

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

1	Document title	Allocations Policy	
2	Metadata	N/A	
3	Document Owner (post)	Director of Housing Services	
4	Document date	June 2024	
5	Dates reviewed	September 2020, June 2024	
6	Next review date	June 2027	
7	Approval required	Board	N
		Committee	N
		SLT	Y
		OLT	Y
		Local (Team Leaders)	N
8	Consultation conducted?	No	
9	EIA completed?	No	
10	Related P&P		
11	Consultation history		

1. Scope and purpose

1.1. Elim's vision is to meet housing need and deliver homes that change people's lives. How we allocate our homes to prospective tenants is a critical activity in delivering this vision. This Policy sets out how we will do this.

1.2. This Policy aims to:

- Make the best use of Elim's homes in a way that fulfils our vision
- Ensure that our tenants and prospective tenants access homes that meet their needs
- Ensure that our allocations process is fair and transparent
- Contribute to the strategic housing plans of our local authority partners
- Help the communities in which are homes are located to thrive and be sustainable

1.3. This policy applies to all of our social housing, including our Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. It does not apply to our supported housing schemes, which are subject to individual agreements with local authorities, or intermediate or market rent homes.

2. Key legislation and contractual priorities

2.1. In delivering these Policy aims we will adhere to all relevant legislative, regulatory and contractual requirements including, but not restricted to:

- Localism Act 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 1996
- The Regulatory Framework
- Choice Based Lettings Schemes
- Section 106 agreements
- Relevant lettings and management agreements
- Housing Act 1996 and subsequent amendments
- Immigration Act 2014
- Mobile Homes Act 1983

3. Eligibility

3.1. To be eligible for an Elim home, an applicant must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be over 18, or over 16 with an adult guarantor who will hold the tenancy in trust and guarantee rent until the applicant turns 18
- Be habitually resident in the UK and have the right to rent in the UK
- Not be exempt from holding a tenancy by their immigration status. Typically this means that they should hold either an EU passport or have leave to remain in the UK (note that legislation in relation to passports may have potential to change/be uncertain as a result of the Brexit process – Elim reserve the right to apply current legislation as it sees fit. Where this is unclear, legal advice will be sought).

4. Accessing an Elim home including Gypsy and Traveller pitches

4.1. There are three main routes into an Elim home:

- Nomination by a local authority
- Direct access through our internal Move-On Scheme called 'Your Best Move'
- Through mutual exchange with another social housing tenant

For permanent pitch applications - Some Traveller sites have their own allocations policy and allocations are decided by the relevant local authority. Sites that Elim has responsibility for are managed through local authority nominations.

For Transit pitch applications – please refer to 5.6 below and the relevant procedure.

4.2. Nomination by a local authority

Nomination by a local authority is the most common route into an Elim home. We hold nominations agreements with each of the local authorities in whose areas we operate. These local authorities prioritise housing applicants according to level of need through Choice Based Lettings (CBL) schemes. We do not hold our own waiting lists for properties but instead use the applicants provided through CBL (or equivalent system). This process is governed by Nominations Agreements with individual local authorities to which we will adhere.

4.3. On occasions, local lettings plans implemented by a local authority may temporarily supersede any nominations agreements. On such occasions we will work with the authority to deliver the plan. If for any reason it is not possible for us to do this, then we will notify the authority and revert to the pre-existing nominations agreement. For the allocation of new developments we may seek to develop a local lettings plan with the host authority to support development of a diverse and sustainable community.

4.4. Move-on Scheme

Elim's internal move-on scheme was developed to make best use of our properties in order to fulfil our vision and as part of our 'Your Best Move' initiative. The key aspects of the move-on scheme are:

- Applicants will have recent experience of homelessness and be residing in either:
 - An Elim supported housing scheme
 - Elim temporary or insecure accommodation
 - The supported housing scheme of a provider with which Elim has a contractual relationship for the support provision.
- Applicants that fulfil the criteria for the move-on scheme will be referred by a Support Worker or Housing Officer. The referral will demonstrate that:
 - The candidate has a recent history of homelessness
 - The candidate has taken tangible steps to access education and/or employment and training (including voluntary work) and the Elim home will serve to support these steps
 - The candidate can be reasonably expected to manage their own accommodation with little or no additional formal support
 - The applicant has an active application for housing within the local authority in which the available Elim property is based.
- Every new vacancy in an Elim social rented home will be considered for the move-on scheme. Reasons for the home not being included may include:
 - The let would be in breach of local nomination agreements
 - The home is not appropriate, e.g. the majority of homes let through the move-on scheme are expected to be shared or 1-bed properties.
 - There are no suitable applicants.

Full details about the move on scheme can be found at [F:\Supportive Housing\Supportive Move On](#).

5. Exceptions

5.1. There may be exceptions to these routes into an Elim tenancy. Such exceptions will always be approved by the Head of Housing or equivalent:

5.2. Sensitive Lets: in some cases, the identity of an applicant can have a disproportionate impact on the wellbeing of a neighbourhood. This will usually be in situations where there has been sustained or serious ASB in the neighbourhood. In such cases, we may bypass standard routes into an Elim home. A written record of the decision making process will be kept.

