

Allocations and Lettings Policy

Governance Information

Applicable Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality Act 2010 Data Protection Act 2018 Immigration Acts 2014 and 2016 Localism Act 2011 Housing Acts 1988 & 1996
Regulatory Reference	Tenancy Standard Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard
Policy Owner	Director of Operations
Approved By	Board
Date Approved	18 th July 2024
Review Date	July 2027
Stakeholders Consulted	Residents, Resident Operations Committee Members & Board

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Change
V1	30 th January 2024	Kim Ward, Head of Housing	Streamlined policy details, removed succession and assignment details as these are covered in the Tenancy Change Policy. Added change to Fixed Term Tenancies to Assured Tenancies. Added start and end date changes to 'any day.' Removed community letting, general needs, community worker and shared ownership waiting lists.
V2	April 2024	Consultant review	Removed Annual Lettings Plan – No longer a regulatory requirement. IDS will continue to comply with Nominations Agreements.

			<p>Removed Shared Ownership sales – This will be covered in a separate policy.</p> <p>Included reference to how IDS manages under-occupation and overcrowding to comply with Tenancy standard.</p> <p>Revised the Internal transfer list section to highlight how transfers are managed.</p> <p>Revised property size eligibility table in line with LHA bedroom entitlement guidelines.</p> <p>Removed right to rent section – this is covered in 'How we let our homes' section.</p> <p>Removed Data section - this is covered in the Data Management Policy.</p> <p>Added Definitions.</p>
V3	July 2024	Consultant	Amendments made following Board review and feedback

Contents

1. Policy Statement
2. Purpose
3. Scope
4. Our Commitment
5. How We Let Our Homes
6. Allocations via Local Authorities
7. Sheltered Accommodation
8. Allocations via IDS Internal Transfer List
9. Direct Lettings
10. Management Transfers
11. Property Size Eligibility
12. Under-Occupation & Overcrowding
13. Adaptations
14. Housing for IDS Staff and Board Members
15. Tenancy Types
16. Appeals
17. Definitions
18. Roles & Responsibilities
19. Equality Impact Assessment
20. Policy Review & Monitoring

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 At the Industrial Dwelling Society (herein known as IDS) we are committed to ensuring fairness and transparency in how we allocate and re-let our homes to residents, both new and existing. We adhere closely to the guidelines set by the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard, which means we:
- Make the best use of available housing;
 - Ensure our lettings are compatible with the purpose of the housing;
 - Contribute to local authorities' strategic housing functions; and
 - Let our homes in a fair and transparent way, taking the needs of residents and perspective residents into account.
- 1.2 We are proud of our Jewish heritage and our unique position in the communities in which we work. We are committed to providing homes for Jewish families and those who work within the community, ensuring they have access to affordable and secure housing within a supportive community.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy provides clear and transparent rules for the allocation and letting of properties owned and managed by IDS.
- 2.2. IDS will provide accommodation for people in housing need by assisting the work of Local Authorities in accordance with Nomination Agreements. We will assist voluntary agencies as set out in 4.2 working with those in housing need and provide opportunities for existing IDS residents to transfer to more suitable accommodation within our own housing stock.
- 2.3. This policy replaces the Allocations and Lettings Policy of 2020 and has been updated following consultation with residents. It also reflects the updated Tenancy Standard as set out by the Regulator of Social Housing.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy sets out how we allocate and let our general needs and sheltered homes. It applies to both existing IDS residents and new applicants who either register with their Local Authorities for one of our homes or apply to IDs directly.
- 3.2. This policy does not cover tenancy succession rights, tenancy assignment requests or mutual exchange applications as these are covered in the Tenancy Change and Mutual Exchange Policies respectively.
- 3.3. This policy does not include how IDS manage decants or the letting of parking spaces.
- 3.4. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Tenancy Change, Mutual Exchange, Decant, Rent Arrears, Rent Setting, Data Management, and Complaint Resolution Policies.

