



Estuary

HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Lettings Policy

Lettings Policy

Privacy statement

Estuary Housing Association is committed to handling your personal information fairly, lawfully and securely in line with current data protection laws. We are required to collect and process personal data to manage the letting of our empty homes.

We take your privacy seriously and our Privacy Notice, available on our website, explains your privacy rights and how we collect, use, share and secure your personal identifiable information. It explains the types of personal identifiable data we will collect and hold about you. This information may be provided by you or a third party.

Our Privacy Notice is subject to regular review and will be updated as necessary. If you would like to receive a printed copy of this notice, please contact our Central Services Team on 0300 304 5000, alternatively you can request a copy by emailing info@estuary.co.uk

If you have questions relating to data protection and how we use your personal information you can contact our Data Protection Officer by email at dpo@estuary.co.uk or by writing to the Data Protection Officer, Estuary Housing Association Ltd, 8th and 9th floors, Maitland House, Warrior Square, Southend on Sea, Essex SS1 2JY.

Purpose or Aim

We are committed to the provision of good quality housing, care and support services to meet local needs and to contribute to the development of sustainable communities.

Our aim is to provide accommodation for people in greatest need of housing who are unable to obtain good quality and affordable housing through the private market.

This policy describes how we let our homes, including through nomination agreements and choice based lettings arrangements. It aims to provide information and advice for staff, applicants for housing and transfer tenants on how we select applicants and allocate our general needs rented homes.

This policy is a statement of principle for guidance and should not be considered binding. It does not override our statutory or contractual or other legal obligations. The Association has the final decision to grant or refuse a tenancy, and whether to allow an applicant or transfer applicant onto our housing waiting list.

Equality & Diversity

At Estuary Housing Association (EHA) we are committed to embedding equality and diversity at the heart of our work. We aim to be an inclusive organisation, where individual differences are respected, where staff, people who use services, and their families and carers, are treated with dignity and on the basis of their merits, abilities and needs, and where everyone has a fair opportunity to fulfil their potential without suffering discrimination or disadvantage.

As a major social landlord we need to understand and address the housing and related needs of our residents in the communities where we operate. We will ensure that no one applying for accommodation is discriminated against or treated less favourably than any other person because of their age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnic or national origin, gender reassignment, religion or belief, disability, pregnancy or maternity.

1.0 Definitions

'Letting' refers to the process whereby we rent a property both for new homes and subsequent relets.

'Choice based lettings' systems operated by both local authorities and registered providers enabling applicants to bid for properties advertised by Registered Providers.

'Housing Need' applicants will be assessed via our points based system and must attain points to be allowed on to our waiting list. Applicants will be assessed based on their health, vulnerability and/or financial situation and will be deemed to have a housing need where points are allocated as they are unable to access a suitable home in the private sector.

'Nomination agreement' refers to an arrangement whereby a certain proportion of homes provided by us are allocated to applicants from the housing waiting list of a local authority.

'General needs' refers to properties we provide for residents to live independently and where we do not provide support or care services.

'Applicant/s' refers to any person/s applying for an Estuary general needs property

'Transfer/s' refers to a person/s who are currently an EHA tenant and has a right to transfer.

'Affordable rent' refers to properties we let with a rent of 80% of the local private market rent.

'Re-let' is a property that has been vacated by an existing resident and is ready to be offered to a new resident.

'Social Sector Size Criteria' know more widely as the 'bedroom tax' refers to Government rules for the size of accommodation for a household that Housing Benefit will cover.

'Local letting policy' allocation schemes that fall outside of the standard nomination agreement or allocations policy, generally in terms of building a balanced and sustainable community, rather than concentrating on meeting housing needs alone. This also includes housing for older people as some homes have a lower age criteria.

