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**Management Transfer Policy**

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## 1 Introduction and policy purpose

- 1.1 This policy outlines our approach to management transfers (also called management moves) for our social tenants who need an urgent move. It also discusses how we support tenants who wish to downsize from properties that they are under-occupying. It sets out our eligibility criteria about who can apply, how priority is awarded, and our matching standards.
- 1.2 This Policy does not relate to temporary moves, or moves associated with major works or regeneration, these types of moves will be covered under the Decant Policy.
- 1.3 The aim of the policy is to ensure allocations are fair and transparent, and all priority transfers are undertaken as efficiently as possible in the interests of our residents, whilst making best use of stock and meeting West Kent Housing Association's strategic needs.
- 1.4 The vast majority of customers who move will do so by bidding on [Kent Homechoice](#), a choice-based lettings system covering all of Kent and Medway. By accessing Homechoice customers have access to all housing stock within their eligible Local Authority area.
- 1.5 The policy aims to:
  - provide residents and staff with clear information on the requirements for a Management Transfer, and/or Direct Let.
  - set out the circumstances for approving or refusing an application for a Management Transfer and/or a Direct Let.

- 1.6 This policy also explains how we may prioritize certain types of under-occupying household who wish to move to a smaller property within our internal transfers. This enables our larger homes to be allocated to more suitably sized households. This helps us to use our housing stock in the most effective way to meet housing needs within our communities.

## 2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 West Kent understands that there are situations whereby a tenant needs to move urgently due to a risk to themselves and or their family.
- 2.2 Management Transfer may be used to ensure under-occupying residents can be assisted to move into smaller accommodation, which can help the outgoing customer reduce their overhead spend (such as rent, council tax and utility bills), while securing a home for a larger family who have more need of the larger home.
- 2.3 In addition, we may on rare occasions use our discretion to move someone who is living with complex tenancy management issues of a serious nature. We will prioritise moving people in such circumstances with a focus on finding a safe and secure environment for the family to live.

### **3 Responsibilities**

3.1 West Kent will assess each application for a Management Transfer or Direct Let in line with this policy and in conjunction with the following policies:

- Housing Options Policy
- Community Safety Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy

3.2 West Kent's decision to approve or decline a Management Transfer and/or Direct Let will be made in writing and if the decision is to decline, we will outline the reasons for the refusal.

3.3 West Kent will liaise with external agencies to establish the facts and make an informed decision about the best course of action in each individual case to reduce the risk of harm to tenants and their families.

### **4 Definitions**

4.1 "Management Transfer" is the umbrella term for all Management Transfers and Direct Lets. They are broadly interchangeable terms, with a great deal of overlap. However, there are some differences:

4.2 The sole aim of Management Transfer/Direct Let is to move someone quickly. A Management Transfer may or may not result in a Direct Let, depending on what option will provide the best chance of moving for the customer and their family. Every customer who has an agreed Management Transfer status will be eligible for additional support to move. We will also liaise directly with the Local Authority concerned, to seek a solution. This means that for most households their actual move will be via the Local Authority, as it can be preferable to waiting much longer for a West Kent home. This is especially true in areas where West Kent has limited suitable stock, as they will have access to homes from all housing providers in that area.

4.3 Direct Lets can cross Local Authority areas and will sometimes be the preferred option where people are fleeing their current locality, or where we make the decision to help move someone who may have a lower banding status— such as where a family are under-occupying and want to downsize- as the net benefit to the community is that a larger home comes back into usage. Due to our nomination agreement with Local Authorities, we will not usually be able to direct let someone out of their Local Authority area unless the above conditions apply.

#### **Management Transfer**

4.4 A standard Management Transfer is where someone has an urgent need to move, and they require additional assistance to ensure they maximize their chances of moving promptly. In most cases a Tenant will be assisted to gain the highest banding from their

Local Authority to move, due to a serious of risk of harm to themselves or a member of their household.

- West Kent's Allocations team and/or Community Safety team will liaise with the relevant Local Authority to request an increase to the household's banding, by ensuring the customer has all the relevant advice and support required and can satisfy the Local Authority's banding criteria.
- In most cases, tenants will be required to place bids via the housing register on all suitable properties and will be nominated by the Local Authority if they are successful.
- Where someone's need to move is for a safety reason – such a Domestic Abuse, they will likely automatically be entitled to a high banding with the Local Authority – which would mean they would move relatively promptly.
- It is worth noting that in most cases, moving via the Local Authority is the preferred option for the customer, as they will have access to the properties of all local providers (including West Kent), and access to all new builds in their chosen area, and in some cases will have access to reciprocal agreement – such as the Kent Domestic Abuse Reciprocal programme.

#### **Direct Let**

4.5 A Direct Let is when West Kent make a direct offer of accommodation within our own stock without asking the customer to bid via the Housing Register. This means that customers may effectively jump over people who have waited longer to move or may move between stock areas (from one local authority to another). This is why these moves will only be agreed in the most serious of situations.

- Where a direct Let is agreed, this will be limited to two reasonable offers of accommodation in all but the most exceptional circumstances – in recognition of the seriousness of the need to move.
- Area allocations are determined solely by postcode boundaries. We are unable to accommodate requests based on specific streets or property types. This relocation has been approved due to exceptional circumstances and should not be viewed as an opportunity to select a preferred property.
- A Direct let will be a like for like offer, so to a property of the same size, as that which is currently being occupied except where a family needs to downsize to a smaller property in line with our Housing Options Policy. A like-for-like move allows the resident to relocate quickly to a safer environment, and once settled, they can continue to bid for a larger home through the housing register. Additionally, going through the register gives them access to properties from other housing providers, increasing their chances of securing a suitable long-term home. A like for like offer means a property of the same bedroom size, not floor area or property type.