4. Our Commitment

- 4.1 In line with our heritage and our Corporate Strategy IDS will give preference to applicants from the Jewish Community where this is possible. This is in recognition of the documented disadvantage experienced by the Jewish Community in accessing housing both in the social and private sectors.
- 4.2 As an organisation we define 'Jewish' as including those who identify as Jewish and those working within the community. We recognise that for some Jewish people, Judaism is not about faith.
- 4.3 We will support voluntary agencies working within the Jewish community that provide housing advice and assistance to those in housing need
- 4.4 We will respond to identified specialist housing need within the Jewish communities that IDS serves, and will provide affordable housing which help build sustainable communities.

5. How we let our homes

- 5.1. There are several routes into an IDS rented home. These are:
 - Nomination from a Local Authority (covered in section 6);
 - Transfer to another IDS home if you are an existing IDS resident (covered in section 8);
 - By directly applying for an IDS home (covered in sections 7 and 9);
 - By management transfer (Covered in section 10); and
 - By Mutual Exchange (This is covered in the Mutual Exchange Policy).
- 5.2. IDS is committed to working in partnership with all relevant Local Authorities through agreed lettings schemes such as Choice Based Lettings and local Nomination Agreements.
- 5.3. We also work with a number of referral agencies to support our commitment to providing homes for Jewish families.
- 5.4. All allocations made by IDS are subject to the legal requirement that the applicant satisfies the Right to Rent criteria set out in the Immigration Acts 2014 and 2016 and the relevant Code of Practice.
- 5.5. We will record all lettings as required by the Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) system.

6. Allocations via Local Authorities

- 6.1. IDS works in partnership with a number of Local Authorities to alleviate local housing need and homelessness. We will comply with our Regulatory requirements and our Local Authority Nominations Agreements
- 6.2. In the case of newly acquired, or newly built properties where a proportion of funding or land has been provided by a public source, Local Authorities may have the right to 100% of first lettings, or in some cases, in perpetuity. IDS will comply with this requirement.
- 6.3. When requesting a nomination from a Local Authority, IDS will provide details of the accommodation including size, floor level, bedroom spaces and any adaptations to ensure best use is made of the property.
- 6.4. We will also ask that when providing a nomination the Local Authority provides sufficient information regarding any care and support requirements, and background of the nominee within agreed information sharing protocols. The purpose of this is to ensure that IDS can help support our residents to sustain their tenancies.

- 6.5. Local authorities will therefore be required to provide:
- The reasonable preference criteria under which the applicant has been nominated;
 - Whether the applicant, or a member of their household, has any known care needs or provision;
 - Whether the applicant, or a member of their household, has any known history of anti-social behaviour, a history of rent arrears or benefit fraud; and
 - The age and sex of all family members to be housed.
- 6.6. Where there are no nominees, or where the nominees are deemed unsuitable, IDS may identify an existing IDS resident for the property. We will also prioritise applications from the Jewish referral agencies we work with, where possible.

7. Sheltered Accommodation

- 7.1 IDS owns seven sheltered blocks which are for residents aged over 60. Four of these sheltered schemes are designated solely for the Jewish community as set out in section 4.2.
- 7.2 Both IDS and non-IDS residents over the age of 60 can directly apply to IDS for sheltered accommodation . See sections 8 and 9 below.

8. Allocations via IDS internal transfer list

- 8.1. We can allocate a proportion of our empty homes to existing IDS residents and therefore operate an internal transfer list.
- 8.2. All existing IDS residents can apply for a transfer irrespective of how long they have held a tenancy with IDS. They do not need to have an identified need to move or meet any criteria threshold other than property size eligibility (see section 11).
- 8.3. If more than 1 resident bids for an eligible property priority will be given to the resident who has been registered on the transfer list for the longest period of time. In the event that more than 1 applicant bids for the property with the same registration date IDS will review each application and consider criteria such as, but not limited to, under-occupation or overcrowding, or disrepair. In the event that all applicants still meet the same criteria we will give priority to Jewish applicants.
- 8.4. A transfer may not be permitted if the resident has rent arrears; where a Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP) has been served for a breach of tenancy; or where the current property condition has not been maintained by the resident in accordance with IDS standards and expectations.
- 8.5. Discretion may be exercised in emergency circumstances subject to the resident making arrears repayment agreements; an agreement to pay for the cost of refurbishment works; or agreement to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract as examples. This decision will be made by the Head of Housing.
- 8.6. IDS will grant those who were social housing tenants on the day on which section 154 of the Localism Act 2011 came into force, and have remained social housing tenants since that date, a tenancy with no less security where they choose to move to another social rented home. This requirement does not apply where tenants choose to move to accommodation let on Affordable Rent terms.
- 8.7. The Internal transfer list will be reviewed on an annual basis. Anyone who fails to confirm their wish to remain on the list will be removed. They will need to apply again in order to rejoin the list.

