

Policy

Title: Lettings and Allocations Policy

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This document relates to:

the
calico
group

calico
homes



acorn
a **calico** group service



safenet
a **calico** group service



syncora
the **calico** group together

calico
enterprise



delphi
a **calico** group service



ring stones
a **calico** group service



Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Lettings and Allocations Policy outlines Calico Homes' approach to letting homes owned or managed by Calico Homes excluding market rented, Rent to Buy, shared ownership and temporary accommodation managed by Syncora.

1.2 Calico Homes is committed to creating and maintaining sustainable tenancies and neighbourhoods. We strive to go one step further with our customers.

1.3 This policy applies to all existing or potential customers who are looking for a home with Calico Homes.

2. Context

This policy has been developed to ensure that Calico Homes is fully compliant with all relevant legislation and regulations relating to lettings and allocations.

3. Policy Aims and Objectives

The aims of the policy are:

- To communicate clearly and transparently the variety of options open to those in housing need and the choices available.
- To demonstrate how we will allocate homes in an accessible way, tailoring the service to best meet the needs of the individual.
- To set out how we let our homes in a fair, open, and equal way that doesn't discriminate against any group or person.
- To set out how we will ensure compliance with ongoing legal and regulatory requirements.
- To ensure that we comply with the Tenancy Standard 2024.

The policy supports delivery of the Calico Homes vision and strategic objectives as set out below.

The Calico Homes Vision

“Going one step further with customers and local communities to provide affordable, safe and quality homes and personalised services; supporting customers to live their best lives in challenging times.”

The Lettings and Allocations policy is in place so that people can access the housing we provide.

The Calico Homes objectives:

- To provide safe and well-maintained homes through investment in existing and new properties.
- To support customers to sustain tenancies.
- To provide good quality and personalised repairs, customer, and neighbourhood services.
- To develop trusting relationships and to empower customers and communities to take the lead on the things that matter most.
- To strengthen the business so it is strong, well-governed, environmentally friendly and provides value for money customers.
- To create a place where people want to work now and in the future.

Policy objectives

- We will let our homes in a transparent way that takes the needs of customers and prospective customers into account.
- We will support customers to maintain their tenancy or licence.
- We will offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of the housing stock.
- We shall meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation.
- We will support relevant customers living in eligible housing to mutually exchange their homes.

4.0 Customer Scrutiny, Oversight and Monitoring

4.1 Calico Homes aims for transparency and accountability in our lettings and allocations offer.

4.2 We publish information so that customers can see how the service is performing, and what tenancies have been granted, by a variety of methods along with reporting on sustainability levels.

4.3 We encourage customers to provide feedback on their lettings and allocations experience. Whether positive or negative, customer input helps us continuously improve our services.

4.4 This policy will be communicated to customers by publishing on the

website and will be available to customers by request.

5. Lettings and Allocations Policy Statement

5.1 We will provide housing to the people who most need it and in turn meet our nominations obligations.

5.2 As the leading housing provider in the Burnley area, we collaborate with our customers and the local community to bring about sustainable change, that benefits present and future generations, creating balanced communities where people want to live.

5.3 Calico Homes support applicants and customers, developing relationships to enable them to take charge of their life and make informed decisions.

5.4 We will treat customers with fairness and respect.

5.5 Where an applicant or customer has been identified as vulnerable, we provide support with the lettings and allocations process. Customers and applicants can be supported by a representative or advocate if they want this.

5.6 Calico will work cooperatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and will enable customers to access appropriate support and advice.

5.7 Calico Homes makes the best use of homes ensuring they are occupied by the customers they were lawfully let to. We treat tenancy fraud very seriously. More details can be found in the Tenancy Fraud Policy.

5.8 We will carry out a pre-tenancy assessment to ensure customers can afford the property, have appropriate support in place to manage a tenancy and to prevent tenancy fraud. More details can be found in the Tenancy Sustainment Policy, the Tenancy Policy and the Tenancy Fraud Policy.

5.9 We will support customers if they are suffering from financial hardship arising from under occupation or inappropriate housing.