2.0 Background

The policy takes account of the Government's social housing reforms as set out in the Localism Act 2011 and Welfare Reform Act 2012. The Localism Act gave Local Authorities greater discretion to determine who can register for housing.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced measures to reduce the amount of welfare benefit that a household can receive. It introduced the social sector size criterion which applies to working age households who are under occupying their home. However within this policy the social sector size criteria will apply to all of our general needs homes irrespective of the age of the tenant, unless the move has come about via a mutual exchange. The Benefit Cap has also had a significant effect for larger families with regard to their choice of suitable housing.

'Lifetime' tenancies are no longer guaranteed and new tenants to the Association will be offered a one year probationary tenancy. Where this has been conducted satisfactorily this will be followed by a 5 year fixed term tenancy.

We have a duty under the Housing Act 1996 to co-operate with Local Authorities, so far as it is reasonable, to offer accommodation to people in priority need under local authority letting schemes.

3.0 Eligibility

- 3.1 To be eligible for housing, there must be some form of housing need.
- 3.2 We will investigate and verify all applications for housing. Each application will be carefully considered before an offer of housing is made in order to ensure that the property is suitable for the proposed occupier. We may need to request additional information from the nominating local authority, statutory agency or housing association to support a nomination. Additional information could include: medical evidence, risk assessments, credit references, occupational therapist reports, tenancy record from previous landlord and rent balances. We will comply with the eight principles of the Data Protection Act in relation to a housing application and the information we have requested as part of this
- 3.3 We will let our properties according to our eligibility and size criteria with the exception of lettings made through common housing policies that we have adopted.
- 3.4 We do not operate residency criteria so you can apply to be housed in any Borough where we have homes. The only exception will be where we have nomination agreements that require the applicant to have a local or parish connection.
- 3.5 We let our homes to:
- people nominated by their local authority
 - people nominated under local choice-based lettings arrangements
 - existing Estuary tenants seeking a transfer or moving to independent living from supported housing
 - people referred to us by partner agencies and reciprocal agreements
 - people through other special arrangements e.g. Homeless Action Resource Project
 - applicants from our own waiting list who have been assessed against our eligibility criteria and a housing need has been identified.
- 3.6 All housing is allocated based on the needs of the permanent members of a household. Non family members will not be included unless this is to provide proven care and support to a member of the household. (Lodgers are not deemed permanent however long they have resided in the property).
- 3.7 We will consider applications from people under 18 years old but there must be a responsible adult or Social Services support. In these cases it will be necessary for the local authority or responsible adult to guarantee the rent and act as the applicant or tenants representative, until the young person passes their eighteenth birthday. They will only be granted an occupancy agreement whilst they are aged less than 18 years followed by a probationary fixed term tenancy once they have reached their 18 birthday.
- 3.8 Due to legislative changes anyone aged between 18 and under 22 who is applying as an individual are likely to be need to be in employment, due to the reduction in welfare benefits for this age group. We will ensure you are able to afford a home before offering you a tenancy based on your current income. You may be defined as being in exempt categories in relation to their housing costs entitlement, for further information regarding these refer to our website.
- 3.9 Single applicants under the age of 35 will be subject to the shared accommodation rate from April 2019, where their tenancy commenced after 1st April 2016. The shared accommodation rate limits the amount of housing benefit or housing element eligible to be received to the shared accommodation rate for the area. Due to this legislative change we will only accept applicants who are in employment, or are within one of the exempt categories in relation to the shared accommodation rate.
- 3.10 As part of our assessment process under 3.8 and 3.9 we will take into consideration the

employment history of the applicant over the last 3 years. The aim of this is to provide an indication as to whether or not the applicant is likely to recommence employment based on their historical record and therefore represent a lower or higher risk.