5.3. Management transfer: on occasions, we may transfer an existing Elim tenant from one Elim property to another. Example reasons for this action are:

- As part of an approach to management of the impact of ASB.
- At the request of a local statutory body, e.g. Police, in response to a concern for a residents' safety.
- In order to provide a resident with a home that better meets their needs as a result of a health or disability requirement.
- In order to rehouse a member of Elim staff who has previously been provided with 'live-in' accommodation as part of their job.

5.4. Homes that are not social housing: Where homes are not social housing, they may be let in alternative ways, e.g. through classified adverts or through a partnership with another organisation.

5.5. Hard to let homes: Where we have not been able to let a home through any of the main routes identified above, we may choose an alternative way to let the home. In doing so, we will still ensure that we are fulfilling Elim's vision of meeting housing need.

5.6. Transit sites and pitches. Applicants are invited to apply direct to Elim using our prescribed application forms. In line with transit guidance lets are up to 3 months only and applicants must be able to demonstrate that they are in transit and have a permanent home or pitch to return to.

6. Grounds for refusal

6.1. In some circumstances, Elim may refuse an application for housing. This will be because we think that the allocation may be detrimental to the neighbourhood, to Elim or to the applicant's household themselves. Any of the following circumstances may provide grounds for refusal:

- a) The applicant a conviction or caution in the past 3-years for an offence that may make them unsuitable to be a tenant. All unspent convictions must be declared on the housing application form. Note that Elim is committed to the principles outlined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and so a conviction does not automatically mean that a housing application will be turned down.
- b) The applicant has been evicted or had a possession order or an injunction made against them in the past 5-years for serious anti-social or criminal behaviour, including domestic abuse.
- c) The applicant or a member of the household has had tenancy enforcement action taken against them in the past 3-years as a result of anti-social behaviour.
- d) Any landlord has commenced legal action for breach of tenancy against the applicant in the past 3-years.
- e) The applicant has current or former arrears of rent, service charges or any other housing debt with Elim or any other landlord.
- f) Following a financial assessment, the allocating Officer believes that the applicant will not be able to afford to live in the property.
- g) The applicant has not been able to provide sufficient evidence that they meet the eligibility criteria detailed in 3.1. above.

6.2. Elim exist to meet housing need. We recognise that many people in housing need will have a chaotic recent history and that a secure home represents a platform from which they can begin to rebuild their life and recover from trauma. Whilst the circumstances above qualify as grounds for refusal, we will take a holistic view of applicants' situations, balancing their views

and those of associated professionals against risk to neighbourhood, tenancy and Elim in an effort to manage risks.

6.3. Any refused applicant for housing will be provided with a copy of this Policy and has the right to appeal against the decision under this Policy. Appeals should be made to info@elimhousing.co.uk or by phone on 01454 411172, stating the grounds on which the appeal is based. The appeal will be reviewed by a first line manager not directly involved with the allocation decision and a response will be provided in 5 working days.

6.4. Elim may seek to obtain references in order to gain assurance about an applicant's suitability for a home. This will always be done with the consent of the applicant and in line with Elim's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement.

7. Housing Fraud

7.1. Social housing fraud is a criminal offence. Anyone found to have deliberately lied, provided false information or withheld information as part of an application will not be offered a property or will have their offer removed. Enforcement action will be taken if we believe a tenancy has been obtained through deception.

8. Property size

8.1. We will typically make offers of accommodation based on information in an applicants' CBL bid. We will aim to make best use of our properties by taking into consideration the size standards outlined in the Housing Act 1985 and the financial implications of the Local Housing Allowance. The table at 8.2. provides detail of how we will offer our properties.

8.2.

Property type/size	Household size/type
Flatlets/ bedsits	to single people (unless emergency or supported accommodation, where one child may be housed with a single adult)
1 bed flats	to single people and couples (unless emergency or supported accommodation, where one child may be housed with a single adult).
2 bed properties	to couples who need two bedrooms to provide accommodation for an overnight carer who is not part of the household; to two single people sharing (for example brother and sister); to households with up to two children of different sexes under the age of 10 or of the same sex under the age of 16.
3 bed properties	to families with at least two or more children where the children are 10 or over and of different sexes or where at least one of the children is 16 or over
4 bed houses	to families with three children or more depending on the sex and ages of the children
Bungalows	normally to people over 60 or to those with disabilities
Housing on ground and lower floors	Applicants may be required to demonstrate their needs for ground floor accommodation, for example medical evidence to support the need for ground floor accommodation only.

8.3. In some cases there will be exceptions to the guidance in 8.2, for example:

- Where a larger property is required for serious medical reasons.

- Approved foster carers will be allowed an additional room whether or not they currently have a child placed with them, so long as they have become approved or fostered a child in the previous 12-months.
- Adult children who are in the armed forces but continue to live with parents will be treated as continuing to be part of the household even if deployed on operations.
- An extra room may be allowed for a resident or non-resident carer. The applicant must reasonably require the care being provided and be in receipt of med-high care component of DLA/Attendance Allowance or the daily component of Personal Independence Payments.
- A severely disabled child should not have to share a room with a sibling.