

**Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea**

**Wider Grenfell Rehousing Policy**

**Barandon Walk, Hurstway Walk, Testerton Walk**

**Bramley House, Treadgold House**

February 2018



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## **1. Introduction**

This special dispensation rehousing policy has been adopted pursuant to paragraph 1.11 of the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme, February 2017 revision and should be read in conjunction with the Allocation Scheme.

The Grenfell Tower fire that occurred on 14 June 2017 was a humanitarian disaster on an unprecedented scale within the borough. The loss of life and harrowing events of the tragedy as well as its aftermath have devastated an entire community. The Council recognises that the tragedy deeply affected an entire community and especially residents who live in close proximity to the Tower. Listening to and supporting the residents of North Kensington, the Council also recognises that residents and families of Barandon, Hurstway and Testerton Walks (the Walkways), Bramley House and Treadgold House were particularly affected.

This rehousing policy forms part of the Council's commitment to the residents of the Wider Grenfell area following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, to help the community heal and to rebuild their lives.

The policy sits alongside the Council's commitment to invest in the community, to refurbish residents' homes and environment, and to work with the community to ensure it remains desirable and revitalised place to live, albeit with one with such tragic memories of those who lost their lives.

The policy explains how the Council will prioritise tenants of the Walkways, Bramley House and Treadgold House for rehousing in long-term accommodation where they feel unable to remain in their current home. It sets out the Council's priorities and procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation to this group.

The Director of Housing has the delegated authority in exceptional circumstances to amend or waive this policy.

## **2. Who qualifies for Wider Grenfell Priority?**

Priority under this policy, known as 'Wider Grenfell Priority', will be awarded to tenants who were living at the Walkways or in Bramley House or Treadgold House as their main home prior to the fire and who fall within one of the following groups:

- Council introductory or secure tenants; or
- Tenants of temporary accommodation secured by the Council pursuant to the main housing duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (s.193).

The Council recognises that residing in hotels is not a suitable arrangement on an ongoing basis. The Council also recognises that long term rehousing will take some time even with the special priority awarded under this policy. Alternative, self-contained temporary accommodation will be offered to Walkways, Bramley House and Treadgold House residents to enable them to move out of hotels.

Wider Grenfell Priority cannot be awarded while applicants remain in hotel accommodation. It will only be granted to applicants residing in self-contained temporary accommodation provided by the Council, or residing at home in the Walkways, Bramley House or Treadgold House, unless the Council has not been able to offer suitable temporary accommodation.

The Council will support private tenants and lodgers with advice and assistance to find an alternative private rented tenancy.

## **3. Points and priority**

Tenants who qualify for Wider Grenfell Priority will be awarded 900 points on the Housing Register.

This is a high priority status equal to the "supporting health and independence" priority status.

The award of Wider Grenfell Priority may be combined with either or both of the following priority categories provided in the Housing Allocation Scheme, February 2017 revision, where applicable.

- i. Supporting health and independence (900 points): section 4.6 of the Scheme

Where a tenant applies on health grounds (their own or a member of their household), ordinarily it will have to be demonstrated that the condition pre-existed the tragedy and that rehousing to another property will play a critical role in addressing those health problems. Nevertheless, the Council will consider the circumstances of tenants who are experiencing substantial mental or physical health problems following the tragedy where the granting of supporting health and independence in addition to Wider Grenfell Priority might be warranted.

- ii. Overcrowding priority (200 points): section 4.10 of the Scheme.

Tenants will be awarded overcrowding priority if they are lacking two or more bedrooms in their current home according to the Council's definition of bedroom need (see section 4.2 of the Wider Grenfell Rehousing Policy).

Therefore, within the Wider Grenfell Rehousing Policy, a higher priority will be awarded to tenants with a greater need for rehousing.

Where two or more tenants with the same priority for rehousing have expressed an interest in the same vacant property, the property will be offered first to the tenant with the greatest length of residence in the Walkways. The start date for this length of residency is known as the 'priority date'.

No time restriction will be placed on making an application for Wider Grenfell Priority.

#### **4. Household needs**

##### **4.1 Needs assessments**

All households will be assisted to complete an accurate housing needs assessment and agree a personal rehousing plan which will be kept up to date. Officers will also assist households to update any changes in circumstances which affect the accommodation they require.

Applicants will be asked to provide Equality and Diversity information. The Council asks households to assist in this process in order to help to deliver the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity when applying this policy.