5.10 Customers can move between homes and areas through mutual exchange, internal pathways to housing and transfers.

6. How homes are allocated and let

6.1 We allocate homes in different ways to support the Local Authority housing strategy, make the best use of our properties, offer choice to customers and support pathways to housing from internal partners within the Calico Group.

6.2 When we allocate homes, we will:

- Take a personalised approach to ensure that the property and area are suitable for the customer based on their individual circumstances.

- Ensure to the best of our knowledge that the property is affordable for the customer and the tenancy is sustainable.
- Where possible, give customers choice of where they live.
- Consider the age and gender of children, and any need for live-in carers or additional space for medical reasons.
- Comply with Part 10 of the Housing Act 1985 to avoid overcrowding.
- Ensure customers are not under-occupying properties unless, in exceptional circumstances, this is affordable.
- Seek to let adapted properties to households who require the adaptations.
- Independent Living accommodation and sheltered housing will be allocated to a household that meets the criteria of the scheme and has a need for support.
- Extra care accommodation will be allocated to applicants who meet the criteria of the scheme and have a care need.
- Supported Living accommodation will be allocated to customers who are referred by the Local Authority and are assessed as suitable for the accommodation.

6.3 A minimum of 50% (as per our nominations agreement with the Local Authority) of vacant homes will be advertised using our choice-based lettings (CBL) scheme, B-with-us and let following the B-with-us priority for allocation as detailed in the B-with-us policy.

6.4 We may let some homes using the CBL scheme but using alternative ways of prioritisation such as longest registration date or priority given to specific band categories. We will make this clear when advertising the home.

6.5 We will allocate up to 50% of homes outside of the CBL scheme by direct applications and may use alternative methods of advertising, either to attract new customers from different markets, or to give balance to a community. These homes may be advertised and offered in several different ways. Applicants for these homes will be assessed to check that they are eligible for housing with Calico if they have not already been verified by a Local Authority and will all have housing need. Some of the circumstances for letting in this way may include, but is not limited to:

- To address anti-social behaviour levels in a neighbourhood
- To improve tenancy sustainment
- To improve the financial circumstances of customers where under-occupying
- To manage risks in relation to health and safety
- To support a more sustainable community
- To provide move on accommodation from temporary accommodation.

6.6 For homes let outside B-with-us, we will mirror the qualification and eligibility criteria as detailed with the B-with-us policy.

6.7 We will use Local Lettings Plans, that are developed in partnership with the local community where appropriate. This may be a time limited intervention to adjust the standard allocations criteria in a specified location or for specified

housing stock to achieve specific outcomes. All Local Lettings Policies require a review annually and will consider any equality and diversity implications, so as to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for customers and, where relevant, prospective customers.

6.8 Where there are specific eligibility criteria, we will make this clear when advertising the home, for example a local connection.

6.9 We operate a sensitive let approach for some properties, for example where there has previously been anti-social behaviour.

6.10 We will operate a clear, open, and equitable approach when determining whether to let a property to an applicant. This method will provide appropriate support to anyone who needs this, for example does not speak English as their first language, or who struggles with reading or writing. To create sustainable tenancies, we will conduct affordability checks and may ask for references.

6.11 We will ensure that lettings made to board members, employees, former employees and their close relatives and friends are transparent, impartial and provide a robust audit trail which includes approval from an Executive Team member.

6.12 Internal transfers will be considered on a case-by-case basis for reasons such as safeguarding, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, under occupation, overcrowding, financial reasons or medical/mobility. Mutual exchange will always be encouraged prior to a transfer but if this is not appropriate/available, a transfer may be granted.

6.13 When allocating new-build homes, Calico Homes wants to ensure balance and sustainability within the plan and in the surrounding neighbourhood. Our goal is to build cohesive, inclusive and successful communities that appeal to stakeholders and customers whilst securing its financial investment.

6.14 We will promote mutual exchanges to encourage customer aspiration, choice and mobility, making the best use of housing stock so that income is maximised and to support sustainable communities and tenancies where people choose to live and want to stay.

6.15 Where a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 exists, there may be additional restrictions on who can rent a property. If there are any restrictions, this will be indicated on the property advert details.

