

Allocations and Lettings

Policy

Applicable Company: Calico Homes

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Version Number: 1

Signed Off By: Board

Review Cycle: Bi-Annually

Revision Date: 20/08/2026

Next Review Date: 18/08/2028

Policy Checklist Completed? Yes



1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Calico Homes allocates and lets homes in a fair, transparent and accessible way.

The policy explains the principles that guide how we make allocation decisions, how we work with local partners, and how we make best use of Calico Homes properties.

This policy supports the delivery of the Calico Homes Corporate Plan, Customer Strategy and Neighbourhood Strategy. It states our commitment to investing in local communities where everyone thrives. It reflects our role as a housing provider in Burnley and the surrounding areas, to support customers to access homes that are suitable for their needs, affordable and capable of being sustained.

The policy supports the delivery of place-based priorities identified through Neighbourhood Plans, whilst ensuring customers have fair access to housing opportunities, appropriate support and a positive customer experience.

Customer insight and feedback will be used to help shape service delivery, inform future policy reviews and support continuous improvement. This helps ensure that allocations and lettings services remain responsive to customer needs and aligned with Calico Homes' strategic priorities.

Through this policy, Calico Homes aims to:

- meet housing need;
- create sustainable communities;
- make the best use of housing stock;
- support tenancy sustainment;
- support customer choice and mobility;
- provide an accessible, fair and transparent service
- provide clear housing routes for Calico Group customers who are ready to move into settled accommodation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Calico Homes allocations and lettings for:

- General Needs housing;
- Independent Living housing;
- Supported Living Accommodation managed directly by Calico Homes
- Market Rent properties owned or managed by Calico Homes

This policy does not apply to:

- Extra Care;
- Shared Ownership;
- Rent to Buy;
- Short-term accommodation owned by Calico Homes but managed on behalf by a third party or another company within the Calico Group.

3. Regulatory and Legal Context

This policy has been developed to ensure Calico Homes allocates and lets homes in a way that is fair, transparent, accessible and aligned to relevant housing legislation, statutory guidance and regulatory expectations.

This policy has been developed having regard to:

- Housing Act 1985;
- Housing Act 1996;
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
- Immigration Act 2014;
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023;
- relevant statutory allocations guidance; and
- the Consumer and Tenancy Standards issued by the Regulator of Social Housing.

This policy explains how Calico Homes will make best use of its housing stock when letting homes, ensure lettings align with the purpose of the accommodation, support Local Authorities' strategic housing priorities, and help create sustainable communities through Calico Homes Neighbourhood Plans.

Calico Homes works within local partnerships and participates in Be with Us, the choice-based lettings scheme used across Pennine Lancashire. This supports fair and transparent allocations for those in housing need. Calico also recognises its wider role in creating housing opportunities and improving outcomes customers. This includes providing move-on options, where permitted, applying discretion to make best use of our homes, sustain tenancies and support thriving neighbourhoods.

This policy commits to a minimum of 50% of allocations being made through Be with Us Choice Based Lettings and nomination agreements, while retaining upto

50% flexibility to respond to local housing need. This includes supporting existing customers to move or sustain their tenancy, enabling move-on opportunities through Calico's Pathways to Housing approach, and making specialist Supported Living allocations through agreed referral and nomination arrangements. Where appropriate, Calico Homes may also use sensitive lettings to support the long-term sustainability, safety and stability of our neighbourhoods and communities.

4. Policy Objectives

Through this policy, Calico Homes will:

- make the best use of housing stock by matching applicants to homes that are appropriate for their physical needs and household circumstances
- support tenancy sustainment by taking a person-centred approach to housing suitability, affordability, support requirements and tenancy readiness;
- contribute to sustainable communities through responsible allocation decisions;
- work collaboratively with Local Authorities and partners to support strategic housing plans, homelessness prevention, nominations obligations and local housing need;
- support applicants in the greatest need to access suitable housing opportunities through accessing Be with Us.
- support the best use of housing stock and tenancy sustainability by facilitating mutual exchanges through our Home swapper platform. Management transfers under exceptional circumstances.
- Support Pathways to Housing by helping customers from Acorn, SafeNet and Gateway who are tenancy ready to access settled accommodation.
- ensure Supported Living accommodation is allocated in accordance with the purpose of the accommodation and the needs of the customer group.
- prevent and tackle tenancy fraud, ensuring that homes are allocated and occupied by those legally entitled to them, used as their principal residence, and utilised for genuine housing need in accordance with the terms of the tenancy.
- ensure lettings made to Board Members, colleagues, former colleagues, relatives or connected persons are managed fairly, transparently and with a clear audit trail.

5. Principles of Lettings and Allocations

Fairness and transparency

Calico Homes will allocate and let homes in a way that is fair, transparent and easy to understand. Customers and prospective customers will be given clear information about how homes are allocated and what options may be available to them.

