



Allocations and Lettings Policy

Owning Manager: Sally-Anne Underhill – Head of Housing Services	
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Audit Log

Date of change	Who updated policy	Details of the change made
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Oct 16	Kuldip Kaur-Walters	Customer Service Committee

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Allocations Policy

1 Introduction to Allocations and Lettings

1.1. Policy Statement

asra Housing Group (for the rest of this policy known as *asra*) is a leading housing and regeneration agency with a straightforward purpose '*to deliver great homes and great services*'. asra aims to be recognised within the sector and by our customers as having high standards whilst keeping to asra's core belief of serving diverse communities on their doorsteps. Our aim in allocating and letting homes is to provide quality, affordable homes and services to both specific and wider members of the community who are in need, and to allocate and let these homes in a fair and transparent way. We also aim to increase prospective tenant choice in housing and encourage greater tenant mobility across Local Authority boundaries.

asra is committed to developing and maintaining strong and productive relationships with our Local Authority Partners as well as other Registered Providers of social housing in order to ensure that we meet the local housing needs of each community where we have homes.

1.2. Contacting asra

Please contact asra to discuss any housing needs or any aspect of this policy.

The Allocations and Lettings Team can be contacted in the following ways:

✉ e-mail: enquiries@asra.org.uk

🌐 Internet: www.asra.org.uk

✍ Write to: Allocations and Lettings

asra Housing Group
3 Bede Island Road
Leicester
LE2 7EA

☎ Phone: 0116 257 6716

1.3. Objectives

asra's aim is to deliver a fair and transparent allocations service to our prospective tenants through a range of tenures and access routes that will meet their needs on an individual basis.

In this policy we count all members of an application as prospective tenants.

We seek to ensure that our *Allocations and Lettings Policy (2016)* is efficient, effective, and able to demonstrate best use of our stock by:

- Allowing flexibility in the allocations of our properties at a local level to ensure the needs within our communities are met, including but not limited to: ensuring in areas of high deprivation that we let properties to prospective tenants of mixed incomes that will contribute to local economic growth; maximising choice of accommodation available and mobility for prospective tenants by offering access to a range of housing options including a range of tenures and access routes;
- Fulfilling our statutory duty to assist Local Authorities in meeting their strategic housing functions by nominating a percentage of our homes to local prospective tenants in housing need as per Local Authority Nominations Service Level Agreements.

asra will, when allocating its properties, take advantage of the following flexibilities within the Localism Act 2011:

- New powers to grant assured shorthold tenancy agreements for a fixed term of 5 years preceded by a probationary term that can last for a maximum term of 18 months;
- Greater control over who is admitted to our Register, and who qualifies for an allocation of accommodation by us;
- Supporting greater tenant mobility across the social housing sector;
- Having regard to Local Authority Tenancy Strategies in the areas we own and manage homes

asra will allocate its properties in compliance with all relevant government legislation and guidance including, but not limited to:

- Housing & Planning Act 2016
- Localism Act 2012
- The Housing Act 1996
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- The Homelessness Act 2002
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

- The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings - A Code of Guidance, 2008.
- Fair & Flexible: Statutory Guidance on Social Housing Allocations for Local Authorities in England
- Government Housing Standards
- CLG Allocation of Accommodation: Statutory Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England, June 2012 (hereafter termed "The Code of Guidance 2012") (allocations is deemed a public function, Weaver v L&Q 2009).
- The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012;
- HCA & CLG: Affordable Homes Framework 2011-15
- Local Authority Tenancy strategies, where published
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Decent Homes guidance
- Allocations Code of Guidance 2012;
- The Welfare Reform Act 2012.
- Immigration (Residential Accommodation)(Prescribed Requirements & codes of Practice)(Amendment) Order 2016

asra will allocate its properties in line with all relevant strategies, policies and procedures including but not limited to:

- Corporate Strategy;
- Group Tenancy and Affordable Rent Policy;
- Group Income Management Policy;
- Group Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Group Customer Involvement Action Plan
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy;
- Tenancy Change Policy;
- Mutual Exchange Policy;
- Decant Policy;

1.4. Lettings Not Covered By this Policy

There are instances where this Policy does not apply. Some lettings are excluded from the terms of this scheme; these include:

- the renewal of a fixed term tenancy to a current tenant in the same property;
- offers made to tenants of asra in response to an application where for example, to tenants being decanted on a temporary basis, or to under-occupying successors;
- transfers of asra that are made for housing management purposes;
- transfers of tenancies made by Court Order under the Matrimonial

- Causes Act 1973 or other family legislation;
- assignments of, and successions to, asra Tenancies;
 - mutual exchanges of housing tenancies;
 - offers of tenancies made under reciprocal arrangements with other local housing authorities or Consortiums/ Agencies.
 - lettings to properties leased by asra to providers of supported accommodation and subsequent tenancies issued to customers of such properties;
 - lettings to other supported housing
 - lettings of temporary accommodation to statutory homeless households;
 - sensitive lettings e.g. public protection cases; and
 - Where a court decision is made about a tenancy, for example under Family Court Jurisdiction;

Circumstances such as those listed above are governed by the relevant asra Policies which take priority over the *Allocations & Lettings Policy (2016)*.

In these instances we will explain why this Policy does not apply, and advise the applicant which Policy relates to their circumstances.

Allocations Policy

2 Becoming a Perspective Tenant at asra

2.1 Access to asra Housing

asra recognises that it operates in communities within which there is wide social diversity. We will work closely with tenants, local authorities, and relevant agencies to ensure that the Allocations & Lettings process is accessible and is compliant with asra's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2016-2019)* and *Respecting Difference Policy (2016)*.

asra's *Allocations and Lettings Policy (2016)* is divided into three broad areas:

- Affordable Housing
- Housing for Older People
- Supported Housing to include Extra Care

In order to offer maximum choice, we will offer a number of access routes in which prospective tenants may apply to asra for properties. This is detailed in Section 2.2. asra will allocate some properties via management agreements with other Agencies; for example, for the use of 'Move-On' accommodation.

To enable prospective tenants to have clear information and equal access to the Allocations & Lettings Service we will publish clear information on our website, www.asra.org.uk and will provide a range of formats and languages upon request.

asra will house prospective tenants in order to meet a housing requirement or need. In order to enable asra to meet these needs a range of allocating methods are utilised. Please see Section 2.14 and Section 3.

2.2 Methods Used to Allocate Housing

Asra have 5 methods of Allocating Housing:

- Choice Based Lettings operated by asra
- Local Nominations
- Supported Housing Allocation
- Agency Referrals
- Management Moves

2.3 Choice Based Lettings operated by asra

asra operates a Choice Based Letting Scheme. A maximum of 50% of our properties will be allocated in this way.

asra's Choice Based Lettings Scheme is open to all prospective tenants that can demonstrate a need for housing. A simple registration process and assessment would be required.

Prospective tenants in need of housing will also be encouraged to contact the Local Authority to register for the opportunity to obtain a home in their area. This will give prospective tenants a wider choice of housing options with a range of housing providers including asra and the Local Authority.

