



KINGDOM

Housing Association

Transfer Policy

If you need this publication in larger print, audio form, Braille, or in another language, please contact our office and we will try to help you.



TRANSFER POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is to outline the way in which Kingdom Housing Association Limited proposes to manage transfer requests.

We are committed to the principles of good corporate governance and sustainability and will endeavour to develop fair and consistent policies, procedures and practices.

In line with our commitment to equality and diversity, this policy can be made available in a variety of formats including large print, translated into another language or other media. We will make any reasonable adjustments to assist you if you have a disability.

Most Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Local Authorities have policies to meet the needs of tenants wishing to move within their stock. We have devised a policy which is fair, meets all current statutory obligations and offers tenants who wish to transfer properties a user-friendly system in order to meet their housing needs and aspirations.

2. Applying for a Transfer

We want our existing tenants to remain with us as long as possible and have user friendly procedures in order to meet their changing housing needs and aspirations. In line with our Allocation Policy we will allow up to 30% of our allocations in any one year to be from the transfer category.

Most tenants are eligible to apply for a transfer; however there are certain restrictions which will apply. We will accept applications from tenants who are assessed as being adequately housed as at the date of application as they may have personal, social or aspirational reasons to move. Normally, tenants assessed as having no immediate need will be transferred only once other transfer applicants with housing need have had their needs met. Applications will be assessed in accordance with our Allocation Policy.

If a tenant wishes to apply for a transfer within Fife they must complete a Fife Housing Register application form. We are now members of the Fife Housing Register Inter-Organisational Transfer Scheme which means that all tenants whose landlord is a member of the scheme will be on one list and will be considered along with the other FHR partners' transfer applicants for any vacancy. Our Customer Service Team can help you to complete your transfer form and your transfer form will be assessed by the Fife Housing Register staff. If tenants wish to transfer to any of our properties in Falkirk or Perth and Kinross, they should apply to us using our Kingdom application form which is available on our website or on request. We are not part of a common transfer scheme in Falkirk or Perth and Kinross and therefore transfer applicants will only compete against other Kingdom transfer applicants for these areas.



Any forms must be completed as fully as possible as transfer applications are assessed in line with the Allocation policy and points are primarily awarded for housing need.

Whilst we strive as hard as we can to meet everyone's needs and aspirations, we cannot transfer everyone who applies because we do not always have a suitable vacancy. Whilst we will try our best to meet our tenant's needs on some occasions although the tenant may meet all the conditions, a suitable vacancy may not arise within their time frame.

Where tenants are affected by under occupancy and a transfer would improve their situation, we may give transfer applicants priority over other social housing applicants on the Fife Housing Register and our housing list for areas out with Fife. In addition, if an under occupying transfer applicant does not meet our eligibility criteria then we may consider relaxing the criteria if there is a business case to do so.

Where an applicant, regardless of income, wishes to transfer to a larger property than the Department of Work and Pensions says they need, we will not normally prevent the transfer. We will, however, point out clearly that they will be eligible to pay any shortfall in the rent due to an under-occupancy charge and they must indicate that they are willing to pay this before the transfer is granted.

3. Suspensions

We may suspend a tenant's application in the following circumstances:

- If they have housing related debt greater than 1 month's rent. If they have either rent arrears or rechargeable items they may still be eligible for a transfer if they have an agreement in place and they have paid it for the previous consecutive 3 months and continue to pay it.
- If they have been evicted in the last three years for anti-social behaviour or where either they or a member of their family have an ASBO granted against them.
- If we have clear evidence that they or a member of their family have caused anti-social behaviour or criminal activity in any of their tenancies in the last 3 years then this may also lead to suspension.
- If they are currently subject to legal action by us for housing debt or anti-social behaviour.
- If the tenants property fails to meet a reasonable standard of repair. They must be prepared to allow access to their house for an exit inspection. At the exit inspection their house will be checked for damage, unauthorised alterations or poor decoration. If their property fails the inspection they may still be eligible as long as they are prepared to repair or replace the things



which have led to them failing to meet the standard. Their application will be suspended pending completion of the necessary works and reviewed thereafter.

Where a tenant is suspended for housing related debt or anti-social behaviour, whether they have a Fife Housing Register or out with Fife application, their suspension will be reviewed every six months and they will be contacted as part of this process to update their circumstances.

