



PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust

The Trust

Transfer Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Trust allocates its homes through its membership and participation in three local authority area based common allocation policies. These are;
 - Cheshire Homechoice
 - West Cheshire Homes
 - High Peak Home Options
- 1.2. This Transfer Policy provides supplementary guidance on how we deal with tenants who want to transfer.
- 1.3. In conjunction with the common allocation policies, the Trust will use this Transfer Policy to effectively manage our housing stock to ensure our homes are let to the people based upon their housing needs. In doing so, this policy provides that the Trust meets its obligations under the Regulator's Consumer Standards. We have a customer centred approach to transfers that enables customers requiring rehousing to make informed choices about their housing options. We will also use this policy to create sustainable communities.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy outlines how Peaks & Plains (the Trust) will support tenants who want to move from one Trust property to another (transfers). Tenants who transfer will be subject to the guidance within this policy, as well as the rules of their respective local Allocation Policy (see 2.1), to which the Trust also subscribes. This policy does not apply to market rent, Rent to Buy or shared ownership properties.
- 2.2. This policy applies to general needs and sheltered housing stock. The policy provides clarity to customers on the conditions that the Trust requires to be met before supporting a transfer. It also gives colleagues clear guidelines on eligibility and the advice and guidance we will offer to improve tenant mobility.

3. POLICY AIMS

- 3.1. Our aim is to provide a flexible and effective transfer process that will:
 - ensure our homes are let in a fair, transparent and efficient way;
 - support the local authority's strategic housing function;
 - give people choice through participation in choice based letting schemes;
 - make best use of available stock;
 - minimise the time that properties are left unoccupied;
 - make appropriate use of adapted properties.

4. HOW THE TRUST DEALS WITH TRANSFER REQUESTS

- 4.1. Tenants who wish to be rehoused, will be directed to apply through the common allocation policy operating within their area. Tenants will then receive a priority or “Banding” (applicants are placed into one of six groups or bands of priority) within the allocation policy reflective of their housing circumstances.
- 4.2. Generally, existing Trust tenants may apply to transfer to alternative accommodation once they have lived in their home for 12 months. Exceptions to this approach in cases of an exceptional need to move will be considered on a case by case basis, but entirely at the discretion of the Trust.
- 4.3. To manage turnover and demand for our homes, the Trust reserves the right to refuse non-essential “like for like” transfers where there is no demonstrable housing need, where customers are adequately housed. In these instances, we will direct the customer to pursue a mutual exchange. For example, a tenant deemed to be in Band D (do not meet any of the reasonable preference criteria and/or are otherwise adequately housed) may be precluded from obtaining a transfer.
- 4.4. In order to reward positive tenancy behaviours the Trust will support a “like for like” transfer where the prospective transferring tenant can demonstrate a positive tenancy history for at least 24 months, including the parameters set out below in 5.1.

5. SUPPORT FOR TRANSFERS

- 5.1. Generally, transfers will be approved where;
 - There are no rent arrears or other housing related debts
 - No breach of tenancy conditions
 - Property and garden condition meets the Trust’s lettable standard
 - The tenant’s home has not been specifically adapted to the household’s needs
- 5.2. Where tenants are transferred with an outstanding debt, payment of the sums owed shall form a condition of the new tenancy agreement.
- 5.3. Any restriction that is imposed on the transfer application will be notified to the tenant in writing with advice on behaviours and actions required to remove restrictions.
- 5.4. Most transferring tenants will make their own arrangements to move. In circumstances where it is in the overwhelming interest of the tenant to move but they are prevented from doing so due to their financial constraints or other reasons, the Trust may, at its discretion, offer support so the move can go ahead.

6. PROMOTING TENANTS’ ABILITY TO MOVE HOME

- 6.1. The Trust will promote tenants’ ability to move home through a range of communication methods, including to tenants who are not internet users. We will promote both transfers and mutual exchange equally.

- 6.2. The Trust will produce a transfer leaflet as a summary guide to this policy, including advice and support available to prospective transfer applicants.

7. MANAGEMENT TRANSFERS

- 7.1. In instances where a management transfer is required for one of the Trust's tenants, the requirement to bid through a common allocation policy will be waived. This will generally be in exceptional circumstances where the immediate welfare, health and safety of our tenant could be at serious risk if they remain in their own home, or where other exceptional circumstances need to be addressed.
- 7.2. The Trust will usually withdraw a management move offer if the tenant does not engage appropriately with us during the process and/or refuses to accept a reasonable offer of alternative accommodation.
- 7.3. Where a management move is required, a manager will write a supporting report detailing the reasons for the move, for the approval of the Head of Customer Experience, or equivalent grade post. All successful management moves will be recorded and reported in accordance with the prevailing national and local authority reporting requirements.

8. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

- 8.1. Transferring applicants may request an appeal against any decision made in relation to their application for rehousing.
- 8.2. Applicants, who have applied via Choice Based Letting who feel they have been treated unfairly or are dissatisfied with a decision about an offer of tenancy and/or support for a move, should refer to the appeals procedure of the relevant Choice Based Lettings Scheme. However, decisions taken solely by the Trust through this policy may be appealed by the Trust's complaints policy.

9. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Our customers, regardless of background or ability, deserve to have the same opportunity to benefit from the services we provide. We will ensure that customers with particular needs are able to communicate with us and will be treated by our staff in a manner that takes their needs into account.
- 9.2. The Trust will ensure;
- all customers receive equal access to services irrespective of defined protected characteristics
 - all staff are trained on equality, diversity and inclusion issues and are equipped to deal with our customers' specific needs

10. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 10.1. The Executive Management team are responsible for the approval of this policy.

- 10.2. The Head of Customer Experience will oversee the operational implementation of the policy, including consideration and approval of exceptional lettings requests from managers.
- 10.3. Day to day operational responsibility for dealing with customers who wish to transfer will fall under the remit of the Neighbourhoods team, led by the Housing Manager and Neighbourhood Team Leader

11. MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 11.1. The Board will receive at least an annual report from officers on the Trust’s lettings performance which will include detail on the number of transfers and exceptional lettings made outside of the Allocations policy.

12. CONSULTATION

- 12.1. This policy has been developed in consultation with the Trust’s Challenge Group.

13. FUTURE REVIEWS

- 13.1. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years

14. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- 14.1.
- Cheshire Homechoice Allocation Policy
 - West Cheshire Homes Allocation Policy
 - High Peak Home Options Allocation Policy
 - Mutual Exchange, Assignment and Succession Policy
 - Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

POLICY INFORMATION

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