When the waiting list is open (see Section 2.3.1) anyone can complete an application form to determine if they are eligible for an allocation of accommodation with asra. Application forms will only be accepted via an online form which is completed by the prospective tenant. Applications can be discussed via telephone or office interview whenever an alternative to the online format is requested.

We are able to support prospective tenants to complete applications or provide application forms upon request in large-print, braille or languages other than English.

Once the application is processed prospective tenants will learn if they are eligible and qualify to join asra's waiting list (see Section 2.8) and what Priority Category the perspective tenant is assigned to (see Section 2.14)

2.3.1 Management of the Waiting List

asra's waiting list has two modes; 'open' and 'closed'. When the waiting list is 'open' anyone over the age of 18 is free to apply. asra only take prospective tenants between the ages of 16 and 18 in exceptional circumstances. However, at times asra will need to 'close' the waiting list. This occurs when the number of perspective tenants on the waiting list far exceeds the stock availability that asra have available. Please see Section 3.1.

When the waiting list is closed, asra may take the decision to partially open the waiting list for some properties. These reasons include, but are not exclusive to:

- the demand for properties in that geography is low
- the numbers of potential prospective tenants is insufficient in relation to particular type of properties (for example 1 Bedroom flats)
- A property is difficult to let. Please see Section 3.6.

2.4 Nominations via the Local Authority

In all Local Authority areas where asra own and manage homes, we will maintain Nominations Service Level Agreements whereby prospective tenants can be nominated directly from the Local Authority for vacancies as outlined in Appendix 1.

The Local Authority's assessment of an applicant's priority requirements for housing will generally, but will not always be accepted upon receipt of all documentation relating to the prospective tenants housing needs. However in order to ensure consistency and fairness towards all prospective tenants a thorough verification process of the applicant and their housing needs will still be undertaken. All prospective tenants, regardless of the access route, will be subject to the same verification process set out in this Policy (Section 4.5 and Section 4.11). When a nomination is refused the reasons why the decision has been made will be given in writing to the Local Authority.

For more details on our Local Authority Nomination Agreements, please see Appendix 1.

2.5 Supported Housing Allocation

Supported schemes are managed by asra's Independent Living Team.

Due to the specialised nature of Supported Housing, the primary source of prospective tenants for asra Supported Housing Schemes is direct referrals from the relevant professional bodies, services, or the Local Authority.

Extra Care Living is available to prospective tenants with support needs as identified by the commissioning Local Authority. Therefore, the eligibility criteria for Extra Care Living require prospective tenants to meet the terms outlined in the nominations / commissioning agreements.

If an applicant's circumstances require that they seek supported housing as an option for accommodation, the Lettings Team or the Independent Living Team will provide information on possible referrals to the relevant schemes for housing.

2.6 Agency Referrals

asra reserves the right to operate Service Level Agreements with a range of Agencies and Social Housing Providers in order to assist in re-housing some of their clients. These Agreements are made in accordance with all relevant Good Practice Guidance and Legislation and are carefully considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure that we are making best use of existing stock whilst ensuring a balanced and sustainable community.

asra maintains service level agreements with agencies to include Compass, Probation, and Veterans Nominations Schemes etc. Furthermore, asra maintains Agency and Consortium Agreements whereby Management

Agreements outline respective roles and responsibilities to include the agreed allocation process.

2.7 Management Moves

In some extreme cases asra may make a management decision to let a property outside of a Housing Register or Local Authority Choice Based Lettings Scheme. This will occur in circumstances where the applicant's need to be re-housed will not be able to be met via the Housing Register, or via participation in a Local Authority CBL scheme and/or within the timescales required. When a property is let by this method we will notify our Local Authority partners so that the let still occurs in a transparent way. We will also provide feedback on our website. For more details on Management Moves, please see asra's *Management Moves Policy 2016*.

2.8 Eligibility and Qualification

All prospective tenants will be assessed to establish their eligibility for an allocation and that they qualify to Register on asra's housing lists both at the point of application and at the point of allocation.

2.8.1 Ineligible Prospective Tenants

asra will not allocate accommodation to people who are ineligible as identified in the *Allocations Code of Guidance (2012)*. If a person is ineligible then he/she cannot be allocated social housing accommodation.

Ineligibility due to Immigration Status

Prospective tenants are ineligible for an allocation of accommodation under the following circumstances:

- the applicant(s) is a person from abroad and subject to immigration control with the exception of those persons prescribed by the Secretary of State as subject to immigration control but nonetheless eligible for an allocation as set out in The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 and/or any subsequent amendments;
- the applicant(s) is a person from abroad who is not subject to immigration control who is not habitually resident in the asra's property area

There are no restrictions to including a person subject to immigration control as part of the household of an eligible applicant.

Those subject to immigration control are not restricted from accessing Low-Cost Home Ownership schemes provided that they are unable to afford suitable accommodation on the open market and can secure a mortgage. Prospective tenants who are ineligible for social rented housing due to their

immigration status who wish to be considered for such schemes should contact the relevant Homebuy Agency for their area.

Furthermore, persons are not eligible for an allocation of accommodation in the following circumstances:

- For committing an indictable offence in the vicinity of the home and still posing a threat to the community;
- For causing damage to the property or allowing the property to deteriorate so that this behaviour would entitle the landlord to possession under Ground 13, Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988;
- For obtaining a tenancy by deception so that this behaviour would entitle the landlord to possession under Ground 17, Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988;
- Paying money illegally to obtain a tenancy;
- Being a perpetrator of domestic abuse so that this behaviour would entitle the landlord to possession under Ground 14A, Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988;
- Any other breach of tenancy that would entitle the landlord to possession under a Ground in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988;

Prospective tenants found to be ineligible for an allocation of social housing due to their immigration status will not be accepted onto asra's Housing Register. They will be notified of the decision and the reasons for it in writing. The applicant has a right to request a reassessment of such a decision (see Section 6.5).

2.8.2 Qualification

Social housing is in short supply and it is asra's policy to prioritise those in most housing need and who are not able to source accommodation from the private market sector.

asra will take into account the changes contained within the Welfare Reform Act 2012 in determining which households will qualify for an allocation of accommodation.

asra will include an affordability check when deciding on qualification. This affordability check will ensure that any tenancy granted is sustainable for the prospective tenants (s), taking into account any relevant Act of Parliament, for example Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

An applicant will not qualify for inclusion on the asra's Waiting List if:

- The prospective tenant or a member of their household has been evicted as a result of anti-social behaviour or rent arrears and can not qualify for inclusion on asra's Housing Register for three years from the date of eviction.
- the prospective tenant or a member of his/her household has been

- convicted (and the conviction is unspent) or is facing legal action of anti-social behaviour or certain types of crime (Appendix 2);
- the prospective tenant has an outstanding housing debt, unless under exceptional circumstances where the prospective tenant can prove affordability of new Tenancy and former Debt. (see Appendix 4)
- the prospective tenant has sufficient resources to buy a suitable home on the open market (Appendix 3);
- Prospective tenants who currently own their own home unless they are moving on welfare grounds (for example, elderly persons requiring sheltered accommodation, disabled or vulnerable prospective tenants requiring additional support, risk of homelessness, domestic abuse, fleeing violence, or racial harassment or having a housing need and equity of less than £16,000);
- The prospective tenant has made a fraudulent application to the housing register (see Section 5.5).
- Single people and households requiring up to 2 bedrooms, with a total gross household income above £60,000 (in line with Government's First Steps Housing Program);
- Households requiring 3+ bedrooms, with a total gross household income above £74,000 (in line with Government's First Steps Housing Programme)

2.8.3 Reassessment of Eligibility and Qualification

Prospective tenants who are not deemed eligible and/or do not qualify for an allocation will be informed of the decision and the reasons for it in writing. Such prospective tenants have a right to request a reassessment of the decision (see Section 6.5).