3.11 We will follow all current legal and regulatory requirements in assessing applications from people subject to immigration control. We are unable to offer any tenancy where the applicant does not meet the 'Right to Rent' criteria which is part of the Immigration Act 2014. Any other adult who will be part of the household but not the tenant also needs to meet this criterion. Where they do not we cannot take them into account and this may affect the size of accommodation offered. (See Appendix 1 for more information)

4.0 Nomination agreements and choice based letting

4.1 We let the majority of homes through Local Authorities' choice based lettings (CBL) schemes. We are committed to the principles of choice based lettings as a fair and transparent way of sourcing applicants for our empty homes. We are committed to working with Local Authorities in order to assist them with their statutory duties in relation to the homeless and those in priority need; however any nomination must meet the criteria of this Policy. Each Local Authority has its own system for advertising and short listing applicants, therefore any potential housing applicant should contact the Local Authority or check their website for more information.

4.2 We will work with local authority partners and statutory agencies to reach agreement on the reasonable proportion of empty homes to be offered to local authority nominations. This will generally be 100% first lets for newly built homes and 75% of relets. This proportion may vary according to local arrangements.

4.3 The nomination agreements do offer a proportion of our relets, generally 25%, to be allocated to a person from our own waiting list. This could be a current tenant or someone that has applied directly to us for housing.

4.4 We will adhere to the provisions of any nomination or service level agreement we hold with our local authority partners. However, we reserve the right to refuse nominations in accordance with our Lettings Policy.

5.0 Applications for housing

5.1 The most effective route for households applying for social housing is through a local authority housing register. We do however hold a housing waiting list for both existing and non Estuary tenants and will consider rehousing applicants identified in section 3.5.

5.2 We have a combined waiting list for both our own transferring residents and non EHA residents. Due to nomination agreements with our Local Authority partners and the lack of empty homes being available we reserve the right to close a waiting list where we have sufficient numbers. We may choose not to hold a waiting list where we have small stock holding or vacant homes rarely become available.

5.3 We will consider all applicants who wish to move from their current home where there is a housing need. We will also consider the need to move where the applicant needs to be closer to family to give or receive support or for employment opportunities.

5.4 Where an application is received and there is no housing need the applicant will not be accepted on to our waiting list. We will give general advice to those with no priority need regarding other housing options including mutual exchange, shared ownership and market rent opportunities.

5.5 We will not generally allow a transfer during any probationary period of a fixed term tenancy. However exceptions may apply and these will be considered through our management transfer

process or agreement with another registered provider.

- 5.6 Applicants must not have rent arrears with their current landlord to be accepted onto our waiting list. The only exception to this is for current Estuary residents who have proved they will be financially better off, i.e. downsizing or where there is an urgent rehousing need.
- 5.7 Applicants will have the opportunity to specify a Local Authority area of their choice as part of the application process. We will allocate properties within that Local Authority. Where an applicant has specified a particular location they wish to live, or not wish to live, this will only be accepted if this is due to a medical need, or supported by the Police, Social Services or other similar agencies. We will also try to take into account applicants needs to be near school catchment areas or family support networks but our ability to do this may be restricted by the limited number of properties in certain local authority areas.
- 5.8 Applicants will be made one offer of a suitable homes in the Local Authority area of choice. The offer will be made in writing generally via email and an accompanied viewing with a member of our staff will be arranged so applicants are able make an informed decision whether to accept or refuse the offer. If applicants refuse, or fail to respond to an offer this will be counted as a suitable offer. Refusing or failing to respond to the offer of accommodation will result in the applicant being removed from the waiting list. They will not be able to reapply unless there is a material change in their circumstances.
- 5.9 Where an applicant or a member of the household is pregnant, we will not count this child as part of the household until after they are born. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to provide a copy of the birth certificate.
- 5.10 We will not normally allow anyone onto our waiting list that has been evicted, is subject to a court order or where legal action is being taken due to any breach of tenancy.
- 5.11 For non EHA applicants we will request a reference from your current landlord, and we reserve the right to contact previous landlords, to ensure any tenancy has been conducted satisfactorily.
- 5.12 For EHA residents we will inspect their current home prior to accepting hem onto the waiting list. Where this has not been kept to our required standard they will not be allowed onto the waiting list until the property has been brought up to standard.
- 5.13 For the purposes of this policy Estuary's market rent and mortgage rescue tenants are not entitled to transfer but are able to apply to join our housing waiting list.
- 5.14 Estuary Board members, employees, or their close relatives can apply for housing: however the link must be disclosed on the application form. Their application will need to be agreed in accordance with Section 7 of our Probity policy.
- 5.15 Where applicants or tenants have pets, permission will be needed from Estuary to keep the pet/s in any of our homes. Please refer to our Pet Keeping Policy. Where permission is not granted, or the property has a restriction on the amount of pets, the applicant cannot refuse an offer of accommodation on this basis. Where an applicant does decide to refuse an offer due to these reasons the offer will count as a suitable offer. The exception to this is where the pet is required for day to day living, i.e. guide dog for the blind, hard of hearing etc. This needs to be supported by a suitable agency, or qualified professional.
- 5.16 We will work with Local Authorities and agencies in cases where an applicant or member of the household has a history of serious offences, for example: arson, drug use or sexual assault. Due to the location of our homes is it unlikely that we will be able to assist where applicants are placed on the sex offenders register. However we will assess each applicant on a case by case basis. We will carry out a risk assessment in consultation with the Police, Social Services, the Probation