9. Direct Lettings

- 9.1 IDS will accept applications directly from individuals and families who are not living in an IDS home, along with referrals from the Jewish agencies and charities we work with. These applications will be assessed and managed in line with our internal transfer list process(see section 8).
- 9.2 We will from time to time collaborate with other providers of social housing and negotiate mutually beneficial reciprocal agreements in cases where there is an urgent need for households to move. These cases will be managed in line with our management transfer process (see section 10).
- 9.3 All direct lettings will be managed from available IDS stock that is not subject to Local Authority Nomination Agreements.

10. Management Transfers

- 10.1 A management transfer is an offer of alternative accommodation if a resident is deemed at risk or serious risk if they remain at their current home.
- 10.2 Circumstances in which a management transfer may be awarded include, acts or threats of violence, including but not limited to racial harassment, hate crime or domestic abuse. It may also be to resolve an ongoing property safety issue or long-term medical issue.
- 10.3 Decisions on whether a resident should be offered a management transfer are made by the Allocations Panel. The case is presented by the supporting officer, along with the appropriate documentation and accompanying evidence. Where IDS deems there to be an emergency the management transfer will be awarded as soon as reasonably possible,
- 10.4 These will usually be offered on a 'like for like' basis in terms of the number of bedrooms, unless the current property is under-occupied or overcrowded, in which an offer of a suitable sized property may be made where possible and available. They will also be offered a property on the basis of 'one offer only'.
- 10.5 Active management transfer cases will be reviewed every three months. If circumstances have changed and a move is no longer necessary, the applicant will be removed from the management transfer list and this will be confirmed to the lead resident.
- 10.6 Where IDS requires a resident to move, for example for redevelopment of a property or to facilitate major repairs, this is covered in the Decant Policy.

11. Property size eligibility

- 11.1. When allocating a property, restrictions apply in order to minimise under occupancy and prevent deliberate or statutory overcrowding at the commencement of a tenancy. The table below outlines eligible household size in relation to the property:

Property	Eligible household size
Bedsit / 1 bed, 1 person property	Single person
1 bed / 2 person property	Single person or couple
2 bed / 2 - 3 person property	Couple / single person with 1 child

2 bed / 4 person property	<p>Couple / single person 1 child, 2 children of the same gender or 2 children of different gender until one reaches the age of 10</p> <p>Children over the age of 16 and adults that are not cohabiting as a couple are entitled to a bedroom on their own.</p>
3 bed / 3 – 5 person property	<p>Couple / single person with 2 or 3 children of different gender until one reaches the age of 10, or 3 children of the same gender</p> <p>Children over the age of 16 and adults that are not cohabiting as a couple are entitled to a bedroom on their own.</p>
3 bed / 6 person property	<p>Couple / single person with 3-4 children of the same gender, or two male and two female children.</p> <p>Children over the age of 16 and adults that are not cohabiting as a couple are entitled to a bedroom on their own.</p>
4 bed + properties	<p>Larger units will be allocated in accordance with the principles applied above, i.e. no more than two persons to share a room.</p> <p>Children over the age of 16 and adults that are not cohabiting as a couple are entitled to a bedroom on their own.</p>

- 11.2. In the case of two adults who are not a couple, or where medical evidence demonstrates a need for separate bedrooms, a couple / two adults may be considered for a two bedroom property. This exception will also be applied to size criteria in larger households.

12. Under Occupation & Overcrowding

- 12.1 IDS will actively encourage residents who are either under-occupying or overcrowded in their homes to move by participating in rehousing schemes such as Homeswapper. We may also offer financial incentives to support such residents to move home.

13. Adaptations

- 13.1. Where homes have been built or adapted to meet the needs of residents IDS will advertise the property highlighting details of the adaptations to ensure best use of stock.
- 13.2. If no applications are received from applicants who need the adaptation IDS may choose to let the property to another person on the transfer list.