2.9 Rehousing High Risk Prospective tenants

asra recognises that some individuals requiring housing may pose a risk to our prospective tenants, our staff and the communities they live in. Prospective tenants considered to be high risk include but are not limited to:

- Prospective tenants with unspent convictions as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (see Appendix 2)
- Prospective tenants with convictions that will never be spent as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (see Appendix 2)
- Registered Sex Offenders (see Appendix 5)
- Prospective Tenant poses a risk to themselves, other tenants / their visitors and asra staff and representatives.

In circumstances where prospective tenants are considered to be high risk, prospective tenants will be subject to the same verification process as all other prospective tenants to be accommodated in our homes.

However, asra reserves the right to refuse to re-house high risk prospective tenants where:

- The relevant professional agencies refuse to support the provisional offer of accommodation;
- The relevant professional agencies fail to provide the required documentation and risk assessments and risk management plans;
- There is evidence that the applicant would be at risk of failure to maintain a tenancy;
- There is evidence that the applicant's health and safety would be at risk if re-housed in a property.
- Posses a risk to themselves, other tenants / their visitors and asra staff and representative.

2.10 Rehousing Prospective Tenants moving on from Supported Housing

Prospective tenants that no longer need supported housing and are ready to move into General Needs Housing will be considered for accommodation with asra. These prospective tenants may be referred to asra for housing via any of the methods as defined in Section 2.2.

In circumstances where prospective tenants are moving on from supported housing they will be subject to the verification process as all other prospective tenants to be accommodated in our homes.

In these cases asra will liaise closely with the relevant support services to ensure that the applicant will be sufficiently supported in a general needs property and suitable support is in place to manage any risks.

2.11 Relationship Breakdown

asra recognises that many of our sole tenants have co-habiting relationships with people who are not recognised as joint tenants.

In the event that these relationships break down, we will **not** offer accommodation to the individual who is not legally recognised as a tenant. These individuals must register with a Registered Provider; with the relevant Local Authority or register on our own Waiting List.

In these cases asra will be able to provide housing options advice to prospective tenants, including registration on asra's Waiting List signposting to the Local authority and providing assistance with completing application forms.

In the event that a relationship breaks down between joint tenants' asra will have regards to any relevant binding court decisions which may preside over tenancy arrangements. Further information can be found on asra's *Tenancy Change Policy (2016)*.

2.12 Prospective Tenants related to asra Staff

Where a prospective tenant is related to a Board Member or Staff Member of asra (or an employee themselves), the application will be treated in all respects in accordance with any other prospective tenant applying for housing as outlined in Schedule 1 of the Housing Act 1996.

To ensure that the criteria are adhered to and that the application is treated with neither favour nor disadvantage, any application will be reported upon receipt and approval must be gained by asra as per the Group Probity Procedure.

This applies to any prospective tenant who is related to the asra Board or Staff members, regardless of the source of the application.

2.13 Suspensions of Applications

Applications may be suspended in some circumstances. These include but are not limited to:

- Where prospective tenants refuse 3 provisional offers of accommodation
- Where prospective tenants are found to be in arrears at the verification stage, and do not have a repayment plan in place or cannot demonstrate that they have been keeping to an agreed repayment plan. Applications will be suspended for a period of 6 months or until they can demonstrate 6 months' adherence to a repayment plan; whichever is least.
- Where prospective tenants are under investigation for any incidence of unacceptable behaviour as defined in Appendix 2, until the conclusion of the investigation.
- If prospective tenants fail to place a bid for a period of 6 months, and it is clear that there were properties they were eligible to have bid on during this period of time

2.14 Prioritising Prospective Tenants

asra will prioritise prospective tenants based on housing need. These needs include but are not exclusive to:

- Medical Needs
- Mental Health Needs
- Current Housing Status
- Current Social Circumstances
- Support Needs
- Current Household make up

asra categorise our applicant needs by priority Category. The Categories are:

- Category 1 – Emergency Need
- Category 2 – Urgent Need
- Category 3 – Identified Housing Need
- Category 4 – Choice Plus

For more details on Categorising please see Appendix 6.

2.15 Intentional worsening of housing circumstances

Should a prospective tenant perform a deliberate action or inaction that results in a worsening of their housing circumstances, they will not gain preference on the asra's Waiting List unless there are exceptional circumstances. The household will be placed in the Category and awarded the points that they would have qualified for should they not have worsened their housing circumstances.

Households able to resolve their own housing needs by renting a suitable property in the private sector without recourse to public funds and choose not to do so, will be placed in the Category and/or awarded points that they would have qualified for should they have done.

The situation will be reviewed 12 months from the date of acceptance onto the asra's Housing Register or upon a material change of circumstance within the household.

Prospective tenant who have their preference reduced as a result of intentional worsening of their housing circumstances, or failing to resolve their own housing need when it is reasonable for them to do so will be informed of the decision in writing. Such applicants have a right to request a review of the decision (see Section 6.5).

2.16 Mutual Exchange

asra recognises that existing tenants' circumstances may alter to the point where their current property no longer meets their housing needs; at this point asra will advise for and support a Mutual Exchanges of Tenancies.

Mutual Exchanges are not included in overall percentage of lets as asra do not deem it an allocation of accommodation.

Further information refer to asra's *Mutual Exchange Policy 2016*.

Allocations Policy

3 What Property is a Prospective Tenant eligible for?

3.1 asra Housing Stock

asra provides housing for people and communities across central and southern England. We have over 40 years' housing experience and more than 14,000 homes in management and development. There are over 12,500 general needs properties and 1500 Supported, sheltered housing and Extra Care Living properties spread through out the Midlands and London Burroughs. Please see Appendix 7.