Equality and accessibility

We will ensure our lettings and allocations services are accessible and inclusive. We will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate and take account of individual circumstances when making allocation decisions.

Best use of stock

We will make best use of our homes by matching prospective customers to properties that are suitable for their needs. We will support existing customers to address under-occupation and overcrowding through providing advice on housing options. We will make effective use of adapted homes through matching vacant properties to customers with an existing need, or advertising clearly as adapted. We will ensure homes are let in a way that supports long-term tenancy sustainability.

Tenancy sustainment

We will seek to ensure that customers are supported to establish and maintain successful tenancies through our pre tenancy checks. This includes considering affordability, support needs, property suitability and tenancy readiness as part of allocation decisions.

Customer choice and mobility

Wherever possible, Calico Homes will support customer choice and mobility. This includes supporting customers to access Be with Us, Home Swapper and other approved housing routes.

Sustainable communities

We will make allocation decisions that support sustainable communities, neighbourhood wellbeing and effective housing management, aligned with Calico Neighbourhood Plans. Where appropriate, this may include sensitive lettings aligned to specific requirements aligned to Local Lettings Plans that promote balanced, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods.

6. Our Approach to Allocating Homes

Calico Homes does not rely on one single allocation route. Our approach to making allocations combines the following:

- Choice Based Lettings through Be with Us;
- Local Authority nominations;



- Pathways to Housing;
- Supported Living referral and nomination arrangements;
- Management moves by exception
- Mutual Exchange

Operational details for each route are set out in supporting Policy and Procedures.

6.1 Choice Based Lettings and Nominations

Calico Homes works in partnership with relevant Local Authorities, including Burnley Borough Council, Rossendale Borough Council and Ribble Valley Borough Council, to support strategic housing functions, homelessness prevention, nomination arrangements and identified local housing need.

Calico Homes currently commits a minimum of 50% of relevant allocations through Be with Us and Local Authority nominations, in line with partnership commitments and local housing responsibilities. Nomination commitments are in place in Ribble Valley and Rossendale. Supported Living accommodation is excluded from this commitment and is allocated through separate referral and nomination arrangements.

6.2 Pathways to Housing

Calico Homes recognises that settled housing can be a vital step in supporting independence, safety, recovery and long-term wellbeing. Where appropriate, Calico Homes will support tenancy ready customers from Acorn, Gateway and Safenet to access settled accommodation through approved Pathways to Housing arrangements. This applies where assessment has confirmed that independent accommodation is suitable and sustainable. This approach forms part of Calico's wider allocation framework. Allocation decisions are subject to management oversight, clear criteria, appropriate assessment and supporting procedures to ensure fairness and transparency. Referrals must be supported by an approved Move On Plan which evidences tenancy readiness, housing need and any identified support requirements.

All Pathways to Housing referrals are subject to the pre-tenancy assessment requirements as other allocation routes, including completion of the Pre-Tenancy Checks Procedure and the Affordability and Tenancy Readiness Assessment.

Pathways to Housing opportunities will normally be managed on a first come, first served basis to ensure fairness and transparency. However, Calico Homes retains the discretion to prioritise cases where there is an evidenced and significant risk to individual, others or the wider service, and where management determines that an alternative priority order is justified.

6.3 Supported Living referral and nomination arrangements

Calico Homes provides Supported Living accommodation for adults with Learning Disabilities, Autism and Complex Needs.

Calico Homes is responsible for providing and managing the accommodation and delivering housing management and landlord services. Care and support are commissioned by the relevant Local Authority or health commissioning body and delivered by an approved care or support provider.

Supported Living accommodation is specialist housing and is allocated differently to General Needs and Independent Living accommodation. Due to the nature of the accommodation and support arrangements, these homes are not advertised through Choice Based Lettings schemes.

Referrals are received through agreed nomination, commissioning and referral arrangements with Local Authorities, health commissioning bodies, support providers and other partner agencies. Where nomination rights form part of a commissioning agreement, service level agreement or contractual arrangement, allocations will be made in accordance with those arrangements.

Calico Homes will work with commissioners and support providers to ensure placements are appropriate, safe and sustainable, whilst retaining responsibility for the final allocation decision.

6.4 Sensitive Lettings and Local Lettings Plans

In some circumstances, Calico Homes may use sensitive lettings or local lettings plans to support community sustainability, housing management objectives, support community safety, health and safety considerations or to enable effective management of housing stock.

A sensitive approach to lettings may be appropriate where the letting of a home requires additional consideration because of previous anti-social behaviour, community safety concerns, safeguarding issues, tenancy management risks or other local circumstances. The purpose of a sensitive letting is not to exclude unfairly, but to ensure that allocation decisions are balanced, proportionate and support the long-term sustainability of the customer, the tenancy and the wider community.