##### **4.2 Bed size recommendations**

The size of property each applicant with Wider Grenfell Priority and their household requires will be assessed as set out below:

We will offer properties of the same bedroom size as the one where the household was living, or if the household is overcrowded, they will be offered a larger property that meets the needs of their household on the following basis:

## Bedroom calculation

	One person	Couple	Two adults not living as a couple	One adult or a couple plus					
				One child or other adult	Two children of the same sex aged 20 or under	Two children of opposite sexes aged 9 or under	Two children of opposite sexes, one or both aged 10 or over	Three children	Four or more children
Studio	X	X							
One bed		X							
Two bed			X	X	X	X			
Three bed							X	X	X
Four or more bedrooms									X

## 5. The Allocations process

### 5.1 Expressions of interest in advertised properties

As soon as a tenant is on the Council's Housing Register, they can start to express interest in vacant properties that meet their specified needs, as agreed in the needs assessment and personal rehousing plan.

Tenants will use the Council's online Choice Based Letting (CBL) scheme, Home Connections, to express an interest in properties.

### 5.2 Assisted choice

Tenants awarded Wider Grenfell Priority who are not able or do not have immediate access to be able to express an interest or may simply otherwise be missing out on making suitable expressions will be offered assisted choice. The Council will engage closely with tenants to ensure the assessment of their needs is up to date, accurate and agreed in writing. We will discuss their housing preferences and identify and remove barriers to finding suitable homes.

### **5.3 Converting temporary accommodation into long-term accommodation**

Sometimes it will be possible to convert temporary accommodation owned and managed by a social landlord into long-term social housing, where the household wishes to remain living in that property. If this is possible, the accommodation may be allocated to the tenant with Wider Grenfell Priority currently occupying it.

### **5.4 Entitlement to two reasonable offers**

A tenant awarded Wider Grenfell Priority will have the right to receive two suitable offers from the Housing Register. The offer will be triggered by a successful expression of interest or a suitable match made under assisted choice.

### **5.5 Reduction of priority, right to review and independent adjudication**

In the event that the Council is satisfied that a tenant has refused a suitable offer unreasonably, it will notify the tenant of its decision. The tenant will have the right to request a review of that decision. The review will be carried out by a senior officer not involved in the offer process. If the request for a review is upheld, the decision will be reversed and the offer will not count as one of the tenant's two offers.

Only after two offers have been unreasonably refused and unsuccessful reviews of those decisions will the Council notify the tenant that it intends to amend a tenant's priority date to the date of the last suitable offer.

However, the Council will establish an independent adjudication stage to ensure that the final decision is taken by an independent person not employed by the Council.

If the independent adjudicator upholds the Council's decision, the tenant will retain their points award, but their priority date will be amended to the date of the last suitable offer.

## **6. Tenancy terms and conditions**

### **6.1 Tenure**

Homes advertised and offered on the Housing Register will be from both the Council and registered providers (housing associations).

The Council will let properties to tenants rehoused with Wider Grenfell Priority on lifetime secure tenancies, subject to the commencement of Part 4 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 (implementing Schedule 7 amendments to secure tenancies) and associated regulations.

For registered providers, all tenancies will be let on Assured Tenancies under the Housing Act 1988.

Where the tenant is rehoused by a registered provider property, the new landlord's tenancy terms will apply. However, the Council will request the registered provider to grant a tenancy of at least the same length as that held by the tenant previously.

## **6.2 Rent and service charges**

Tenants rehoused to a property owned by the Council will pay the rent and the service charges applicable to the new property.

Where tenants are rehoused to a property owned by a registered provider, the new landlord's rent and service charges policies will apply.

## **7. Allocation of vacant properties in the Walkways, Treadgold House and Bramley House**

Where vacant Council properties arise in the Walkways, Treadgold House and Bramley House, it is the Council's intention that they will first be made available to Lancaster West Estate residents who are registered for rehousing on the Housing Register.

The Council will set out this procedure in a separate local lettings plan.

## **8. Equality and diversity**

In adopting this policy, the Council has had due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Council will continue to monitor the effect of this policy on the above needs and in particular will review this policy after it has been in force for a period of at least three months. Further reviews will be carried out as necessary and appropriate.

The Council will continually monitor, review and improve the delivery of this policy with the aim of ensuring that it meets the community's needs in the best way that it possibly can.