

# Designated Older Person's Housing Allocation Policy

**The Common Allocations Policy applies to everyone who wants to apply for social housing.**

**Please read the Common Allocations Policy before reading this policy.**

**This is an extra policy which covers people aged 55 or older who want to apply for:**

- **sheltered housing schemes**
- **extra care housing**
- **some rural bungalows**

**Leased retirement flats are not covered by this policy.**

## Information for older people who want to apply for social housing

**Everyone** who wants social housing must apply to the Common Housing Register. The Common Allocations Policy explains the rules for applying to this Register and how available properties will be allocated.

People aged 55 or older can also apply to:

- The Designated Older Person's Housing Register, if they want sheltered housing, extra care housing or a rural bungalow. This policy explains the additional rules for this Register.
- The Accessible Housing Register, if they need an adapted property. The additional rules for this Register are explained in the Accessible Housing Allocations Policy.

## How we decided what to put in this policy

Here are the things we thought about when we wrote this policy:

- The **United Nations Principles for Older Persons**, which include:
  - *being independent*
  - *taking part in community life*
  - *getting the right care*
  - *having the life they want*
  - *being treated with dignity and respect*
- **The Equality Act 2010**. The Act says:
  - we must treat people fairly
  - we must make sure older people can use our services. This might mean we need to do things differently for disabled people.
  - we must take action so that disabled people and the rest of the community have equal chances in life and can get on together.
- Older people may not need accessible housing. But many older people will. So the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** is important. This says disabled people have a right to live independently and to be part of the community
- The Welsh Government has written a **Declaration of Rights for Older People in Wales**. It is based on the United Nations Principles for Older People. Here is a list of older people's rights:
  - I have the right to be who I am
  - I have the right to be valued
  - I have free will and the right to make decisions about my life
  - I have the right to decide where I live, how I live and with whom I live
  - I have the right to work, develop, participate and contribute
  - I have a right to safety, security and justice
- This policy fits with the Welsh Government's **Strategy for Older People in Wales: Living Longer, Ageing Well (2013–2023)**. Our policy will:
  - develop 'age-friendly' communities. These are communities that are good places for older people to live.
  - help younger adults to start thinking about what they will need when they are older.

- This policy fits with the NHS's principles of **Prudent Health Care**. These are:
  - The public, patients and professionals need to work together as equals so that people can be healthy and happy.
  - Find out who has the greatest health needs, and see to them first.
  - Do not do too much for people. Do not do too little for people. Do not do things that make people worse off.
  - Find out what works well, then do it.
  
- This policy fits with Ceredigion County Council's **Service Strategy for Older People (Care and Wellbeing) 2014**, especially:
  - Improve information and advice so it is easier for older people to help themselves and to make choices about their care and support.
  - Make sure older people can get good assessments of the support they may need. A good assessment happens at the right time, doesn't ask more questions than are needed and looks at the whole of the person's life.
  - Give more choice of services like tele-care and tele-health.
  - Give more choice of housing and more housing with support (like 'extra care housing'), so fewer people need to go into residential care or hospital.
  - Work with Housing Associations and housing developers to make sure:
    - there is enough housing in Ceredigion that is suitable for older people
    - there is a choice of types of tenancy.
  
- **Housing for All: A Local Housing Strategy for Ceredigion**. This says we want the right services and housing across Ceredigion so people can live independently. This is a job for the whole of Ceredigion County Council.

## What we want the policy to achieve

We want to make sure older people get the housing they need to be:

- healthy
- active
- independent

Sometimes getting older brings health and support needs. So older people may need accessible housing, or support to live at home. Our policy will help this happen.

Our policy also helps achieve the aims of our Common Allocations Policy. We want to:

- use social housing to make communities stronger
- make sure properties go to the people who need our help the most
- make sure people know where they stand

## Using social housing to make communities stronger

Our Designated Older Persons Housing Allocations policy will make communities stronger by:

- making sure people living in or very close to Ceredigion are more likely to get housing.
- helping people stay independent and part of their community by helping them stay close to their support networks.
- making sure people in Band A, B and C all get a share of social housing. *The Common Allocations Policy explains the Band system.* We want:
  - Band A to get 40% of the housing
  - Band B to get 30% of the housing
  - Band C to get 30% of the housing
- taking away the rules about earnings and savings when an older person applies for Designated Older Person's housing.

## **Making sure homes go to the people who need our help the most**

We need to make sure we help the people who need our help the most. We will:

- make decisions using the rules in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- do what we can to solve problems with poor quality privately rented housing.
- make sure people aged between 55 and state pension age can move to smaller homes, so they don't have to pay the bedroom tax.
- work with housing providers to make sure people only live in accessible or supported housing if they need it.

## **Making sure people know where they stand**

We want people to know where they stand with us. We want them to know:

- if they are likely to get social housing.
- how long they might have to wait.
- how we will decide who is offered an available property.
- what we expect from them. For example, how we expect them to behave.

We will:

- use a band system, not a points system.
- take into account how long someone has been waiting, but also make sure people with an urgent need can get our help.
- not let a home to anyone who keeps behaving badly.

## Applying under this policy

You must be:

- aged over 55 **or**
- living with someone aged over 55

*Younger people may be able to get sheltered, supported or extra care housing, but they are not covered by this policy.*

If you are aged over 55 and on the Common Housing Register, you **must apply** if you also want to go on the Designated Older Person's Housing Register. It will not happen automatically.

If you are already on the Common Housing Register when you have your 55<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Housing Register Team will contact you and ask if you want to apply for the Designated Older Person's Housing Register.

If you want to apply for extra care housing, you will need to fill out a form that says why you need extra care housing.

When you apply, you can choose

- as many or as few schemes as you want
- as many areas of rural bungalows as you want

This helps us allocate housing. It also means we can give you a realistic idea of how long you might have to wait.

Sheltered housing and extra care housing schemes may have rules about pets. *Assistance dogs are **not** classed as pets.* Schemes may have other rules as well.

Before you choose a scheme, you must check you are happy with their rules. This is because we will put you in Band F if you refuse a reasonable offer from us for a scheme you have chosen. If you are in Band F we will not make another offer to you.

## Application to the Registers

**We use bands to help us allocate homes.**

**Please read the Common Housing Allocations Policy to find out about the banding system.**

**Our banding system looks at your:**

- **housing need**
- **local connection**

**We also have a Band F for people who are waiting to be put in another band. For example, they might be in rent arrears, or we might be waiting to see if their private landlord will make their current home safe and fit to live in.**

When you apply to the Common Housing Register, we will tell you what band you are in.

When you apply to the Older Person's Housing Register, we will check:

- at least one member of your household is aged 55 or older
- your household would not be overcrowded. This means we work out how many bedrooms your household needs. Then we check if we have any Designated Older Person's housing that is big enough.
- whether you want sheltered housing, extra care housing or a rural bungalow

## **Allocating housing to people on the Designated Older Persons Housing Register**

When a property is available, the Housing Register Team will allocate it to Band A, Band B or Band C.

We will look at the Designated Older Person's Housing Register for people who:

- are in that band
- have applied for that scheme or type of housing

We will take into account how long people have been on the Designated Older Person's Housing Register.

### **Is this policy working?**

Every 3 months we will check if this policy is working.