Local lettings plans may be used where there is a need to support the sustainability of a particular scheme or new development. These will be applied fairly, proportionately and in accordance with relevant legislation, equality considerations and regulatory requirements. Any future local lettings plans will be developed and co-designed with customers.

Operational arrangements for sensitive lettings and local lettings plans, including approval routes, evidence requirements and decision-making processes, will be set out within supporting procedures.

6.5 Market Rent Properties

Calico Homes has a small number of homes that are market rent. Market rent properties will be managed in accordance with the legal requirements applicable to non-social housing assured tenancies, including requirements arising from the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and any associated implementation guidance. Detailed operational arrangements will be set out within the Market Rent Lettings Procedure.

6.6 Affordability and Tenancy Readiness

Calico Homes is committed to ensuring that homes are allocated in a way that supports long-term tenancy sustainment and reduces the risk of tenancy failure arising from financial hardship.

Prior to the commencement of a tenancy, applicants may be required to complete an Affordability and Tenancy Readiness Assessment in accordance with the Pre-Tenancy Checks Procedure. The assessment will consider factors including affordability, income, expenditure, welfare benefits, household circumstances, support requirements and the applicant's readiness to sustain a tenancy.

The outcome of the assessment will inform allocation and letting decisions and may result in one of the following outcomes:

- Proceed;
- Proceed with Support; or
- Do Not Proceed.

Where support needs are identified, Calico Homes will seek to work with the applicant and relevant support agencies to identify appropriate interventions that may enable a sustainable tenancy to commence.

Affordability and tenancy readiness decisions are subject to appropriate management oversight and approval arrangements. Applicants will be informed of decisions and outcomes in writing, with records maintained in accordance with Calico Homes' procedures and record management requirements.

Calico Homes will maintain appropriate governance and assurance arrangements to monitor the effectiveness of affordability assessments, tenancy readiness outcomes and tenancy sustainment performance, helping to ensure homes are let responsibly and sustainably.

6.7 Mutual Exchange

Calico Homes supports eligible customers to access mutual exchange opportunities as a way of promoting customer choice, mobility and efficient use of homes. Detailed eligibility, consent, refusal grounds and operational requirements are set out in the Mutual Exchange Policy.

7. Supporting Vulnerable Customers

Calico Homes is committed to ensuring housing services remain accessible and responsive to individual needs.

We will:

- make reasonable adjustments where appropriate;
- consider individual circumstances when making allocation decisions;
- work with support agencies where required; and
- take a trauma-informed and person-centred approach.

We are committed to supporting customers experiencing domestic abuse and other vulnerabilities to access safe and sustainable housing solutions. Where abuse is identified or suspected during the allocations process, appropriate safeguarding action or referral will be considered in line with Calico's relevant policies and procedures.

8. Tenancy Fraud

Calico Homes takes tenancy fraud seriously and is committed to ensuring homes are occupied by those legally entitled to them. We will take appropriate action to prevent, identify and investigate tenancy fraud. This includes ensuring that applicants provide accurate information as part of the allocations and lettings process. Further information is contained within the Tenancy Fraud Policy.

9. Appeals and Reviews

Applicants will be informed of the relevant review, appeal or complaint route available to them depending on the allocation route used. Detailed arrangements are contained within the Lettings and Allocations Procedure.

10. Monitoring and Assurance

Calico Homes will monitor delivery of this policy through proportionate performance and assurance measures.

This may include monitoring:

- lettings performance;
- void performance;
- nomination compliance;
- tenancy sustainment outcomes;
- Pathways to Housing outcomes;
- customer satisfaction;
- equality and diversity outcomes;
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures; and
- tenancy fraud activity.

Performance information will be reviewed through operational reporting and appropriate governance arrangements.

10.1 Customer Voice, Feedback and Learning

Calico Homes is committed to understanding the experiences of applicants, customers and partner agencies who engage with our allocations and lettings services.

We will use a range of customer insight mechanisms to understand service effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement. This may include feedback gathered through:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs);
- complaints, compliments and service feedback;
- transactional customer surveys;
- customer engagement and neighbourhood events;
- customer scrutiny, consultation and future co-design activities

Learning from customer feedback will be considered alongside performance information, operational data, assurance activity and regulatory requirements to inform service improvements, policy reviews and procedural development.

Where themes, trends or learning are identified, Calico Homes will take appropriate action to improve service delivery, strengthen customer outcomes and ensure the allocations and lettings service remains fair, transparent, accessible and responsive to customer needs.

11. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Tenancy Policy;
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy;
- Tenancy Fraud Policy;
- Mutual Exchange Policy;
- Community Safety Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy;
- Domestic Abuse Policy; and
- Data Protection and Privacy policies.