3.2 How many bedrooms is a Prospective Tenant entitled too?

Social Housing is in demand for households of different sizes. As guided by *Section 324 of the Housing Act 1985* asra have guidelines of how many bedrooms a household is entitled too. In order to determine the number of bedrooms an applicant is entitled to, we have decided that as a general rule, one bedroom will be allocated to:

- Single adult aged 16+
- Couple
- Two children of the same sex to the age of 16
- Two children regardless of sex to the age of 10
- Any other child
- A non-residential carer for an adult (a carer who does not live with the prospective tenant but provides the applicant or their partner with overnight care)

For prospective tenants entering our Sheltered and Extra Care accommodation, as a general rule, one bedroom will be allocated to:

- Single adult aged 55+; (prospective tenants below age 55 will be considered where there may be a support need, for example, in receipt of DLA)
- Couple; at least one member of the household is aged 55+
- Any other adult aged 18+;
- A non-residential carer;

3.2.1 Additional Bedrooms

There are circumstances under which an extra bedroom can be allocated. In all of these circumstances, it will be subject to the household meeting the requirements of the affordability assessment referred to in this Policy, and also subject to the discretion of the Compliancy Manager. The circumstances are:

- Housing for older people where the property has more than 1

- bedroom;
- Where the household needs are likely to change within the next 12 months (for example where a member of the household is pregnant, or an adoption placement is being progressed or where a child is likely to need a bedroom of their own or it is anticipated that a member of the household will be returning to live at the property, including after being released from prison);
 - Where the household member has a legal order i.e.; Family Court /Consent order which outlines that the children will reside with the prospective tenant for three or more night per week, asra would allow an additional bedrooms in line with our policy.
 - Where the household member has a medical ailment and can supply a medical certificate from their GP or Consultant to evidence the need for an additional bedroom, asra would allow an additional bedroom in line with our policy.

In all cases an income assessment will be carried out to ensure the tenancy can be sustained.

3.2.2 Reassessment of Bedroom Need

Prospective tenants who are not deemed in need of an extra bedroom will be informed of the decision and the reasons for it in writing. Such prospective tenants have a right to request a reassessment of the decision (see Section 6.5).

3.3 Affordable Rents

asra's Allocations scheme will ensure that a proportion of all properties let, especially Affordable Rent, which are 80% of market rent are prioritised for allocation to households in employment or where the "Choice Plus" requirements have been met. This will ensure that available properties in an area are a mix of both social and affordable rent types; this will also ensure that a balance is created within communities we help to build. A local scheme by scheme approach, rather than a borough wide approach will be taken.

The same verification process applies to Affordable Rents, to include the income assessment, as outlined in Sections 4.5 and 4.11.

3.4 Choice Plus

Choice Plus is the tool to demonstrate our commitment to creating and maintaining sustainable homes and local communities by:

- Addressing an evidenced need to provide affordable housing for key workers;
- Creating mixed income communities;
- Encouraging applicants and tenants' aspirations;
- Contributing to local economic growth;

- Tackling antisocial behaviour and crime;
- Supporting safe and sustainable neighbourhoods;
- Supporting aspirations of prospective tenants and tenants wishing to transfer in order to improve personal circumstances (for example; better schooling, to take up employment, to move areas);
- Making best use of stock;
- Helping prospective tenants and tenants to balance income and affordability;
- Increase mobility in social housing sector;
- Promoting choice as an incentive to improving circumstances
- Allowing flexibility in re-housing those in the armed forces and the families there off.

The same verification process applies to Choice Plus prospective tenants, to include the income assessment, as outlined in Sections 4.5 and 4.11.

3.5 New Build Properties

100% of newly built properties will be let in the first instance via Local Authority Nominations or, where in operation, via Local Authority Choice Based Lettings Schemes. asra builds new properties in order to meet housing needs in areas where these properties are required. As a stipulation of obtaining planning permission to build these homes, there is a legal obligation that asra will ensure the Local Authority will be given priority to house prospective tenants from their Housing Register. All newly built homes will be let in accordance with Service Level Agreements as signed by asra and the Local Authority.

3.6 Difficult to Let Properties

A property will be deemed a “difficult to let” property if one or more of the following applies:

- There is a higher than average turnover on the estate that the property is located in
- A property has been advertised once in a Local Authority Choice Based Lettings Scheme and the full shortlist of prospective tenants has been exhausted without securing a letting
- The Local Authority has provided three nominations via a Nominations Service Level Agreement and all three nominations have been exhausted without securing a letting
- Due to the external environment the property may prove challenging to let, for instance a poorly maintained private property next door
- Any other circumstances which for management purposes are deemed to result in the property being “hard to let.”
- asra has advertised these properties on our own Choice Based Letting Scheme and the property remains unlet.

In circumstances where a property is deemed “difficult to let,” asra will take preventive measures to ensure that the property is let as quickly as possible, which may include but are not limited to:

- Re-advertisement in the Choice Based Lettings Scheme with wider criteria for prospective tenants to bid, for example considering under-occupation;
- Advertising via local media or lettings agents;
- Open days to generate interest;
- Posters to be displayed in local housing offices and community service areas;

Referrals from local agencies or other means to ensure a letting is obtained.

3.7 Local Lettings Policies

To make best use of housing stock and create balanced, mixed and sustainable communities, asra may operate local lettings policies on some estates.

The development of a Local Lettings Policy will compliment the overarching Allocations & Lettings Policy of asra, but in doing so will also:

- Aid the development of balanced communities where a local policy would positively promote community cohesion and more inclusive sustainable neighbourhoods
- Address sustainability issues such as high turnover of properties, anti-social behaviour, crime and other social issues with the area
- Enable best use of housing stock in order to deliver better outcomes and improve the opportunities for current and future customers to access social housing

In developing Local Lettings Policies, we will consult with customers in the community, other social landlords and partners such as the Local Authority, police, and support agencies. We will also use data collected internally and externally such as about demographics, Anti-Social Behaviour or Hate Crime to assist in development of the Policy. Local Lettings Policies will be monitored to ensure that they are assisting to sustain communities.

Local Letting Policies will set out any additional criteria or eligibility requirements we deem to be applicable. These policies will be implemented following consultation with all relevant stakeholders and prospective tenants and will be monitored upon their review dates.

Allocations Policy

4 The Lettings Process

4.1 How Homes Are Let

In order for a prospective tenant to receive a home with asra, they must first apply and be accepted onto asra's housing register as outlined in Section 2. Once accepted prospective tenants will be required to express an interest, or "bid" on a property.

4.2 Advert Cycles

There will be two advert cycles each week;

- Monday – Wednesday
- Thursday – Sunday

Properties available via the Waiting List will be advertised on these cycles.

Of the total affordable homes and homes for older people that are advertised via asra's Choice Based Lettings scheme, properties will be advertised according to the following:

- 10% will be priority to Transfer prospective tenants
- 10% will be advertised as priority to prospective tenants in the Category 4 – Choice Plus (Affordable Rents)
- 80% will be advertised to prospective tenants in Priority Categories 1-3.

Occasionally properties may be advertised as "Sensitive Letting Required." This may be due to housing management requirements or health and safety requirements. Examples of this may be (this list is not exhaustive):

- a minimum age criteria
- caveat that no children are permitted
- prospective tenants subject to references from previous landlords
- or prospective tenants who are in employment.

4.3 Expressing an Interest, or "Bidding"

Prospective tenants will be able to "bid" on properties online to express an interest in them. Prospective tenants will only be permitted to bid on properties for which they are deemed eligible for, with regards to number of bedrooms as per Section 3.2.

Prospective tenants are permitted to place 2 bids per advert cycle.

4.4 Shortlisting

After an advert cycle has ended prospective tenants will be “shortlisted” by the following:

- Category 1-3 – firstly by Category, then by date of registration
- Choice Plus – by date of registration only

Prospective tenants will then be issued with a provisional offer as per Section 4.5.