6.16 The types of tenancies we offer can be found in our Tenancy Policy.

7. Eligibility – Right to live in the UK

We are legally obliged to ensure that we house people who have the right to rent in England, and we will ask for evidence to verify this.

Full details can be found by following this link:

We are unable to house applicants who are legally not eligible for social housing as they don't meet the immigration and residence conditions.

8. Rejections

8.1 We reserve the right to reject an application for housing, this may occur under the following circumstances (this is not an exhaustive list) :

- Unsatisfactory references
- Unsuitable circumstances, for example:
 - Causing nuisance or annoyance to other persons in the locality of their property or to Calico employees or agents.
 - Perpetrators of domestic abuse who are subject to a non-molestation order, an injunction order, an occupation order or a restraining order, which is in force at the date an application is being determined.
 - Having an unspent conviction at the date an application for a serious offence as defined by the Serious Crime Act 2007, Part 1, Schedule 1, committed in the locality of a property against another person or Calico.
 - Having committed any behaviour that would give grounds for possession order under the Housing Act 1985.
 - Being subject to, or having breached an injunction under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- Providing false or misleading information
- Convicted of a 'serious offence', such as an unspent conviction at the date an application, for a serious offence as defined by the Serious Crime Act 2007, Part 1, Schedule 1, committed in the locality of a property against another person or Calico.
- Failure to provide the correct or sufficient documentation.
- It would breach this policy.

8.2 All rejected applicants will have the right to appeal a rejection decision within 10 working days. We will advise applicants of their right to appeal if their application is rejected. The appeal should be in writing or by email. If appropriate, we may offer an extended period for any appeal due to vulnerability. Appeals will be responded to within 10 working days and will be carried out by the Neighbourhood Manager or equivalent. The details of how the appeal will be held can be found in the Lettings and Allocations Procedure.

8.3 In some situations Calico will suspend an application for a specified amount of time, for example where an incomplete application is received or where further information has been requested but not provided. We will notify applicants of the reason their application was suspended, the date of the review and the steps they need to take for the application to be activated.

8.4 A separate Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy and can be found on our website.

9. Reasonable Adjustments

9.1 It is our policy to ensure that discretion is used in cases of identified vulnerabilities such as disability, frailty, domestic abuse, concern for welfare or any other identified need. Calico Homes will use information provided by customers and held in our systems to assist in identifying responsibilities. We will also ask customers and applicants if there are any issues that need to be considered to help us make appropriate decisions when letting homes.

9.2 In cases where abuse is identified or suspected at the point of identification, a safeguarding notification will be made.

10. Monitoring

10.1 Monitoring of the delivery of this policy will include the production of monthly reports to enable operational managers to effectively monitor the performance and progress of the service.

10.2 Board members are responsible for overseeing delivery of this policy. To do this they will receive regular updates about performance of the service and delivery of the policy on a quarterly basis with extra reporting by exception if required.

10.3 We will monitor customer satisfaction levels and seek feedback following each let. Where dissatisfaction is indicated, we will contact the customer to understand what has gone wrong, look to make things right and offer the opportunity to make a formal complaint.

10.4 Customer feedback received via transactional surveys and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures will be used to actively improve the service being offered.

10.5 We will publish our performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures which will include aspects of this policy.

10.6 Calico will provide customers with accessible information about how we are performing in delivering this service and what action will be taken to improve performance, how we have taken customers views into account to improve the service, the information given and communication.

11. Regulatory and Legal Compliance

- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 2004
- Housing Act 1985 & 1996 (as amended)Health and Safety at Work act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)

- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- • Immigration Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 (as amended)
- Consumer standards
- Consumer standards Code of Practice

12. Links with other Calico Strategies, Policies and Procedures

- The Humanity Offer – Calico Group Customer Strategy
- Tenancy Policy
- Tenancy Fraud Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- Starter Tenancy Procedure
- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Health and Safety Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Tenancy/Licence/Lease agreements
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Extra Care Policy
- Income Management Policy
- Community Safety Policy
- B-with-us Policy
- Development Strategy
- Housing Board Members, Employees, Former Employees & their Close Relatives and Friends procedure
- Lettings and allocations processes and procedure (under development)
- Extra Care Policy (under development).