Where the tenant has taken the required action to address the reasons for the suspension, e.g. made and kept to an arrangement to pay housing related debt or sought support to address any anti-social behaviour, the tenant must contact us so that we can review the status of their suspended application.

4. The Role of the Housing Services Department

The processing of transfer applications out with Fife is the responsibility of the Customer Service Team. Within Fife, transfer applications will be processed by the Fife Housing Register, although Customer Service Team will offer advice and assistance to tenants wishing to complete a transfer form.

The appropriate Housing Officer will ensure the quota for transfers is not exceeded.

5. Appeals Process

Any applicant unhappy about a decision relating to a transfer must submit a written appeal to the Area Manager within 28 days of receiving the decision. The Area Manager will review the decision and reverse any aspect which is felt to be unfair or contrary to this policy.

If the decision remains the same, the applicant will be given written reasons for this.

If the applicant is still dissatisfied they will be able to use our Complaints, Comments and Compensation policy to take their concerns forward. A copy of this policy is available from our Customer Service Team.

6. Civil Partnership Act 2004

For the purpose of a transfer, we will take into consideration the above legislation where a civil partnership has been registered in the terms of the Act.

7. The Measurement of our Performance – Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets standards and outcomes that describe the results that tenants and others who use their services can expect from social landlords. The relevant standards



and outcomes for the activity of managing transfers are listed below. We will use these to measure our performance and also to be accountable to our customers.

Charter Outcome 1: Equalities

Social landlords perform in all aspects of their housing services so that:

- Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

We will achieve this Charter objective by ensuring that anyone applying for a transfer is treated fairly and has equal access to assistance in making their application and its assessment. Our comprehensive forms and interview process identify applicants' individual needs in detail so that we can best match their aspirations and needs. We will monitor the number of transfers to which needs groups they go and by gender and other protected characteristics to ensure our access is fair to all groups.

Charter Outcome 2: Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Our policies will be available in a number of formats to ensure as many people as possible have access. We will have documents translated or use an interpreter where there are language barriers or where people have sensory impairment. We will use email, telephone, one to one meetings and our website in order to make it easy for people to communicate. We will be available to discuss how we reach decisions and the services we provide through our Customer Service Team.

Charter Outcome 3: Participation

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

We will seek the views of our tenants by communicating with them in a number of ways they feel comfortable with namely email, our website, phone, Facebook and on a one to one basis. We will also use surveys, focus groups and meet with residents groups in order that they can influence our decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.



Charter Outcome 6: Estate Management, Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbour Nuisance and Tenancy Disputes

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that:

- Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

Where people are subject to harassment, violence or anti-social behaviour we will work with other agencies in our sphere of operations to address these issues and reduce the impact on our tenants. Where people feel they have to seek alternative accommodation because of these issues, the Transfer policy will be used to facilitate this in a timeous and responsive way.

Charter Outcome 11: Tenancy Sustainment

Social landlords make sure that:

- Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

We will support tenants with housing issues in their own homes to ensure their tenancies are as sustainable as possible. Sometimes when these homes no longer meet people needs, part of the support will be to help people make transfer applications and help them during the whole process including supporting those who obtain a transfer to settle in to their new tenancy successfully.

8. Monitor and Review

This policy will be reviewed 5 years from the date of implementation, which will be the date the policy is approved by the Committee of Management or earlier if deemed appropriate.

In order to monitor the level of transfers, a report will be prepared on a quarterly basis for the Committee of Management. This report will include:

- the number of transfer applicants rehoused in the previous quarter;
- the number of transfers granted to tenants affected by under occupancy;
- the number of transfers granted to tenants who had arrears prior to or as a result of under occupancy;
- The number of tenants who refused a transfer and the reasons for their refusal.



KINGDOM HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

TRANSFER POLICY

Policy drawn up with reference to:

Housing Scotland (2001) Act
Data Protection Act (1998)
Civil Partnership Act 2004

Reference made to the following sources and other guidance:

Prepared by: Alexander McLaren

Current Policy dated 19 March 2007

Draft 1 - Circulated to Directors for review - October 2013

Policy audited by Kingdom's solicitors - December 2013

Sub Committee Review of Policy –11 February 2014

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Policy Approved: Yes

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