4.5 Provisional Offers

Provisional Offers will be made to prospective tenants subject to an initial Sustainability Assessment of their eligibility for a home.

All initial offers of accommodation are only provisional. All prospective tenants are required to undergo a thorough evaluation process prior to entering into a tenancy with asra. In all cases this process will include the following:

- Issuing a provisional offer of accommodation, in all cases where contact details are provided, via telephone or in writing where unable to contact through any other means
- A pre-allocation interview and full verification of the application form to ensure that the prospective tenant is in the correct Category at the time of shortlisting. If the prospective tenant is found to have had substantial change in circumstances whereby this would affect the status of their application a provisional offer will be withdrawn and the application will be referred back to the Allocations team to re-evaluate the application.
- Pre-Tenancy Income Assessment to ensure that the prospective tenant can afford to maintain a tenancy and all household costs associated with this
- Pre-Tenancy Interview which may include a Home Visit
- Risk assessments and management plans as required
- Landlord references
- Credit or other background checks where this is required
- Viewing of the Void Property
- Signing of the Tenancy Agreement

In cases where a contact telephone or email address is provided, asra will make contact via telephone or email. If a prospective tenant has indicated that they prefer to be contacted via a specific method, this will be adhered to (for instance, where a prospective tenant has indicated that they have a disability or any other factors it will be taken into account to ensure the prospective tenant is given equal opportunity to respond to the provisional offer). Provisional offers will only be issued in writing where all other methods have been exhausted, and prospective tenants must respond within 2 working days to confirm acceptance or decline the property.

At first point of contact a prospective tenant must indicate if they are interested in the property. If a prospective tenant fails to respond to a provisional offer by the required date then this will qualify as a refusal of the provisional offer and the next person in line for the property will be given priority to be considered for a tenancy.

It is important to recognise that prospective tenants are evaluated on a case by case basis and the asra reserves the right to carry out several in-depth verification checks in order to ensure that we are satisfied that an prospective tenant has the right to social housing and will be able to successfully maintain a tenancy.

4.6 Multiple Offers

asra is committed to making the best use of housing stock and minimising the length of time that properties are empty. Therefore, as a matter of course asra will issue multiple offers to prospective tenants wherever this is required. The multiple offer letter will clearly state that a multiple offer has been issued, and will also clearly state the ranking in numerical order, of each prospective tenant placed within the multiple offer.

In instances where a multiple offer has been made, an open viewing is arranged, where each prospective tenant will be informed prior to attending the viewing that multiple prospective tenants will be attending.

4.7 Refusing an Offer of Accommodation

Prospective tenants from asra's register that refuse a provisional offer of accommodation will be informed that this may affect their housing application. If a prospective tenant has three refusals they will be required to take part in an interview either via telephone or in the office to determine if they will stay in the current Category due to reasonable refusals; or be moved into a lower Category; or have their application suspended for a period of six months. Social housing is a resource which is in short supply and it is important to ensure that prospective tenants understand the consequences and impact on resources when provisional offers are repeatedly refused.

Where these prospective tenants are nominations from a local authority, we are obligated to abide by the local authority's decision in the management of their own housing register. The local authority may have accepted a statutory duty to house the prospective tenant and refusing a provisional offer may result in the prospective tenant no longer having a priority status to be re-housed. They will be advised of this at the time of refusal.

Prospective tenants sourced from a local authority housing register that refuse a provisional offer will not be issued with an alternative provisional offer for accommodation with asra unless they are referred by the local authority for another property.

4.8 Withdrawing a Provisional Offer of Accommodation

asra reserves the right to withdraw a provisional offer of accommodation at any stage during the re-let process if there are any concerns about the prospective tenant's ability to successfully maintain a tenancy or they do not meet the requirements as set out in the verification process.

Where this occurs the prospective tenant will be notified in writing, detailing the reasons why the provisional offer has been withdrawn.

Prospective tenants who have had a provisional offer of accommodation withdrawn have a right to request a reassessment of the decision (see Section 6.5).

4.9 Viewing a Property

Prospective tenants will normally be expected to view a property within 2 working days of the property becoming available for a viewing. asra reserves the right to withdraw a provisional offer of accommodation if a prospective tenant is not prepared to view the property within this timescale.

However, the Group will not be unreasonable in its expectations and will work with a prospective tenant to arrange a suitable appointment particularly in cases where third party attendance is required (such as Support Workers or Occupational Therapists, for example).

A prospective tenant will not be permitted to enter into a tenancy agreement for a property without attending a viewing of the property.

All viewings will be accompanied viewings. Viewings will normally be attended by an asra nominated Officer or another member of the asra staff.

4.11 Verification Checks

The Home Office directive outlines; landlords must ensure all prospective tenants and occupants have a right to rent in the UK.

asra will carry out the Right to Rent checks on all prospective tenants and retain copies of the prescribed documents, as failure will not serve as a statutory excuse against a penalty for letting to an illegal migrant.

asra will apply the Right to Rent checks in a fair, justifiable and consistent manner, regardless as to whether we believe the prospective tenant to be British, settled or a person with limited permission to be here.

4.11.1 How asra makes a Verification Check

Asra performs the following checks on prospective tenants:

- Obtain tenant's original acceptable documents that allow them to live in the UK;
- Check the documents with the tenant present; and
- Keep the copied documents on file and record the date of the check.

Additional checks include but are not limited to:

- Landlord reference checks with an prospective tenant's current or previous landlords
- Criminal Records Background Check
- Credit Check
- Risk Assessment
- Income Assessment
- Assessment of support needs and liaison with the relevant professional services in order to ensure a prospective tenant will be adequately supported in maintaining a tenancy.

4.11.2 Verification Checks for High Risk Prospective Tenants

Some prospective tenants such as sex offenders may pose a risk to our prospective tenants, staff and the communities that they may live in. In some of these cases a Multi-Agency risk assessment may be required. In all such cases, asra will require confirmation in writing from the relevant professional agencies (such as the police, probation service, medical service or social services) to determine the suitability of a provisional offer in these circumstances.

Allocations Policy

5 Gaining a Tenancy

5.1 Tenancy Types

Depending on the circumstances as defined below, asra normally offers the following tenancy types to general needs and sheltered tenants:

- Starter Tenancies
- Assured Tenancies
- Assured Shorthold Periodic Tenancies
- Assured Shorthold Tenancies for a fixed term of 5 years preceded by a probationary period lasting for a maximum term of 18 months.

5.2 Starter Tenancies

New tenants entering into an agreement with asra may be offered Starter Tenancies for the first twelve months of the tenancy. Starter Tenancies are based on Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST). Starter Tenancies will be reviewed in the first twelve months and, subject to the tenancy being conducted in a satisfactory manner (as defined in the terms and conditions of the Starter Tenancy Agreement) it will convert to the type of Tenancy outlined at the offer stage; which normally include:

- Assured Tenancies
- Assured Shorthold Periodic Tenancies
- Assured Shorthold Tenancies for a fixed term of 5 years preceded by a probationary period lasting for a maximum term of 18 months.

