

Lettings Policy

The basics

This policy sets out the guiding principles for the direction that Leeds Federated will follow in respect of how it allocates its homes to ensure that effective use is made of the housing stock in tackling housing need.

The policy supports Leeds Federated's vision of 'Helping People Make a Home' and is aligned with the following objectives of the Association:

Objective 1: Thrive

Objective 2: Engage

Objective 3: Evolve

Our approach

This policy aims to:

- Provide the details for how properties will be let
- Explain who can apply for housing with Leeds Federated
- Describe all of the housing options available to our customers

We consider the housing needs and aspirations of customers and potential customers with a clear application, decision making and appeals process.

Leeds Federated relet our properties through several different routes:

- Direct management lets
- Transfers
- Mutual Exchanges
- Succession & Assignments
- Decants
- Nomination from Local Authority nominations

To ensure that Leeds Federated contributes to meeting the priority housing needs in the local authorities within which we operate:

- We will work co-operatively with the relevant local authority to assist them in fulfilling their legal obligation to offer advice and/or accommodation to people who are deemed to be in housing need through Nominations Agreements or participation in Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Schemes or Common Housing Registers.
- Nominations will be made in accordance with the Nominations Agreement drawn up with each local authority. Direct nominations from other partner organisations may also be considered in specific instances.

- Leeds Federated will make lettings decisions based on the priority award scheme operated by each of its partner local authorities in conjunction with the Lettings Policy of the Association.
- Each local authority has a statutory responsibility for determining a customer's priority when they apply to join a housing waiting list by carrying out an assessment of their needs. Leeds Federated will update a customer's application with additional information where possible.

Leeds Federated is also committed to assisting in the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities. We will:

- Undertake pre-tenancy checks to identify any additional support needed to enable customers to make a success of their tenancy.
- Carry out a financial assessment at the pre-offer interview, to establish whether the tenancy would be affordable enabling the applicant to make informed choices. Where it is deemed the tenancy would be unaffordable, then a decision can be made to refuse the applicant on this basis, to meet our objective of creating sustainable tenancies. In such cases, advice will be provided to applicants and they will be signposted to obtain help so that they can secure alternative housing in the future.
- Operate a local lettings policy in selected areas to help build or maintain sustainable communities but these will always take into account urgent housing needs and be non-discriminatory.
- Offer joint tenancies where two or more people apply jointly for housing and where all parties are suitable and eligible.
- Approve transfers, successions, assignments and mutual exchanges where legislation and the individual tenancy agreement allows.

How a property is let

Leeds Federated works with relevant local authorities in which its stock is located and lets its properties according to the allocation scheme operated by each Council with Choice Based Lettings schemes and nomination agreements being the most commonly used schemes.

Where suitable applicants cannot be identified using these methods, we will advertise empty homes more widely and use different approaches to attract new customers. These include:

- Online advertising e.g. My Let website
- To Let Boards
- Flyers
- Internal list of interested applicants
- Seeking referrals from 3rd party agencies such as Age UK

This list is not exhaustive and Leeds Federated will ensure that our approach to lettings will change in response to changes in housing demand.

Some properties will not be offered to new customers through the relevant local authority scheme. Reasons for this include:

- Transfers and decant requirements
- A need to undertake sensitive lettings
- A need to ensure a sustainable letting is created

This list is not exhaustive, however all such lets will be made at the discretion of Leeds Federated and in accordance with this policy.

Eligibility Criteria

Customers who would be eligible to be housed by Leeds Federated and are considered suitable to be a tenant include the following:

- Existing tenants of the local authority or of any registered social landlord who already hold Assured or Secure tenancy agreements
- Customers over the age of 16 years (a Rent Guarantor and Trustee will be required for applicants who are 16 and 17 years old)
- British or Irish citizens
- European Economic Area (EEA) citizens with settled status
- People who have the right of abode in the UK, or who have been granted indefinite leave to remain, settled status, including those who have received settled status via the EU Settlement Scheme, or have no time limit on their stay in the UK
- People with valid leave to enter or remain in the UK for a time limited period, which includes EEA citizens with pre-settled status or EEA and non-EEA citizens granted time-limited leave under the points-based immigration system.

Suitability Criteria

To assist with creating and maintaining sustainable communities, we will:

- Exclude customers from social housing where past or current unacceptable behaviour is serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant and only in circumstances that are not unlawfully discriminating.
- Exclude customers from social housing who have rent arrears and have no evidence of adhering to a payment plan to reduce the arrears, or who have multiple arrears with different landlords. Any exceptions to this exclusion would be based on evidence of a rent payment culture.

Anyone who is considered ineligible or unsuitable to be a tenant will be advised of this and the reasons. They will be advised of how to rectify the situation so they may become eligible for housing in the future. They may also be signposted to other housing options or sources of information if relevant and may be referred to another agency for support or advice if necessary.

Local Lettings Policies

The Association may operate local lettings policies (plans) to enhance the sustainability of selected areas. Where a local lettings policy operates, preference for offers of accommodation will be given to particular customer groups. An equality analysis is undertaken to ensure that local lettings policies will not discriminate unjustifiably, directly or indirectly on racial or other equality grounds.