14. Housing for staff members and their families

- 14.1. IDS staff, Board members and applicants related to either an IDS staff or board member can apply for housing with IDS and be nominated by the Local Authority. If this occurs, approval from the Director of Operations must be obtained prior to granting a tenancy.

15. Tenancies

- 15.1. IDS uses a range of tenancy types. Generally, we will offer a Starter Tenancy for a term of one year, and providing there have been no serious breaches of the tenancy in that year an assured Tenancy will subsequently be issued. The type of tenancy issued may vary depending on whether we are the freeholder of the property or we hold a lease interest as set out in the table below.
- 15.2. Historically, IDS has granted 5-year fixed term tenancies. At the expiry of these, provided we are the freeholder of the property and there have been no serious breaches of tenancy, assured tenancies will be granted.

Tenancy type	When they are used
Secure Tenancies	Secure tenancies mainly exist for tenancies granted before 15 January 1989. Should a current tenant holding a secure tenancy be moved to another property via a management transfer, they will maintain their secure tenancy.
Assured Tenancies	To be issued on the expiry of Starter, or historic fixed term tenancies where IDS is the freeholder.
Assured Shorthold 5-year Fixed Term	To be issued where IDS is the leaseholder following a Starter Tenancy. These will only not be renewed if there are significant arrears or tenancy breaches for which eviction proceedings have already been started.
Starter Tenancies (12 month probationary)	To be issued to residents new to IDS. On the successful completion of a 12-month starter tenancy an assured tenancy (or 5 year Fixed Term) will be issued.
Licence to Occupy	To be used for temporary decants.

- 15.3. Only in exceptional circumstances will IDS grant tenancies for a fixed term of less than five years. An example being where a building is highlighted for possible disposal.
- 15.4. Tenancies will start on any day of the working week and rent will be charged pro rata for that first week. It is expected, in line with the tenancy agreement and Rent Arrears Policy, that rent is paid in advance.
- 15.5. The level of rent will be determined by the type of property and is set out in the Rent Setting Policy.

16. Appeals

- 16.1. An applicant can register an appeal if they are dissatisfied with the way their application, selection, or property offer has been handled. Appeals must be made within 21 days of the decision being made and will be considered by the Head of Housing in line with the Allocation Appeals Procedure.
- 16.2. An applicant can make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service received by IDS as set out in the Complaint Resolution and Customer Care Policy.

17. Definitions

Choice Based Lettings	Lettings system operated by some Local Authorities and Social housing providers, which enables applicants to bid for properties that they are eligible for.
Nominations Agreement	Agreement between a Local Authority and a Housing Provider which sets out how lettings activity is to be managed. It applies to all General Needs and Supported Housing lets.
Decants	The process of relocating residents from their existing homes to temporary or permanent alternative accommodation in order to carry out major works or redevelopment of the property.
NOSP	A Notice of Seeking Possession is a legal notice served on a tenant following a breach of tenancy, served prior to Court action.
Acceptable Behaviour Contract	A voluntary written agreement signed by an individual who has been involved in anti-social behaviour. By signing the contract, the individual agrees to abide by specific terms.
Reciprocal Agreement	An agreement with another social housing provider to house an individual / family in exchange for them housing an IDS individual / family.
Allocations Panel	IDS panel chaired by the Head of Housing to assess and approve management transfers.

18. Roles & Responsibilities

Director of Operations	Overall responsibility for this policy
Allocations Panel	Approval of Management transfers and exceptions to the policy.
Head of Housing	Day to day implementation and decision making
Housing Services Manager	Day to day responsibility for implementing the policy.
Estate Manager	Makes recommendations after information gathering when dealing with requests. Completes viewings, sign up and reviews.
Housing Assistants	Requests nominations for void properties and creates match lists from internal transfer and management transfer lists for allocating. Processes application forms.

19. Equality Impact Assessment

19.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this Policy.

20. Policy Review & Monitoring

- 20.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years, or in response to a change in regulatory guidance, best practice, or legal precedent.
- 20.2. Performance of the lettings service will be reported to the Corporate Management Team by the Head of Housing each month, and to the Operations Committee each quarter.
- 20.3. Resident surveys will be completed and the feedback used to continue to improve performance.