service and any other key partners. This seeks to ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to housing but also to enable us to manage the risk posed by current or ex offenders, and protect residents, local communities and staff.

- 5.17 We seek to let our homes in a responsible manner and want to create sustainable tenancies and communities and avoid establishing tenancies that will fail. We will do this by completing affordability and tenancy risk assessments, and credit referencing (for new tenants). Where we have new build schemes we complete tenancy sustainment workshops which will be mandatory for applicants to attend.
- 5.18 We will require an applicant to demonstrate their ability to manage their tenancy. We may refuse to let a property where an applicant is unable to demonstrate their ability to manage their tenancy or where applicants need a level of support which we or another provider cannot provide. Where we refuse an offer of accommodation we will give clear reasons why.
- 5.19 On some occasions it may be necessary to reject a nomination from a Local Authority. Grounds for rejection will vary and are subject to the nomination agreement and our eligibility criteria. Rejection may include submission of inaccurate information, unsuitability of property for the applicant's needs (i.e. requires ground floor and the property is 1st floor, age restriction), immigration status or applicant's inability to sustain the tenancy (i.e. not working and therefore the home is unaffordable).

6.0 Bedroom standard (refer to appendix 3)

- 6.1 The size of accommodation applicants can bid for via CBL schemes or allocated via our waiting list largely follow the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) social sector size criteria (SSSC). However due to the demand for our homes we expect that same sex children can share unless there is more than a 3 year gap following the eldest 16th birthday.
- 6.2 From April 2017 the SSSC has been amended to ensure disabled applicants are not disadvantaged. We will therefore allow an extra bedroom where a disabled child or disabled non dependant adult requires overnight care from a non resident carer where this is a permanent requirement and can be evidenced by an appropriate professional.
- 6.3 Where a couple are unable to share a bedroom because of their disabilities, they will be entitled to an extra bedroom where this is permanent requirement and can be evidenced by an appropriate professional.
- 6.4 Where an applicant bids for a property that is deemed larger than their household's need, according to the bedroom standard, we will refuse to let the property to that applicant, unless there is proven medical/disability reasons for this.
- 6.5 Where applicants are lacking bedrooms they will be awarded points in accordance with our lettings procedure referring to our bedroom standard.
- 6.6 Where an applicant is under 35, and is applying for housing as an individual, they will not be awarded any points for sharing accommodation with non family members.

7.0 Affordability and assessments

- 7.1 All applicants will be required to pay a minimum of one week rent in advance, including any service charge due, when they accept a tenancy with Estuary and be expected to pay future rent by direct debit.
- 7.2 Before any offer of accommodation we will carry out an affordability assessment to ensure that the home is affordable. Generally we aim to meet the objective that no household should pay in excess of 50% of their net household income on rent inclusive of any service charge. This will include

taking into account any housing benefit that is likely to be received. Where a household will be paying in excess of 50% of their net household income, it will be considered unaffordable and we will not continue with the offer of accommodation.

