

Transfers

H1/FFF

Introduction

This document sets out the policies Shian will implement to promote the options for tenant mobility between different housing thereby making the best use of our available housing stock and responding to tenants whose needs change.

Policy Objectives

Shian currently owns a limited number of homes and aims to make the best use of these to meet housing need in Hackney, Islington and Haringey. The Association has limited options for the provision of transfer opportunities but what opportunities are available will be allocated in strict accordance with this and our Allocations and Lettings policy.

It also provides clear and understandable information for tenants in the event of their asking to move to a smaller property and ensures such transfer requests are assessed fairly and quickly.

Scope

This policy applies to all owned housing provision.

Main Provisions of Policy

Shian recognises that tenants' needs change over time and aims to respond to tenants' circumstances by providing housing more suitable to their needs. However we have a responsibility to perform in accordance with local authority nomination agreements, which reduces the number of properties available for tenants requiring a transfer.

Tenants can apply for a transfer after a minimum of 2 years in tenancy in their current property. It will be only in exceptional circumstances where this will not apply e.g. in cases of domestic violence, racial or other harassment, or urgent major repairs.

Tenants will not be considered for an offer of alternative accommodation if they have rent arrears on their account. Any deviation from this will only be in exceptional circumstances such as priority transfer cases e.g. racial and other harassment and violence. This must be agreed by the Managing Director. If a tenant falls into arrears after being accepted on the transfer list, any offer of alternative accommodation will be withdrawn.

The Association will consider transfers for the following reasons:

- Overcrowding and under-occupation.
- Medical grounds: where the tenant can provide evidence to support this.



- Disability.
- Social reasons e.g. family support, proximity to work.
- Tenants who are victims of racial or other harassment, or domestic violence.
- Tenants in properties with severe structural problems or where re improvements are necessary, requiring a property to be vacated for the works to be carried out.

The Association will hold a waiting list for transfer applicants. The priority of transfer applicants on the transfer waiting list will be determined in accordance with our Allocations and Lettings Policy.

The Association operates a one reasonable offer policy and thus if a tenant turns down what is deemed a reasonable offer she or her will be taken off the waiting list and no more offers of alternative accommodation will be made.

When a property becomes available to an internal transfer applicant, an allocations panel will be convened to identify the priority applicant with reference to this and the allocations and lettings policies.

Responsibility

The Operations Manager is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy. All housing staff must be aware of it and observe its terms.

Monitoring, Review & Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every three years.



Transfer Procedures

Eligibility issues

Shian's policy makes provision for its own tenants to move within its housing stock.

Shian will consider applications from tenants subject to the following conditions:

- The rent account is clear;
- The tenancy has been conducted in a satisfactory manner;
- The tenant has maintained the property in reasonable decorative order.

Tenants in arrears may be considered for an offer of housing subject to an intention to clear their arrears, a satisfactory agreement for the repayment of the arrears and a regular pattern of payments over a fixed period. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

Tenants who are offered a transfer must leave their home empty and in a clean and lettable condition and their garden tidy in accordance with their Tenancy Agreement.

Management Transfers

Shian will consider transferring a tenant on management grounds under the following circumstances:

- Where harassment (racial or other form) has been experienced and a move would ease the situation and where this is judged the most appropriate solution. Please refer to the Harassment Policy for more details.
- Where violence (domestic or other) has been experienced and a move would ease the situation and where this is judged the most appropriate solution. Please refer to the Domestic Violence policy for more details.

In other very limited special circumstances at the discretion of Shian. These may include:

- Where a transfer releases a high demand property;
- Where a transfer prevents estate management problems escalating;
- Where two tenants wish to be rehoused together;
- Where a transfer releases a property of equal or higher demand for waiting list applicants.



Applications

Tenants wishing to apply for a transfer should in the first instance write to their Tenancy Services Officer, briefly explaining why they are seeking a transfer. The Tenancy Services Officer may seek to visit, advise accordingly or send a housing application form.

When a tenant is sent an application form, it should immediately be filled in and returned to the office, and the Tenancy Services Officer will on the basis of the information contained in the form inform the tenant whether she or he do not qualify for consideration for a transfer or alternatively send a letter arranging a home visit to the tenant. During the home visit, the Tenancy Services Officer will complete the visiting report in exactly the same way as he or she would for a first applicant and will also advise on compliance with the conditions of the existing tenancy agreement and welfare benefits, among others.

Importantly however, additional advice will be given on mutual exchanges if the tenant is requesting a transfer to properties in an area not covered by Shian, or if the association is unlikely to have an appropriate unit immediately and the tenant is not in a position to wait for a long period.

The transfer application will be dealt with under Shian allocations and lettings procedure. The tenant will receive written notification on whether the application has been successful or not.

If the application has been successful, the tenant will be put on a waiting list until a suitable unit is available. If the application is not successful, the tenant has the right to appeal to the Operations Manager in the first instance, if he or she is unhappy with the way the transfer application has been treated. Any further appeals should be under the Association's complaints procedure to be heard by the Managing Director under the stage one process.

Allocations to transfer applicants will be made by means of convening an allocations panel as set out in Shian's Allocations and Lettings Policy for the prioritisation of transfer applications.