If for any reason a new tenant does not abide by the terms of the Starter Tenancy (as stipulated in the Starter Tenancy Agreement) then asra reserves the right to extend the terms of the Starter Tenancy beyond the initial 12 month period. For more details please see *asra's Tenancy Change Policy 2016*.

5.3 Tenancy Start Dates

The tenancy start date is the date that the tenancy is signed. As per the terms and conditions set out in the Tenancy Agreement, rent is payable weekly or monthly in advance.

For a weekly tenancy, if the tenancy agreement is signed on a Monday rent is payable on that day. If a tenancy agreement is signed any day other than Monday rent will be payable from the first Monday after the tenancy start date. For a weekly tenancy a weeks rent should be paid in advance.

For calendar monthly tenancies a full months' rent is normally required on the tenancy start date, even if that day is not the first Monday of the month. This

is to ensure the rent account does not fall into rent arrears at any point. The second month's rental payment will be calculated at a daily rate dependent on the start date.

For prospective tenants claiming Housing Benefit, which is paid normally 4-weekly in arrears, from the tenancy start date the prospective tenants must pay the first 4 weeks' rent in advance so that they are not in breach of their tenancy agreement. However, we will have regard to an Applicant's personal circumstances and will not exclude those who clearly cannot afford to pay this amount at the tenancy start date. In these cases a payment plan to get the rent account 4 weeks in advance will have to be reached.

5.4 Owner occupiers moving into Sheltered Accommodation

Owner occupiers who either have exceptional difficulties or are applying for sheltered housing/Retirement Living may not be required to have taken all reasonable steps to have completed the sale of their property before taking up a social housing tenancy. Where a tenancy is granted to a person who owns a property it will be an assured shorthold tenancy with a fixed term of 6 months. The tenancy may be brought to an end if the applicant does not take reasonable steps to sell their property. Once asra is satisfied that the applicant no longer has an interest in their former, market property the tenancy will be converted to a social tenancy.

5.5 False & Misleading Information

If it becomes apparent that the applicant, after being granted a tenancy, had obtained that tenancy through knowingly or recklessly providing false and misleading information, we may take action for possession of that person's home under Ground 17 of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended by the Housing Act 1996)

The Head of Service is responsible for making final decisions on all cases involving false and misleading information.

Allocations Policy

6 Compliance and Management of Allocations at asra

6.1 Diversity and Inclusion

asra will treat all customers fairly and with respect. We will not discriminate against any person on the grounds of Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Age, Sex, Sexual Orientation or Marriage and Civil Partnerships. For more details please see asra's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2016-2019)* and *Respecting Difference Policy (2016)*.

This policy is available to all customers and can be accessed via our website www.asra.org.uk or upon request.

Equality information will be requested from all customers and their household members.

asra will review this information annually to promote equal opportunities, values diversity and tackles social exclusion.

6.2 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive information, however received, will be treated as confidential.

asra appointed officers will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the customer concerned, unless:

- The information is necessary for the protection of children.
- asra by law can not withhold information from the Police that would assist a criminal investigation
- Where we information sharing protocols with external agencies, such as the Police force.

Data gathered during the application and verification process will be used to provide the Department for Communities and Local Government for Continuous Recording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing in England, known as CORE.

6.3 Health and Safety

asra recognise their responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of their employees and will endeavour to meet their obligations under relevant Acts.

asra accepts that there is a potential risk of violence and aggression towards staff when performing their duties which could be high in certain

circumstances. In order to reduce this risk staff are expected to follow health and safety and lone working procedures particularly when working outside the office.

6.4 Customer Involvement

asra is committed to involving its customers in developing Services and improving Service Delivery.

asra aims to involve its Customers in all aspects of Policy, Service Delivery and Service Improvements. Further Information on Customer Involvement can be found in the *Customer Involvement Plan (2015)*.

6.5 Right to Reassessment

Customers have the right to be informed of any decision following a request for an application for Housing, as well as any actions that asra take.

Customers have the right to request a reassessment of their application if:

- asra decided their application is ineligible
- asra decided that they do not qualify for accommodation
- asra have withdrew an offer of accommodation

The purpose of a reassessment would be to ensure that a customer has been treated fairly and in accordance with asra's *Allocations and Lettings (2016)*.

The customer must make a request in writing within 21 days of the letter date stamped, informing them of our decision. The customer must give the reasons for requesting a reassessment by writing to asra or in person if it is difficult to tell us the reasons in writing.

We will acknowledge their request within 7 days of receipt of their request for reassessment, asra will send a confirmation letter that acknowledges contact with us and explains how the reassessment process works giving clear timescales and expectations.

The request will be reassessed by an asra Manager and further panel of two other members who were not involved in the initial decision. This reassessment will involve a discussion with the prospective tenant to hear their opinions and can take place over the phone, or in person depending upon the circumstances.

The customer will be notified of the outcome in writing, explaining the reasons for the decision, within 21 days of receiving the original request for a reassessment.

If the customer remains unhappy with the decision then they will need to file a complaint as per asra's *Complaints Policy (2015)*.

6.6 Compliments & Complaints

Customers are actively encouraged to provide feedback with regards to Allocations and Lettings at asra.

We aim to provide an efficient, responsive and prospective tenant-friendly service to our tenants. If for any reason customers are not satisfied with the service that has been provided then we would like to know so that we can learn from our mistakes and improve in the future.

In line with our *Complaints Policy (2015)*, customers can register a complaint in a number of ways:

- By completing a complaints webform through our website:
<http://asra.org.uk/residents/complaints-and-comments-form.aspx>
- Emailing us at complaints@asra.org.uk
- Or by writing to us at: Complaints Team at our address, see section 1.2

If a customer does not feel able to make a complaint, an advocate such as a friend, family member, support worker or a Member of Parliament can register a complaint on the prospective tenant's behalf.

For more details please see asra's *Complaints Policy (2015)*.

6.7 Performance Measuring

asra measures performance, using Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). These KPI's measure our response and action times against specific procedures.

asra nominated officers, at all stages of the Allocations and Lettings process will respond to any customer contact within three working days. In addition all void properties will look to be let with in 30 days.

asra is committed to letting our properties fairly and transparently. We aim to publish Lettings Feedback quarterly on our website for all lettings. This feedback will clearly show:

- Advert Date
- Property Reference
- Address
- Property type and size
- Access route
- Total of expression of interest
- Successful Category (if from housing register)
- Date of Application (if from housing register)
- As well as any other information deemed appropriate for purposes of transparency.

6.8 Monitor, Review and Continuous Improvement

asra is committed to continuous improvement of the services we offer. Monitoring of performance against this policy along with customer satisfaction is key to ensuring that we are achieving our objectives in the management and of the Allocations and Lettings Process.

asra utilises several methods in order to monitor this policy and ensure that we are providing a satisfactory service to our customers. These methods include, but are not exclusive to:

- Performance indicators
- Equality & Diversity
- Benchmarking against other Registered Providers
- Government regulatory standards
- Collecting data via prospective Tenant Satisfaction Surveys
- Customer Involvement

The performance and customer satisfaction information that is regularly monitored will be utilised to compile feedback. This feedback will form the basis for reviewing the policy.