The relevant local authority will be notified of any local lettings policies introduced which will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant.

Support for Vulnerable Customers

We will make every effort to identify any requirement for additional support for any member of the household as early in the allocation process as possible and will refer to support agencies as necessary.

We will only exclude customers where we cannot provide or procure the appropriate support or level of support required in order to sustain the tenancy at that time.

Where necessary, Leeds Federated will observe the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in allocating and offering properties to customers where this is relevant.

Medical Factors

We will consider customers with existing medical problems in line with any priority they may have been awarded by their local authority. Where priority has been awarded for a particular type of property or for one with particular facilities then only properties meeting this requirement will be offered.

We reserve the right to refuse to offer a particular property or type of property where we feel that some of the facilities (stairs and steps for example but other items may also be included) may pose a risk to the health or safety of any member of a particular household.

Adapted Properties

Every effort will be made to let adapted properties only to those households requiring those facilities. These options may include:

- A direct let to transfer applicants
- A direct let to customers on any needs register of the local authority or another housing association
- Referrals from or advertising with relevant local disability groups, hospitals and occupational therapists
- Specific newspaper, journal or other advertising in addition to the usual Choice Based Lettings route.

Consideration will be given to granting a tenancy for a property which may require adaptations to meet the needs of the individual customers where appropriate. This will consider the ability of the customer to live in the property prior to the adaptations being installed and the timescale for the installation of the adaptations.

We reserve the right to keep any adapted or purpose-built properties empty for longer periods than general needs properties in order to find the most suitable household for the property.

Accommodation Designated and Designed for Older People

Leeds Federated will seek to allocate its housing for older people in a fair and equitable manner to appropriately aged applicants. Older people in this instance would include anyone over the age of 50 years.

The range of accommodation reserved for older people includes

- Schemes with additional support and communal facilities (more commonly known as sheltered schemes) – the qualifying age is normally 55 years.
- Some independent accommodation reserved for older people – the qualifying age is 50 years.

Where necessary we will also advertise such vacancies more widely using a variety of additional appropriate methods to target as many of this customer group as possible. In cases where accommodation designated and designed for older people meets the needs of applicants who do not meet the specific age criteria, consideration may be given to such applicants based their individual circumstances and at the discretion of Leeds Federated.

It is recognised that general demand for specific schemes may change over time and Leeds Federated will seek to re-appraise and reconsider the designation of schemes, or parts of schemes where necessary and in consultation with residents and other parties.

Allocation of Bedrooms

Leeds Federated will ensure that customers are considered for accommodation appropriate to the needs and size of their household.

As a minimum, a separate bedroom would be allocated to:

- Every adult age 16 years or over
- Each adult couple
- Two children, unless they are not the same gender and one is 10 years or over. In this case separate bedrooms will be allocated

Normally, no more than two people should share a bedroom and allocations should not exceed the maximum occupancy rating for each property as determined by Leeds Federated. On receipt of proof of pregnancy, the unborn child will be included in the bedroom calculation.

Customers who have access to children will be assessed as requiring one additional bedroom. However, in undertaking allocations, the principle around making the best use of stock will be considered.

Additional rooms may also be allocated in the following cases:

- Where a customer requires a carer to live with them or equipment or adaptations require more space
- Where a customer requires more space due to a medical condition
- To allow a property to be adapted, for example, to enable a through floor lift to be fitted
- On request from Children's Services, for example, to enable a foster placement to continue

Properties larger than the minimum bedroom standard may be offered but this would be at the discretion of Leeds Federated and would also be dependent on the level of demand for accommodation in the area and other factors such as the applicants' willingness and ability to pay the rent including any shortfall in eligible rent for housing benefit.

Transfers

Existing tenants of Leeds Federated may be considered for a transfer when all other avenues of being able to move have been exhausted or where Leeds Federated considers an internal move or transfer necessary.

Tenants may be considered for a transfer to more suitable accommodation where they are:

- Under-occupying a property
- Overcrowded by two or more bedrooms
- Having trouble accessing toilet and bathing facilities where adaptations cannot be installed, but have been recommended by health care professionals
- Experiencing severe incidences of anti-social behaviour or crime
- Experiencing racial or other forms of harassment
- Older tenants already occupying accommodation for the elderly but needing to move to the ground floor
- Unable to be discharged from hospital due to unsuitability of current property
- Suffering domestic abuse from a member of the household living with them in the property
- Unable to afford the rent and have actively attempted to prevent arrears accruing/cannot afford a rent shortfall resulting in constant accrual of arrears
- Experiencing fuel poverty causing disabilities or health problems to be exacerbated
- Occupying properties which need to be rebuilt or are to be disposed of because of strategic asset management decisions

(This list is not exhaustive)

Where we are unable to assist with a transfer in the short term, we will advise the tenant of other housing options and help with applying although this group will also be free to join waiting lists with other landlords if they wish.

