



# Transfer Policy (General Needs)

## Introduction

Derwent Living operate a transfer policy that enables our existing customers to maximise their 'mobility' and access alternate accommodation that may be more suitable to their personal housing needs.

This Policy gives consideration to housing demand and how we can make best use of our existing housing stock, by ensuring that our tenants are housed in the most appropriate accommodation for their circumstances. We have made provision that where tenants are deemed to be in urgent housing need they are transferred to alternative accommodation in a timely manner.

Each year, Derwent Living will allocate a minimum of 10% of all void properties to transfer applicants.

## Who can apply for a transfer?

- Assured and Secure tenants and be a;
- Sole or Joint tenant

All new tenants to Derwent Living are offered a Starter Tenancy and are not entitled to apply for a transfer of accommodation until their tenancy converts to a full assured tenancy at the 12 month anniversary. However in exceptional circumstances Derwent Living may allow a starter tenant to carry out a transfer. This will be decided on a case by case basis, and authorised by the Head of Housing, Head of Supported Housing or Operations Director. In these circumstances, the tenant would carry forward their time already spent as a starter tenant to the next tenancy.

Tenants who have transferred to alternate accommodation cannot apply for a further transfer for 12 months.

To apply for a transfer, a tenant must complete an application form. Applicants will be asked to specify the areas they wish to move to. When we receive an application it will be assigned to a band according to the need criteria specified within this policy. Any information provided that we feel requires further investigation will result in contact from the Housing Officer.

### **Transfers to Supported Accommodation**

Tenants who wish to apply for a transfer to supported accommodation will be assessed in accordance with a separate policy and procedure managed by the Retirement Living team. If tenants apply for a move to supported accommodation they cannot also register for a move to general needs accommodation.

### **Housing need criteria and access to offers**

We take account of multiple housing needs in this policy. This means that priority is given to transfer applicants who are in the greatest housing need, however by assessing housing need using 'bands' (rather than points) all tenants registered for a transfer will be given greater opportunity to receive an offer.

Where an applicant meets the criteria of 'multiple' circumstances, they will be awarded the highest band according to the circumstance identified as being of greatest concern.

Of the 10% of all void properties reserved for transfer applicants, Derwent Living will ensure that a proportion of offers are made to tenants from each band. Applications within each band will be prioritised in date order.

### **BAND A (30 per cent of all transfers)**

1. Approved Management Transfers (serious ASB to protect witnesses who agree to attend court/domestic violence/harassment/serious welfare concerns/ to support homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainability). Must be approved by HSM and HoH.
2. Applicants in properties that have been identified for disposal or are at risk due to the expiry of the head lease.

### **BAND B (40 per cent of all transfers)**

1. Overcrowded properties (at least one bedroom deficient)

2. Under-occupied properties (where the applicant can free up 2 bedrooms)
3. Health conditions with clear evidence (medical support) of a condition exacerbated by the current property (e.g. require ground floor accommodation)
4. Move on from temporary Derwent Living accommodation
5. Separated families (due to lack of bedroom space)

### **BAND C (25 per cent of all transfers)**

1. Applicants who wish to move closer to family for support
2. Relationship breakdown (where joint tenancies are to be assigned into a sole name)
3. Applicants wish to move closer to place of work

### **BAND D (5 per cent of all transfers)**

1. Applicants who are adequately housed but have expressed an interest to transfer

### **When will we reject an application:**

1. The applicant is currently in breach of their tenancy agreement (other than grounds relating to rent. See section below on arrears.)
2. The property and/or garden are not well maintained and there is damage to either
3. The applicant is a starter tenant
4. The applicant has transferred (between two Derwent Living tenancies) within the previous 6 months

If a transfer application is rejected the tenant has the right to appeal (see section entitled Appeals).

### **Arrears**

Any arrears relating to rent, sundry debt or rechargeable repairs will need to be cleared before a tenant will be considered for a transfer. In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Housing Services Manager a transfer

may be granted where there is a suitable payment plan in place that is being adhered to.

### **Access of offers**

When a property is identified for an offer to a transfer applicant, the tenancy services allocations team will determine which band an offer is to be made from in accordance with the following breakdowns to ensure that our existing customers (within each of the needs bandings) are given maximum opportunity to access alternate accommodation, as follows;

- 30% of offers to applicants in Band A
- 40% of offers to applicants in Band B
- 25% of offers to applicants in Band C
- 5% of offers to applicants in Band D

Upon determining the band, those applicants within that band will be assessed on eligibility for the property type (size).

### **Advertising of properties**

The property identified for an offer will be advertised on the Derwent Living website for a period of 7 days. Of those that express an interest they must already be registered for a transfer. Although the Band to which the offer is to be made will have already been identified, applicants from all Bands will be invited to express an interest. This is to ensure that if the identified band is exhausted consideration can be given to applicants in other bands.

Applicants can express an interest by directly contacting the tenancy services allocations team or clicking a link via the website.