- 7.3 We will carry out credit reference checks for all applicants new to Estuary including nominations from the Local Authority. Where the credit reference indicates that the potential tenant represents a high risk we may decide not make any offer of accommodation to the applicant. The applicant will be informed of our decision however there will be no appeal to this. If they believe the information held is wrong they will need to ensure their credit reference is disputed accordingly. This will not preclude them from applying in future.
- 7.4 Where we or an applicant refuses an offer on the grounds of unaffordability and this is supported by the affordability assessment, this will be considered a reasonable refusal by us and the offer will not be counted. Where the applicant is via a local authority nomination they will need to check with the local authority if this has a negative impact on their housing application.
- 7.5 Where an applicant wants a medical condition to be considered as part of their application, it will be the applicants' responsibility to provide evidence to support this. For non Estuary applicants we will require a copy of the Local Authority's confirmation that they have accepted you onto their waiting list due to medical reasons.

8.0 Urgent Rehousing transfers

- 8.1 Some categories of transfer requests are dealt with as a priority, which include transfers to release under occupied properties, and transfers to alleviate serious housing management issues, domestic abuse, harassment and severe financial hardship. Refer to our Urgent Rehousing Policy.
- 8.2 In these exceptional circumstances we will consider requests from EHA residents to transfer where a resident does not fulfil criteria i.e. rent arrears. We will follow our Urgent Rehousing Policy and assess each case on its merit and must be satisfied that problems causing the priority transfer request will be alleviated by a move to a new home.
- 8.3 We will also consider urgent moves from other registered providers where we are part of a service level agreement that will allow reciprocal moves i.e. TUTIS, Safer London.
- 8.4 Moves required from a property undergoing major works are also covered in our Decant policy.

9.0 Accepting a property being advertised as a fixed term tenancy

- 9.1 Where an existing assured or secure Estuary tenant is offered another Estuary property advertised as a fixed term tenancy, they will retain their existing security of tenure and will be given an assured 'life time' tenancy.
- 9.2 Where a tenant from another social landlord successfully bids on an Estuary property advertised as a fixed term tenancy they will be granted a new assured "lifetime" tenancy unless they currently hold a fixed term, assured shorthold tenancy or licence.
- 9.3 Where an assured short hold fixed term tenant successfully bids for, or is offered an Estuary property they will be granted a new five year fixed term tenancy.
- 9.4 Where an applicant does not hold a social tenancy of any type they will be given a 1 year probationary tenancy, followed by a 5 year fixed term tenancy on successful completion of the probationary period.

10.0 Accepting an Affordable Rent property

10.1 Where a property has been built or previously let as an affordable rent home we are unable to change this under any circumstances and the successful applicant will be offered the property at an affordable rent.

10.2 Where a re-let property is identified to be an affordable rent for the first time this will be let as an affordable rent except in the following circumstances:-

- where the applicant is an existing Estuary general needs tenant and currently pays social rent and;
- has been given decant status or
- is accepted for a management transfer or
- is under occupying the property and wishes to transfer to a smaller home.

11.0 Under occupation

11.1 We recognise that the welfare reforms and the SSSC will adversely affect some residents and may lead to financial hardship. All applicants with a current social housing tenancy will be awarded the appropriate downsizing priority.

11.2 Estuary residents will be supported to move to accommodation most appropriate to their needs and financial circumstances. An incentive may be offered to downsize subject to funding and the criteria within our Under Occupation Incentive policy.

12.0 Local and Special lettings

12.1 We will ensure that any local lettings plan reasonably balances the competing demands of local housing need and desire to address the specific issues on an estate or neighbourhood locality in discussion with the Local Authority. Local lettings policies will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the initial aims.