A transfer request will be refused in the following circumstances:

- Where the tenant has large arrears or other outstanding debts and they have not made any attempt to reduce the amount.
- Where the tenant is adequately housed and no need has been identified that requires a move
- Where the tenant is a perpetrator of Anti-Social Behaviour or other tenancy breaches
- Where the property that has been requested to move to is unsuitable and LFHA is unable to adapt the property to fit the needs of the applicant.
- Where the applicant does not meet the conditions of any Local Lettings Policy.
- Where Leeds Federated does not have any stock to meet the needs of the tenant
- Where there is deliberate damage to their applicant's current home.

In such cases, tenants will be advised of the CBL route or other options for securing alternative accommodation and assisted to apply where necessary.

Mutual Exchanges & Mobility Schemes

Leeds Federated supports mobility between social housing tenants by promoting mutual exchanges through local mobility schemes and the national House Exchange scheme.

Tenants will be considered for a mutual exchange with other social housing tenants where both parties are eligible under legislation and in accordance with their tenancy agreement and the landlord's own individual mutual exchange policy.

Leeds Federated will deal fairly and openly with all mutual exchange requests, providing full reasons in writing where the request is refused.

Further information on Mutual Exchanges can be found here [Mutual Exchange Policy.dotx](#)

Successions and Assignments

Tenancies will be considered for successions and assignments in line with legislation and the individual tenancy agreement held.

Decants

Tenants will be considered for decants; either on a temporary or permanent basis; where it is necessary to move out of their current home to allow for major repairs, refurbishment or demolition works.

Allocations to Staff and Related Individuals

Housing applications submitted by the following individuals will only be considered under specific circumstances:

- Current or former (within the last 12 months) employees, agency staff, Board Members, contractors, or sub-contractors working with or on behalf of Leeds Federated
- Close family members of any of the above

These individuals are collectively referred to as **Relevant Persons**.

All applications from Relevant Persons will be handled in a way that is **open, fair, and transparent**, in line with Leeds Federated's **Probity Policy** and without any conflict of interest or undue influence.

Relevant Persons will only be offered housing in accordance with the published Lettings Policy and will be treated equally to all other applicants, including those applying for transfers or re-housing.

Approval Requirements:

- Applications involving Board Members, Senior Management Team or their close relatives must be approved by the Board with full disclosure of the Relevant Person's interest.
- Applications involving other employees or their close relatives must be approved by the Chief Executive, with the Relevant Person's interest disclosed.

Any Relevant Person whose application is under consideration must withdraw from any involvement in the housing allocation process to prevent a conflict of interest.

Falsifying Statements and Information

The Housing Act [1996] allows a landlord to make a request for a possession order through the court where a tenancy has been granted following false statements provided by the tenant or another person who has been persuaded to act on their behalf.

Leeds Federated will consider taking court action in such circumstances which may result in the loss of the tenancy, a fine or possibly both in some circumstances.

Appeals - Right to request a review of decision

Applicants have a right to a review of any decisions made by Leeds Federated concerning them at any stage during the application or lettings process. These can include decisions made where they:

- Are found unsuitable to be a tenant due to serious unacceptable behaviour
- Are found not to be eligible for a property
- Are refused an offer of accommodation
- Have any other adverse decision made against them regarding their application for housing (this list is illustrative, not exhaustive).

If you are unhappy with a decision, you can request a review within 21 days of receiving your decision letter by contacting Leeds Federated. All written complaints should be addressed to:

Head of Housing
Leeds Federated Housing Association
The Tannery,
91 Kirkstall Road,
Leeds,
LS3 1HS

Review requests can also be accepted by:

- telephoning Customer Services on 0113 386 1200
- by email to <mailto:customerservice@lfha.co.uk>
- via our website at www.lfha.co.uk

Key points for customers

Your Neighbourhood Officer can provide you with more information about the points covered in this policy if you are looking to move.

We need accurate and up-to-date information from our you about you and anyone who plans to move with you to make sure we manage lettings fairly and efficiently. If we ask you to provide documents or details about your housing needs, household members or changes in circumstances, this helps us to assess your application and offer suitable housing. It also ensures that we allocate homes in line with our policies and legal responsibilities.

If your housing situation changes or you no longer wish to be considered for a property, please let us know.

If we believe that your application no longer meets the criteria for active consideration, we may close it in line with our Lettings Policy and the principles of fair access to housing.

If we have made one reasonable offer, then we have the right to close your transfer application in line with our Transfer Policy. [Helping people make a home Transfer policy.dotx](#)

Key points for colleagues

It is the responsibility of all Leeds Federated Neighbourhood staff to ensure that their work is carried out in accordance with this Policy. This will ensure that the Association's Lettings Policy is delivered consistently.

Key points for board/committee members and the regulator

Leeds Federated will monitor, evaluate and report on the activities undertaken to deliver this policy, through:

- CORE lettings logs
- Balanced Scorecard measures
- Fulfilling or exceeding targets set by nomination agreements with local authorities and
- Analysing customer satisfaction with the Lettings Policy and the process itself

Regular progress reports will be made to Customer Experience Committee.

Policy updates

The Head of Housing is responsible for updating this policy.

Policy updated and approved in August 2025 by the Customer Experience Committee. Next review due August 2027.