

Viable Housing Solution

Lettings and Nominations Policy

Between

West Lindsey District Council

And

P3 Charity



Introduction

This is the lettings policy for West Lindsey District Council's Viable Housing Solution (VHS). It sets out the framework within which P3 Charity and WLDC will manage the letting of the affordable, rented properties which are part of the scheme.

WLDC will work in partnership with P3 Charity who own and manage the properties within the project.

Policy Statement

WLDC are a forward thinking local authority, taking a place-based approach to local strategic housing needs. Together with P3 Charity, WLDC are working together to provide a viable housing solution (VHS) focusing in Gainsborough. The principles for this project are:

Safe and affordable housing

A safer place to live

Community stability

Lifetime tenancies for the people of Gainsborough

Tenancies

Tenants will be offered a 6-month starter tenancy. If managed satisfactorily after this time, this will then be rolled on to a longer term tenancy.

If nominated by the local authority as joint applicants, joint tenancies will be offered.

Affordable rents are to be in line with market rate.

Eligibility

For an applicant to be considered for a property within the scheme they must meet the following criteria:

- Have a local connection to West Lindsey. Local connection rules are stated in Appendix A.
- Pass an affordability check. An affordability check will consist of an income and expenditure assessment.
- This will also include two people not in the same household who want to live together as two separate households.

Alongside the above eligibility criteria, the following will be considered when looking at accommodating a tenant with an arson conviction to determine eligibility:

- What the conviction was for
- Date of conviction
- Length of sentence

Further information may be required upon request from P3 Charity's Insurance company.

Initial and Future Lets

VHS accommodation units will be allocated by P3 Charity in-line with this policy following receipt of nominations from WLDC Home Choices Team.

Nominations

- P3 Charity will contact WLDC Home Choices informing them of a pending void and the predicted let date allowing a minimum of 5 working days for nominations to be received.
- Nominations will be from a list held by WLDC and will meet the initial affordability criteria of the property.
- Nominees should be put forward by WLDC Home Choices within 5 working days of receipt of property notification to enable P3 Charity to arrange contact with the prospective tenant.
- Nominees will be prioritised by WLDC Home Choices in accordance with the lettings criteria below and local connection criteria at appendix A.
- P3 Charity will try multiple times to contact the proposed nomination by means of phone, email and letter if required.

Allocation of accommodation

Accommodation will be allocated under the following priorities:

1. Households who are unable to apply for a property type on West Lindsey Home Choice due to their household size i.e. a single person with access to a child could not apply for a 2 bedroom house.
2. Households where WLDC owe a prevention or relief homelessness duty with 1 child or more who are unintentionally homeless.
3. Moving to West Lindsey to improve access to current permanent employment or fixed term contract.
4. Households experiencing financial difficulties that could be alleviated by moving.
5. Households who do not meet the criteria for WLDC Home Choice for other reasons.
6. Household member with an urgent and permanent medical condition, unable to continue to reside in current home.

7. Households currently occupying 'Making Gains' supported accommodation with a positive notice to move on to more independent living.
8. Households with poor current property condition/level of disrepair not caused by wilful damage or neglect where the landlord is unable to make the necessary repairs. This must have been registered with WLDC Housing Standards.
9. Households needing to provide support to another member of their family within West Lindsey but are unable to do so from their current accommodation.

If there are multiple applicants with the same level of priority according to the above criteria for the same property the successful applicant will be decided on the following:

- If the applicant and household will not under or over occupy the property.
- The applicant's threat of homelessness

Direct lettings

Direct lettings can be made by P3 Charity in the following circumstances:

- Where there are no forthcoming nominations from WLDC within 10 working days of the nomination request.
- Where P3 charity have an emergency case from another area that needs accommodation.

Management moves.

Management moves are internal transfers between P3 Charity properties undertaken in the following circumstances:

Temporary or permanent decants where the existing property is uninhabitable (e.g. due to fire, flood, major structural defect, other health and safety risk) or to otherwise aid the management of VHS assets (e.g. redevelopment or disposal.)

[Note: where the household would become homeless, and P3 Charity is unable to identify suitable alternative accommodation, the local authority has a statutory duty to assist.]

Where an adaptation is urgently needed, and it is a more effective solution for the household to move.

Other reason where a management move is considered by P3 Charity to be in the best interest of the tenant and/or P3.

Occupancy Levels

For any property that is proposed to be under occupied, WLDC and P3 Charity will ensure the incoming tenant is aware of any restrictions on eligibility for the housing element of Universal Credit or equivalent. A financial assessment will be conducted by P3 Charity if there are any concerns with the nomination. WLDC will only nominate households who can afford the rent either through employment or Universal Credit

A current tenant who is under occupying and wishes to move will be provided with advice on the housing options available to them.

Monitoring

Reports will be provided annually on the number of nominations made to P3 Charity and the number of properties allocated to those nominations. This will include:

- No of properties acquired across the project
- No of nominations made to the project and how many of these turned into successful lets
- No of tenancies terminated across the project.

Quarterly meetings between P3 Charity and WLDC to discuss quality, number of and success of nominations.

Service Standards

Service standards are in place and cover:

- Provision of information about the property, tenancy rights and obligations, services provided by P3 Charity and those available locally.
- Accompanied viewings.
- A comprehensive sign-up processes.
- A follow-up call and/or visit within 1-6 weeks of moving in.
- A named point of contact from P3 Charity for new tenants.
- Timely property inspections at least every 6 months.

Review

The Viable Housing Solutions Policy will be reviewed 12 months from completion

Regular meetings will be held with appropriate operational officers to ensure lettings issues can be discussed and resolved in a timely manner.

Any amendments required to be made to this lettings policy as a result of issues raised need to be agreed by both parties and a new version of the policy published.

Appendix A

Local Connection Criteria

- Lived within West Lindsey for more than 6 months
- Employed within the West Lindsey area
- Confirmed access to children under 16 in the West Lindsey area where it is safe to continue access for the children, ex-partner and applicant.
- Family consisting of siblings, parents, grandparents who have lived in West Lindsey for more than 12 months