12.2 Where there has been a housing management issue at a specific property we may decide to treat the letting as a sensitive let in order to minimise the risk of the issue reoccurring. A sensitive let may also seek to protect vulnerable applicants where an appropriate letting is necessary to help them sustain a tenancy. By carrying out a sensitive let we will allocate the property to the most appropriate, priority applicant. Details of any sensitive let will be fully recorded on housing management files.

12.3 Any properties which have been specially adapted for use by those with disabilities will be allocated to a resident with a disability or a support need. We will work with Occupational Therapists within the Local Authority area to ensure the home is let to the most suitable applicant.

12.4 EHA also own homes that have a minimum age criteria and these will be allocated to older people. Where vacancies are advertised via the Local Authority the minimum age will be stated.

12.5 Ground floor homes will only be offered to those that require this type of accommodation due to proven medical need, unless there are no suitable applicants at the time of letting. This includes nominations.

13.0 Tenancy support

13.1 We will carry out vulnerability, risk and affordability assessments before offering a property to lessen the chances of a tenancy failing and to target support to new tenants.

13.2 Where resettlement support is required, this should be in place prior to accepting the offer of a

property. We will be able to signpost applicants and tenants to appropriate support but Estuary cannot provide this directly. Applicants should therefore consider this prior to accepting a tenancy with us.

13.3 Support to vulnerable residents in general needs housing will be provided by referral to partner support agencies. Such support is available to both new and existing tenants subject to certain eligibility criteria being met.

14.0 Deliberately making housing circumstances worse

14.1 Where there is evidence that an applicant has on the balance of probabilities deliberately worsened their circumstances in order to qualify for higher priority, no additional points will be allocated and the applicant may be removed from the waiting list.

15.0 Appeals and complaints process

15.1 Where an applicant raises dissatisfaction with service they have received as part of their application, selection, offer or allocation process; complaints will be considered in line with our Customer Feedback policy.

15.2 Appeals will be considered where an applicant feels the points given as part of their application process have not been awarded appropriately; where an applicant has been removed from the waiting list and they feel this is not correct; or where an applicant feels an offer considered as suitable by Estuary they deem not to be. Appeals will be dealt with by a Manager who has not had direct dealings with the process.

16.0 Confidentiality and sharing of information

16.1 Information regarding our residents is sensitive and particular care will be taken to maintain confidentiality in line with our Confidentiality and Data Protection policies. However, responsible information sharing can play a key role in the letting of our homes. We will follow information sharing protocols with Local Authorities and partners where they are in place. Managers will use their discretion when sharing information with their colleagues.

17.0 Monitoring and targets

17.1 At regular intervals, we will review our policy and procedure to ensure that it continues to meet our objectives. The review of the policy is carried out in consultation with key stakeholders, the Board of Estuary and the Federation of Estuary Residents.

17.2 We will publish, on our website, our re-let times, number of lettings made, the location and type of home let annually.

17.3 We will work closely with our local authority partners to monitor our nomination arrangements and provide regular lettings data (LA 'returns'). The monitoring and provision of data may vary between Local Authorities.

17.4 We will provide standardized data to regulators as necessary, including Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) data collection.

17.5 We will survey residents once they have moved in to their new home to gauge their satisfaction of the lettings service and publish this information annually.

APPENDIX 1**Eligibility criteria for letting to new general need residents, including nominations from Local Authorities**

Applicants must:

- have a housing need
- be over 18 years of age, however we will consider housing 16 or 17 year olds where they nominated by the local authority due to statutory homeless duty or are subject to assistance under section 27 of the Children's Act 1989.
- where they are over 18 and less than 22 years old be working or are within an exempt group relating to housing costs.
- where a single applicant is under 35 be working or are within an exempt group relating to shared accommodation rate.
- be a British, EEA, Swiss national or those with an indefinite right to be in the UK or have the right to rent (see below Immigration Act 2014)
- not own their home or their own residential accommodation elsewhere
- not hold another tenancy elsewhere unless this is to be terminated upon the taking the tenancy with Estuary
- not currently subject to a custodial sentence
- not have been previously evicted for a breach of tenancy from any property, including anti-social behaviour, non-payment of rent or charges, tenancy fraud or misrepresentation.
- not known to have or members of their family are known to have caused serious anti- social behaviour
- not have any outstanding debts with Estuary as a result of failure to pay rent, court costs and rechargeable repairs
- be able to demonstrate that they can sustain a tenancy which will include passing our affordability, credit reference and tenancy risk assessments.
- be eligible for the size of accommodation using our bedroom standard.

We reserve the right to refuse a nomination where we believe the letting will present a risk to the applicant, other residents, Estuary staff or contractors.

Immigration Act 2014 and right to rent checks

Under the Immigration Act 2014 we are not allowed to not grant a residential tenancy to any one unless the prospective tenant is a British citizen, or EEA or Swiss National, or has a right to rent in the UK. Tenants have a right to rent if they are present in the UK lawfully, in accordance with immigration laws.

We are not required to take any retrospective action in relation to residential tenancies entered into prior to 1 February 2016, or which are renewed after that date as long as there has been no break in the tenant's right to occupy and the new agreement is between the same parties.

For applicant(s) who apply to Estuary directly we will need to carry out right to rent checks. These checks will include all adults (over 18) who will be part of that household. These nominated by the Local Authority would have had these checks carried out as part of that application process.

Applicant(s) with an unlimited right to rent will be allowed entry onto our waiting list and where offered a home will be granted an assured or fixed term tenancy.

Applicant(s) with a time limited right to rent will be allowed entry onto our waiting list. Prior to the offer of accommodation will be required to carry out a further right to rent check. Where an applicant(s) meet the limited right to rent checks they will be granted an assured shorthold tenancy for 1 year, which will be reviewed annually.

Applicant(s) with no right to rent will not be allowed entry onto our waiting list and will not be offered accommodation under any circumstances.

The Home Office website contains the step by step checklist which enables a landlord to check whether a prospective tenant has the right to rent residential property. We will use this to carry out our checks:- <https://www.gov.uk/landlord-immigration-check>

APPENDIX 2

Eligibility criteria for an Estuary general need residents transferring to another home.

A resident must:

- have a housing need
- be able to demonstrate that they can afford to pay the rent at the new home.
- have no outstanding debts to Estuary, including rent, court costs or charges
- be an assured tenant or a secure tenant
- not be within a probationary period of their tenancy
- have maintained the property in good condition
- have complied with the terms of their tenancy
- be eligible for the property being offered using our bedroom standard **set out in Appendix 3**

APPENDIX 3

Size criteria

We will allocate one bedroom for any of the following:

- single adult as an applicant (or a studio [bedsit] where we have this type of accommodation)
- each adult couple
- two children of the same sex under the age of 16
- two children under the age of 10 regardless of their sex
- any child that has reached the age of 16 and there is more than a 3 year age gap with a same sex sibling
- any child that cannot share a bedroom due to proven permanent disabilities
- any other person who can be evidenced as being a permanent part of the household and is over 21 years of age and is not your own child or partner (this does not include lodgers)
- where a couple are unable to share a bedroom due to their proven disabilities
- a carer who is a non family member and is not part of your household where you, your partner, or children need permanent overnight care.
- Grandchildren or step children would be expected to share bedrooms with other family members as listed above.

Under the social sector size criteria, an extra bedroom will be allocated for a foster child where the resident is an approved foster carer, whether they have a child placed with them or not (as long as they have been approved or had a placement in the last 12 months). This is subject to the applicant being able to afford the property when they have no placements and spare bedrooms.

Households with access to children, but no children permanently living with them, will be allocated a one bedroom property. Where joint custody arrangements or shared residency orders apply, we will only consider additional bedroom/s for child/ren for the parent receiving the child benefit.