Feedback and monitoring will be used to ensure that asra is working in line with customer expectations, our objectives and government standards. These methods include, but are not exclusive to:

- Making the best use of available housing
- Contribute to Local Authorities' strategic housing functions and sustainable communities
- Fair & Flexible: Statutory Guidance on Social Housing Allocations for Local Authorities in England
- Priority must be that social housing will go to those in greatest housing need
- Providing settled homes for those that have experienced homelessness
- Promoting greater equality and clearly meeting equalities duties
- Greater choice and wider options for prospective and existing tenants
- Creating more mixed and sustainable communities
- Greater mobility
- Policies that are fair and are considered to be fair
- Management of applicant expectations and increased information about allocations in the local community
- Adhere to the Equality & Diversity The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012

asra is committed to continuous improvement. In order to meet customer satisfaction we will look at best practice and value for money.

asra staff will be given the appropriate training and updated on any relevant legislation or guidelines.

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months. A review will ensure that this policy remains updated and accurate. A review also gives asra the opportunity to ensure that the policy continues to meet the needs of our prospective tenants.

When the policy is updated we will highlight the changes that have been made and the reasons why these changes have been implemented.

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Appendices

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Appendix 1 Local Nomination Agreements as per September 2016

Local Nomination Agreement for **non** Sheltered Social Housing.

Access Route by Geographical Location for Homes for Affordable Rent and Homes for Older People *includes Affordable Housing, Affordable Rents and Homes for Older People	Minimum Nominations % by Local Authority
London (28 Local Authorities)	75%
Northamptonshire (7 LA's)	50%
Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire (14 LA's)	50%
West Midlands (7 LA's)	50%
Leicestershire (9 LA's)	50%

Local Nomination Agreement for Sheltered Social Housing.

Access Route by Geographical Location for Homes for Affordable Rent and Homes for Older People *includes Affordable Housing, Affordable Rents and Homes for Older People	Minimum Nominations % by Local Authority
London (28 Local Authorities)	75%
Northamptonshire (7 LA's)	50%
Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire (14 LA's)	50%
West Midlands (7 LA's)	50%
Leicestershire (9 LA's)	50%

Appendix 2 Application Rules: Unacceptable behaviour – anti-social behaviour/crime & Spent Convictions

An applicant will not qualify for inclusion on the asra's Housing Register, if he/she or a member of their household:

- has an unspent for an offence which may be considered as anti-social behaviour or a civil order granted by a court under the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 or the Anti-Social behaviour Act 2003;
- is subject to criminal legal action or to a court order for behaviour that may be considered as anti social;
- has an unspent conviction for a crime that is likely to cause fear, distress and alarm;
- is subject to legal action for a crime that is likely to cause fear, distress and alarm;
- has been evicted as result of anti-social behaviour.

asra will consider a fresh application to its Housing Register from any applicant on grounds of anti-social behaviour if the person responsible for the ASB/crime has lived in the community for five years with no further convictions of this type, or when their convictions are spent, whichever is the sooner, see below.

Rehabilitation periods

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) allows most convictions and all cautions, reprimands and final warnings to be considered spent after a certain period. This period – known as the rehabilitation period – is determined by the sentence or disposal given, rather than by the type of offence.

The rehabilitation periods for custodial sentences (including suspended prison sentences) and community sentences, after which a conviction will be spent, are shown in the table below.

Sentence	Time it takes to become spent (age 17 or under at time of conviction)	Time it takes to become spent (age 18 or over at time of conviction)
Prison [1] term of over four years	Never	Never
Prison [1] term of more than 30 months and less than, or equal to 4 years [2]	Sentence + 3.5 years	Sentence + 7 years
Prison [1] term of more than 6 months and less than or equal to 30 months [3]	Sentence + 2 years	Sentence + 4 years
Prison [1] term of 6 months or less [4]	Sentence + 18 months	Sentence + 2 years
Detention and Training Order (over 6 months)		As prison sentences
Detention and Training Order (6 months or less)		As prison sentences
Sentence of Detention (over 6 months but not exceeding 30 months) [5]	As prison sentences	As prison sentences
Sentence of Detention (6 months or under)	As prison sentences	As prison sentences
Removal from Her Majesty's Service [6]	6 months	1 year
Service detention [7]	6 months	1 year
Community Order [8]	6 months	1 year
Youth Rehabilitation Order [9]		6 months
Fine [10]	6 months	1 year
Compensation Order [11]	Once paid in full	Once paid in full
Hospital Order [12]	End of the order	End of the order
Conditional discharge, binding over, Care Order, Supervision Order,	End of the order	End of the order

Time it takes to become spent (age 17 or under at time of conviction)	Time it takes to become spent (age 18 or over at time of conviction)	
Reception Order		
Absolute discharge	Spent immediately	Spent immediately
Disqualification	End of disqualification	End of disqualification
Relevant Order	End of the order	End of the order
Conditional cautions	Once conditions end	Once conditions end
Caution, warning, reprimand [14]	None	None

Notes:

If a sentence/disposal is not covered in the table above, under the changes it has no rehabilitation period and becomes spent immediately (unless it is attached to another sentence/disposal which does have a rehabilitation period).

- 1.** The term 'prison' includes suspended prison sentences, youth custody, and detention in a young offender institution or corrective training.
- 2.** From the day on which the sentence (including any licence period) is completed.
- 3.** From the day on which the sentence (including any licence period) is completed.
- 4.** From the day on which the sentence (including any licence period) is completed.
- 5.** Passed under section 91 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 or under section 206 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975
- 6.** Starting from the date of conviction relating to the sentence.
- 7.** Starting from the day on which the sentence is completed.
- 8.** From the end of the order. This period starts from the last day of when the order given by the court has effect. Where no such date is provided, the rehabilitation period for the order is 2 years, starting from the date of conviction.
- 9.** From the last day on which the order is to have effect.
- 10.** From the date of conviction.
- 11.** The date on which the payment is made in full.
- 12.** Under the Mental Health Act 1983.
- 13.** The day provided for by or under the order as the last day on which the order has effect.
- 14.** Spent as soon as issued.

Appendix 3 Application Rules: Owner Occupiers

Owner occupiers (including those owning a share in a property) with a housing need will be accepted onto the housing register provided they have insufficient resources to resolve their housing need.

- it is unreasonable to continue to occupy their current accommodation; and
- it is not possible, to adapt their current accommodation to meet their needs after taking into account the affordability and practicality of any necessary measures; and
- they have insufficient resources to purchase a suitable property; or
- they have insufficient resources to purchase suitable accommodation in the local authority area in which they currently live and there is a compelling reason why they need to move.

