an offer of employment and requires to move	4

In line with Key's Equal Opportunities all applicants will be treated equitably irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability or age

When allocating tenancies without support, Key will take account of existing supported tenants living in properties adjacent to the vacant property. In some circumstances, where the applicant is considered to not be an appropriate person for the vacancy, then the Key reserves the right to allocate to someone who has fewer points. These situations are principally where existing tenants would be deemed to be vulnerable or their support needs could be increased if the tenancy were allocated. Where a decision is made in these circumstances, the case will be reported to the Management Committee

Where applicants have scored the same points under the terms of the policy, Key reserves the right to allocate to the individual who has best indicated that they have a positive approach to their supported neighbours.

A pre-allocation form is completed which indicates the level of points awarded. Applicants are advised that they can contact Key to ask for confirmation of the points awarded and the reasons why an allocation was not made.

In the event that the applicant is not satisfied with the explanation, they are advised that an appeal can be lodged with the Management Committee.

TRANSFERS AND MUTUAL EXCHANGES

7. Transfers

Existing tenants can register for transfers within their existing development or in other Key developments. Existing tenants will be considered where their current accommodation is unsuitable in terms of size, condition or family circumstances.

When a vacancy occurs, reference will be made to any current transfer applications.

In the majority of situations a transfer applicant will take priority and vacant property will be allocated the vacant property (as the majority of transfers are sought by supported tenants on the basis of their vulnerability and/or unsuitability of an existing living situation).

Tenants in arrears may be considered for transfers, at Key's discretion. An allocation will only be made if the arrears are cleared prior to the tenant taking up the tenancy, or arrears do not exceed one months rent due or there is an arrangement in place with Key to clear the outstanding debt and there is evidence that payments are being made on a regular basis.

If, following a property inspection, there is evidence of neglect or misuse of the house or flat, then a transfer may not be considered, until the necessary work is done by the tenant to bring the property up to an acceptable standard.

8. Mutual Exchanges

Mutual exchanges are considered by Key. These may be within Key's own stock or with tenants from other public sector housing. Consideration will also be given to tenants living in private rented housing.

Key takes no part in instigating mutual exchanges between parties. When an exchange is being proposed the details should be notified to Key by the tenant proposing the exchange and both parties will be interviewed prior to any exchange being concluded. No exchange can take place without written agreement from both Key and the other landlord involved.

In relation to arrears, an incoming transfer will only be agreed if the arrears are cleared prior to the incoming tenant taking up the tenancy, or arrears do not exceed one months rent due or there is an arrangement in place with the previous landlord to clear the outstanding debt and there is evidence that payments are being made on a regular basis.

Where a property has not been maintained to an acceptable standard, an exchange will not be considered until any necessary repairs have been undertaken by the tenant.

Key reserves the right to seek references. An exchange will not be approved will not be made where there is a history of anti-social behaviour.