The website will make clear to applicants that if they do not receive any contact regarding the property then they can assume that they have not been successful. This will ensure that administration and resource costs are kept to a minimum, promoting value for money

### **Offers of accommodation**

After the bidding cycle has come to a close, the allocations team will make an assessment of all those applicants who have both expressed an interest and of those who qualify for an offer based on the information they have provided (size

of property, location and band selected). This takes into consideration that not all applicants have access to the internet and therefore they too will be contacted and asked to express interest in the potential offer.

In addition to the value for money consideration, Derwent Living will avoid raising unnecessary expectations of applicants, therefore a provisional offer letter will only be sent to the top 3 applicants which will be determined by time accrued on the waiting list. The 3 applicants will be given a suitable period of time to make contact to confirm their interest.

If multiple applicants confirm their interest , a firm offer will be made to the applicant who has accrued the most time on the list.

Before a tenant receives a firm offer their Housing Officer accompanied by a Maintenance Surveyor will inspect their current property to ensure there is no damage and the property and/or garden has been kept in good condition. If there is damage or the property is in poor condition the offer will not be made and no further offers will be made until the damage/condition has been rectified.

Checks will also be made of rent and sundry debt accounts to ensure that no outstanding monies are owed to Derwent Living.

If there are limited applicants within the chosen band who qualify and/or have expressed interest, the allocations team will then consider the following 3 applicants and so on, until the Band has been exhausted. If still not suitable applicant has been identified, the allocations team, will consider applicants in the next band (in descending order).

All transfer offers will be authorised by the Housing Services Manager.

### **The type and size of property offered**

In order to make the best use of our housing, tenancies will normally only be granted for properties which are an appropriate size and type for the applicant's needs. This means we match the size of the property to the size of the household.

On certain schemes we may operate Local Lettings Policies where specific issues have been identified (i.e. levels of ASB, gender and/or age imbalance). On such schemes we may only allocate to applicants who meet the specific criteria as defined by the Local Lettings Policy.

If an applicant has regular overnight access (3 nights or more per week) to children we will usually take this into account when offering a property. However, if they are a single person household with access to children it is unlikely that they will be offered a family house. In these cases we will request a letter confirming arrangements from the main carer.

### **Alternatives to transfers**

Mutual exchange is an alternative to transfers. All residents who have a secure or assured tenancy have the right to apply for a mutual exchange. The right to exchange is determined by Section 92 of the Housing Act 1985.

Our Mutual Exchange Policy sets out the framework within which we will promote and deal with requests to exchange.

Starter tenants are not entitled to apply for a mutual exchange until their tenancy has converted to a full assured tenancy.

### **Other types of accommodation available from Derwent Living**

Derwent Living has a varied stock consisting of affordable rented flats and houses; market rental flats, student accommodation; shared ownership properties; housing for the elderly and key worker accommodation. We provide advice and assistance to existing residents who are interested in any of these options.

However to be successful in applying they will have to meet any specified criteria for different types of accommodation, which is stated in the allocations policies relating to that specific tenure.

### **Appeals**

If a tenant is not satisfied that we have complied with this policy they can appeal against any decision made regarding their application to transfer by contacting the Customer Services Manager.

The Customer Services Manager will investigate any appeal within 14 days of receipt and if a meeting is necessary we will arrange a visit to discuss.

On completion of the investigation, the Housing Services Manager will write to confirm the outcome of the appeal.

## Complaints

If the tenant is still not satisfied that we have complied with this policy, then they can complain in line with our Complaints Policy which provides information about what to do together with details of how we handle complaints.

All complainants have the right to external review by the Housing Associations Ombudsman but they must have gone through our complaints procedure in the first instance.

## Associated Policies

Allocations Policy

Local Lettings Policy

Mutual Exchange Policy

## Equality and Diversity: Equal Opportunities Policy

We are committed to promoting Equal Opportunities in the provision of housing services and in the employment of staff and contractors, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin, religion or belief, disability, age, gender, marital status or sexual orientation.

Our commitment includes Minicom facilities at our offices, trained sign language staff, disabled access and facilities at both our offices and work places. We also offer upon request:

- A translation service in written form, i.e. the Association's policies, and in the form of a three-way telephone conversation
- Documents recorded onto tapes
- Documents written in Braille

Aby uzyskać kopię tej ulotki w innym języku, dużym drukiem lub na płycie CD, należy zadzwonić na numer 01332 346 477

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਵਾਉਣਾ, ਮੋਟੇ ਛਾਪੇ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸੀ ਡੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ 01332 346 477 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ یہ لیف لٹ ترجمہ شدہ صورت میں، جلی حروف میں یا سی ڈی پر حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہوں تو براہ مہربانی ٹیلیفون نمبر 01332 346 477 پر فون کریں۔

**If you would like this leaflet translated, in large print or on CD please telephone 01332 346477**

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