This policy is supported by the following procedures and guidance:

- Lettings and Allocations Procedure;

- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Pathways to Housing Guidance;
- Affordability assessment process;

12. Equality Impact Assessment

A separate Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy and will be reviewed alongside future policy reviews.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner where there is:

- legislative change;
- regulatory change;
- changes to business operations;
- learning from performance, assurance activity or customer feedback; or
- a significant change to local allocation arrangements.

Calico Homes

Allocations and Lettings Glossary of Terms

Affordability Assessment

An affordability assessment is a conversation and review of your financial circumstances to help understand whether a tenancy is likely to be affordable and sustainable for you. We may look at your income, benefits, essential household costs and any debts or financial commitments before offering a tenancy.

Applicant

An applicant is a person who has applied for housing or is being considered for a housing allocation through one of our approved housing routes.

Allocation

An allocation is the process of deciding who a home will be offered to.



Be with Us

Be with Us is the choice-based lettings scheme used across Pennine Lancashire. It allows eligible applicants to bid for available homes and provides a fair and transparent way of advertising and allocating properties.

Choice Based Lettings

Choice Based Lettings gives customers the opportunity to express interest in available homes that suit their needs and circumstances, rather than being automatically offered a property.

Co-Design

Co-design means working together with customers to help shape services, policies, procedures or improvements. It allows customers to influence how services are delivered.

Customer Feedback

Customer feedback is any information provided by customers about their experience of our services. This may include compliments, complaints, survey responses, comments made during engagement events or suggestions for improvement.

Direct Let

A direct let is where a home is allocated without being advertised through the normal choice-based lettings process. Direct lets are only used in specific circumstances and must follow approved procedures.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) helps us understand how a policy, service or decision may affect different groups of people and ensures we meet our equality responsibilities.

Home Swapper

Home Swapper is a national mutual exchange service that helps social housing tenants find another tenant who wishes to swap homes.



Housing Need

Housing need refers to circumstances where a person or household requires suitable housing because their current accommodation is unsuitable, unsafe, overcrowded or otherwise does not meet their needs.

Independent Living

Independent Living accommodation is housing designed for older people who are able to live independently but may benefit from living within a supported community environment.

Lettings

Lettings refers to the process of advertising, offering and creating tenancies for available homes.

Local Lettings Plan

A Local Lettings Plan is a specific set of arrangements used in a particular area, neighbourhood or scheme to help support community sustainability and effective housing management.

Management Discretion

Management discretion means that, in exceptional circumstances, a manager may make a decision outside the normal order of priority where there is a clear reason to do so. Any decision must be evidence-based, proportionate and consistent with policy and procedure.

Mutual Exchange

A mutual exchange is where two or more social housing tenants agree to swap homes, subject to approval by their landlords.

Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan is a local plan that identifies the priorities, opportunities and challenges within a particular neighbourhood. These plans help guide service delivery and investment decisions.

Nomination

A nomination is where a Local Authority refers an applicant to Calico Homes for consideration for a suitable property in line with agreed nomination arrangements.



Pathways to Housing

Pathways to Housing is Calico Homes' approach to helping people move from supported accommodation into settled housing where they have been assessed as ready to manage a tenancy independently.

Pre-Tenancy Checks

Pre-tenancy checks are a series of checks and assessments completed before a tenancy begins. These help ensure the property is suitable, affordable and capable of being sustained.

Sensitive Letting

A sensitive letting is an allocation where additional consideration is given to factors such as community safety, safeguarding, previous tenancy issues or local circumstances to help support a successful and sustainable outcome.

Supported Living

Supported Living is specialist accommodation for people who require care or support to live independently. Housing is provided by Calico Homes, whilst care and support services are arranged separately.

Tenancy Fraud

Tenancy fraud occurs when somebody deliberately provides false information, sublets a property unlawfully, does not live in their home as their main residence or otherwise occupies social housing dishonestly.

Tenancy Readiness

Tenancy readiness is an assessment of whether a person is prepared to successfully manage and sustain a tenancy. This may include considering housing history, ability to manage a home, understanding tenancy responsibilities, support needs and financial circumstances.

Tenancy readiness does not mean somebody must be able to manage without support. Where support is available and appropriate, a tenancy may still be considered sustainable.



Tenancy Sustainment

Tenancy sustainment means helping customers to successfully keep their home, meet the conditions of their tenancy and maintain stable housing for the long term.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

Tenant Satisfaction Measures are a set of measures used by social housing landlords to understand customers' experiences of services and satisfaction with their landlord.

Void Property

A void property is a home that is empty and available to let.

Vulnerable Customer

A vulnerable customer is someone whose circumstances, health, wellbeing or personal situation may mean they require additional consideration, support or reasonable adjustments when accessing housing services.

