



## **Lettings**

**Version 3.1**

**Category: Operations – Housing Management**

**Latest Review Date: August 2017**

**Review Frequency: 3 years – next review June 2019**

**Owner: Executive Director Operations**

**Contributors: Housing Services Manager, Housing Officers, Village Manager**

## POLICY

### 1. Policy Goal

To ensure that ExtraCare let rental properties in a way which is fair, transparent and accountable; that helps to maintain a balanced community; and contributes towards meeting the local strategic housing needs in the areas in which ExtraCare operate.

To ensure that the appropriate rent levels and other charges are applied correctly at the time of letting. To ensure that potential tenants are able to make an informed decision about whether the property being offered is right for them.

This policy applies to rental properties that are let on an assured tenancy, either owned by ExtraCare or let by ExtraCare on behalf of a Partner Landlord as part of a management agreement. It does not formally apply to rental properties that are let by a Partner Landlord where the Partner Landlord does the letting. However, the expectation and common practice is that the principles of this Policy will be adhered to by the Partner Landlord.

This policy does not apply to leasehold (sales) properties. .

### 2. Business Objectives

To ensure rented properties are let quickly and efficiently; properties are let fairly, rents are correctly charged and legal, regulatory and consumer requirements are met.

### 3. Organisational Statement

The aim of this policy is to outline the processes by which people can apply for housing, how applications are assessed and offers of accommodation made.

In order to let our rented properties, ExtraCare will take into account three main factors: the overall balance of the community within a location; the housing need of an applicant; and whether the applicant has care needs that are able to be met. ExtraCare should also ensure that the potential tenant is able to make an informed choice through the process, as to whether the

potential property is suitable for their needs and they are able to afford to live there.

Applicants must be over 55 years old in order to live in our locations, although some of our locations have an age criteria of over 60 (which has been agreed with the relevant Local Authority). Our Corporate Plan (2017-2020) states that 55 years is the minimum age of entry.

Only under exceptional circumstances may people be considered for housing under these age limits. This would be with the agreement of the Customer Services Manager / Housing Services Manager in conjunction with the Location Manager. Such exceptional circumstances would be situations where there is an urgent (potentially life – threatening) risk to someone’s health or safety, and where living in an ExtraCare location is the only solution to mitigate that risk.

#### **4. Outcomes**

Staff responsible for letting empty rental properties ensure that these are let in a fair and transparent way, that meet local balanced community objectives. Rents are appropriately charged. Potential tenants are given adequate information on charges in order to be able to make an informed decision on whether the property is suitable for them.

Staff responsible for letting empty rental properties should work proactively with other agencies (such as Local Authority Housing Teams; Adult Social Services) to ensure that these agencies are aware of local lettings issues to ensure appropriate referrals are made.

#### **5. Application**

Staff responsible for letting empty rental properties should ensure the principles of this policy are applied; that applicants are treated fairly, and that staff ensure the customer experience of ExtraCare is enhanced.

#### **6. Reason for the Policy**

To ensure that properties are let fairly, according to need, and in line with seeking to achieve a balanced community.

To ensure that ExtraCare complies with the Homes & Community Agency’s

(HCA) Tenancy Standard and Rent Standard. To ensure that ExtraCare complies with the Associated Retirement Communities Operators' (ARCO) Code of Practice.

To ensure that ExtraCare take appropriate regard to Local Authority Tenancy Strategies that refer to older persons' housing.

## 7. What is new / What is different

This policy is updated to include reference to the HCA (replacing Tenant Services Authority – which is defunct); to incorporate recommendations made by ExtraCare's Customer Scrutiny Group, and updated to reflect current practice.

The updated policy also includes the need to check the immigration status of all incoming tenants, as advised by Home Office guidance.

The Policy has been further updated to incorporate the recommendations of an internal audit on Property Related Charges and Care Income in May 2017, carried out by BDO. It has also been updated to ensure compliance against the ACRO Code of Practice.

## 8. How to measure success

Empty rental properties are let quickly (target – within 4 weeks of becoming empty).

Properties are let broadly in line with Balanced Community targets (where these exist) or within principles of providing a Balanced Community. Resident surveys identify at least 75% resident satisfaction with move in and lettings process.

## 9. Reference to relevant documents

<b>Regulation / Guidance</b>	<b>In House Documents</b>
Homes & Communities Agency – Tenancy Standard Rent Standard	Complaints Policy Equality and Diversity Policy
Local Authority Strategic Housing	Equality and Diversity Charter

Policies

Equalities Act 2010

Housing Act 1996

Data Protection Act 1996

Home Office Landlords Guide to  
Checking Immigration Documents

Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016

First Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber)

CORe Lettings:

<https://core.communities.gov.uk>

Housing Related Support Policy

Care Planning Policy

Affordability Statement

ExtraCare Housing Manual

(Affordability Policy – once approved)

10. **Approval date** – August 2017

11. **Next review date** – July 2019