When making a decision on whether it is reasonable for the household to continue to occupy the accommodation the following will be taken into account:

- whether the accommodation and amenities within it are accessible to all members of the household;
- affordability – taking into consideration any equity in the property, any other properties owned by members of the household and the availability of Government supported schemes such as Mortgage to Rent, Support for Mortgage Interest and the Mortgage Rescue Scheme;
- the physical condition of the property;
- the probability that the continued occupation of the property will result in violence or threats of violence that are likely to be carried out against applicant or a member of their household.
- whether the property is overcrowded to the extent that it is unreasonable for the household to continue to occupy it;
- any other reason that would make it unreasonable for the household to continue to occupy their present accommodation.

Where it is unreasonable for the household to continue to occupy their property, they will be awarded preference according to their housing need.

Owner-occupiers accepted onto the asra's Housing Register are required to take all reasonable steps to complete the sale of their property before taking up a social housing tenancy. Where asra are satisfied that, despite making all reasonable efforts, including reducing the price, this has not been possible, the applicant will be required to undertake to bring their interest in the property to an end as soon as possible after being granted a tenancy and to keep the asra informed on their progress in doing so.

Owner occupiers who either have exceptional difficulties or are applying for sheltered housing/Retirement Living may not be required to have taken all

reasonable steps to have completed the sale of their property before taking up a social housing tenancy. Where a tenancy is granted to a person who owns a property it will be an assured shorthold tenancy with a fixed term of 6 months. The tenancy may be brought to an end if the applicant does not take reasonable steps to sell their property.

Once asra is satisfied that the applicant no longer has an interest in their former, market property the tenancy will be converted to a social tenancy.

Applicants with sufficient financial resources to purchase accommodation that meets their housing need.

Prospective tenants who can meet their own housing need by buying a suitable property on the open market, with or without a mortgage, will not qualify for inclusion on asra's Housing Register. Resources include affordable loans, income, equity and capital.

Appendix 4 Application Rules: Housing Debts

Applicants with housing debt will not qualify to join asra's Housing Register unless there are exceptional circumstances. A housing debt is a debt related to a current or previous tenancy owed to:

- other social landlord or Local Authority; or Housing debts include:
- current or former tenant/licensee rent/charge arrears in respect of a dwelling;
- Mesne profits owed by tolerated trespassers;
- court costs incurred through proceedings in relation to breach of tenancy, including anti-social behaviour, rent arrears or any other proceedings relating to the applicant's occupation of his/her home or former home;
- charges for repair of damage to a dwelling that occupier is liable for

Applicants with 8 weeks of housing related debts owed to a landlord will not qualify for inclusion on the asra's Housing Register until the debt is cleared or a mutually agreed repayment plan is in place.

Appendix 5 Application Rules: Sex Offenders

Where an applicant applies for housing and has declared on the application form of their being on the Sex Offenders Register, any offer of an asra property will require the property to be risk assessed prior to offer and a suitable support package, if required, put in place.

asra will work in partnership with Probation and the police in relation to allocation of properties to Sex Offenders. In accordance with the National Accommodation Strategy for housing Sex Offenders (NASSO), asra has a Duty to Co-operate with the re-housing of sex and violent offenders and will work jointly with Criminal Justice services in terms of community safety, in housing sex and violent offenders safely.

Any application from a Sex or Violent Offender will be dealt with responsibly, ensuring privacy and confidentiality is maintained, except where the interests of relevant staff protection may take priority over confidentiality. Information-sharing with staff, other RSLs, Criminal Justice and other statutory agencies, will be on a strictly need-to-know basis.

Appendix 7 Priority Categorising

<p>Proposed Allocations Scheme – General Needs, Sheltered, and Transfer Applicants</p> <p>Priority Factors that the asra will consider. These Factors are classed in Categories. Applicants in CATEGORY 1 will be given the highest priority.</p>

CATEGORY 1 - Emergency & High Priority Applicants

- Your present home is not suitable due to high medical and mobility needs. Supporting evidence required: from either a hospital consultant or occupational therapist
- Your present home requires major works (evidence required) letter from current landlord or Environmental Health recommendation letter
- Present home being demolished or redeveloped
- Under occupation household affected by bedroom tax (e.g.: 2 bedrooms or more)
- Applicants fleeing/suffering ongoing Domestic Violence or Hate Crime / Harassment unable to return to their home, evidence required from the police (crime number or letters of support from the police outing the urgency to relocate)
- Applicants deemed to be statutory homeless, evidence required, letter from the Local Authority
- Overcrowded by 2 or more bedrooms

CATEGORY 2 - Urgent Need

- Overcrowded by 1 bedroom
- Relocate to take up employment
- Under occupying by 1 bedroom
- Medium medical needs, evidence required from a GP
- Suffering on going ASB, evidence required from, support worker, Housing Officer, Police (incident number)
- Prison leavers (part of move on) supporting evidence require and risk assessment plans from, Probation Officer, support worker and rehousing/settlement worker (where applicable)
- Applicants who are sofa surfing, No fixed Abode (NFA) and in temporary housing.
- Applicants leaving the armed forces

CATEGORY 3 - Identified Housing Need

- Approved for adoption, evidence required, confirmation letter (adoption panel)
- Applicants living with family and friends and been asked to leave
- Non dependant children (18+) who are looking for a first time tenancy

Applicants with any other recognised housing needs can be added to this Category

CATEGORY 4 - CHOICE PLUS - in order to qualify under this CATEGORY all applicants, must provide supporting evidence.

- Full time employment or work for 16 hours or more per week for the last 12 months
- volunteered for community work for 16 or more hours per month and have done so for the last 6 months
- Running a business within the local community
- Key workers seeking accommodation
- Private renting where current rent is greater than 40% of their income

Tenants who have demonstrated positive behaviour and who want to move but do not have a “housing need”. We define this as a tenant who has been an asra or other Social Housing, Local Authority tenant for at least 2 years; not in rent arrears; not been served with any Notices seeking/requiring possession of their property; has been co-operative in respect of giving access i.e. gas servicing and property inspection requests; kept their property in satisfactory condition, and has the approval of the Tenancy Services Manager to be eligible to bid for properties under the Choice Plus Category.

Appendix 7 asra Housing Portfolio

asra provides housing in the following London Boroughs and Home Counties:

Aylesbury	Haringey	Reading
Barking & Dagenham	Harrow	Redbridge
Barnet	Hillingdon	Southwark
Brent	Hounslow	St Albans
Camden	Islington	Tower Hamlets
Croydon	Kingston Upon Thames	Wandsworth
Ealing	Lambeth	Watford
Greenwich	Lewisham	Waltham Forest
Hammersmith & Fulham	Newham	

asra provides housing in the following Local Authority Areas in the Midlands:

Ashfield District Council	Gedling Borough Council	Northampton Borough Council
Bassetlaw District Council	Harborough District Council	Nottingham City Council
Blaby District Council	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
Bolsover District Council	Kettering Borough Council	Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
Broxtowe District Council	Leicester City Council	Rugby Borough Council
Charnwood Borough Council	Mansfield District Council	Rushcliffe Borough Council
Chesterfield Council	Melton Borough Council	Rutland County Council
Corby Borough Council	Newark & Sherwood District Council	South Kesteven District Council
Daventry District Council	North East Derbyshire District Council	South Northants Council
East Northants Council	North Kesteven District Council	Wellingborough Council