- Under-occupying customers may be awarded a direct let, where doing so would free up a larger home, therefore increasing the choice for customers in the community.
- Direct Lets are dependent on suitable properties becoming available within our stock, which can take many months or even years. This is why moving via the Local Authority can be significantly quicker for residents that need to move.

## 5 Applying for a Management Transfer/Direct Let

- 5.1 A Management Transfer and/or Direct Let should only be considered if there is substantial evidence to support the requirement to move and where all other avenues to resolve the ongoing issues have been explored.
- 5.2 Prior to making the application for a Management Transfer, there should be clear evidence of how we have investigated any reports of ASB, crime and community safety in line with the Community Safety Policy. There should also be written evidence from Community Safety Partners or the Police detailing why a move is required and what other measures have been put in place to safeguard the resident and minimise any risks.
- 5.3 Prior to making the application, Neighbourhood Housing Officer/Community Safety Officer must ensure the resident has made a successful application to the relevant housing register to join the waiting list and offer continued support in doing so if required.
- 5.4 A Management Transfer/Direct Let Request Form (Appendix A) should be completed by the relevant Neighbourhood Housing Officer/Community Safety Officer, and all supporting documentation should be attached along with a timeline of events. Once completed this should be sent to the relevant NHM or CSM for approval. If approval is received the signed form should be sent to Head of Voids & Lettings for a final sign off.
- 5.5 Once approved, the signed form will be sent to Allocations for adding to the Management Transfer & Direct Let waiting List. Allocations will send a copy of the report and supporting documents to the relevant Local Authority to request their banding is increased. The Local Authority will assess each case in accordance with their own Policies & Procedures and reserve the right to refuse to offer Management Transfer banding if the case does not meet their threshold for doing so. Awarding Management Transfer is at the discretion of the Local Authority, and West Kent are not responsible for the banding awarded on the housing register.
- 5.6 Once Management Transfer Banding has been awarded by the Local Authority, due to the urgent need to move, residents will be expected to bid on all available properties that meet their size requirements in their defined safe areas. Failure to do so may result in the management transfer status being withdrawn by either the Local Authority or West Kent Housing. The Local Authority may also insist that the applicants are placed on auto bid, so that bids are automatically placed on all suitable properties.
- 5.7 If the family are successful in bidding on a property, they will be nominated to West Kent by the relevant Local Authority.

## **6 Vulnerable Residents**

6.1 In line with West Kent's Vulnerability Policy, we define Vulnerability as circumstances where individuals are especially susceptible to physical or emotional harm or distress. Vulnerability can be influenced by a range of factors, including (but not limited to): age, disability, bereavement, mental health, domestic violence, or poverty. Where a customer or household is identified as vulnerable under this policy, we will make every effort to provide Reasonable Adjustments to our services to accommodate additional needs.

## **7 Refusals**

7.1 West Kent may decline the application for a Management Transfer or a Direct let if we feel the situation does not meet our threshold for a Managed Move. In these circumstances, the Neighbourhood Housing Officer/Community Safety Officer will continue to work closely with the family to look at other ways to manage the situation.

7.2 If West Kent approve a Management Transfer but it is then declined by the relevant Local Authority, West Kent may decide to consider a direct let, if we feel the circumstances are serious enough.

7.3 West Kent will notify residents that the Management Transfer or Direct Let cannot be granted and the Neighbourhood Housing Officer/Community Safety Officer will help the resident explore other ways of moving if this is their wish, including bidding on suitable properties, mutual exchange, or private lettings.

## **8 Appeals**

8.1 If a resident appeals a decision not to offer a Management Transfer or Direct Let, the decision will be reviewed by Head of Voids & Lettings/Director of Housing. The appeal should be submitted in writing within 21 days of the refusal decision.

## **9 Reviews**

9.1 Allocations, Community Safety & Neighbourhood Housing Teams will meet on a Monthly basis to review each of the current approved Management Transfers and Direct Lets.

9.2 For direct lets, if no suitable properties have been identified within three months, consideration will be given to expand the areas of choice to increase the chance of a suitable property becoming available.

9.3 For Management Transfers, if bids are not being placed on all suitable properties, we may request with the Local Authority for the resident to be placed on auto bid.

89.4 A decision may be taken at this meeting to remove a resident from the transfer list for the following reasons:

- Perpetrator has moved away from the area or received a substantial custodial sentence.

- The risk has been reduced.
- Suitable offers have been refused by the resident.
- No bids being placed.

## **10 Regulation**

10.1 Allocations is one of the most highly regulated areas of housing – this is necessary to ensure homes are let fairly, and as equitably and transparently as possible. Most customers will move via the housing register, which is the fairest and most transparent way to make any allocation of housing, and ensures we meet our obligations under Housing Act 1996 Part 6.

10.2 The use of Management Transfer is exceptional. In rare cases, the customer's need to move will be so severe that accessing the waiting list could put their health or safety at risk – in these cases, the more appropriate path to moving may be to consider a management transfer.

10.3 The only criteria under which Management Transfer/Direct let is granted under the Housing Act 1996 Part VI are:

- Tenant/Family members experiencing severe ASB.
- Tenant/Family members experienced Domestic Abuse.
- Tenant/Family members in Witness Protection.
- Other tenancy related reasons – where health and safety is impacted.
- Downsizing – as this will free up a larger property, which is usually more in-demand.

## **11 Communication**

11.1 This policy is available to view by all residents on the website and will be updated with any changes. Internally this policy will be viewable and accessible by all staff with links in place to the website.