

Appendix 2

Bypassing an Applicant

This appendix to the Monmouthshire Common Allocation Policy sets out the circumstances when a Housing Association partner may bypass an applicant who is next in line to be offered accommodation. It is agreed between the partners of the common allocation policy that:

1. Blanket bans should not be used
2. A decision by any partner housing association to bypass an applicant who would be next in line for an offer of accommodation will only be taken according to the criteria agreed and set out in this policy.
3. Any local letting initiative that the partner housing association wish to apply must only be applied according to the procedure agreed by all partners and set out in this policy.
4. Where a housing association partner to this policy may wish to retain exception rules that do not form part of the common allocation policy, for example, rules relating to the size of accommodation to be offered, or rules relating to offers of accommodation from applicants with former rent arrears or behaviour that has not yet been address or resolved – these rules should be transparent and will be recorded for each housing association as an appendix to the common allocation policy, so it is clear when a named housing association will bypass an applicant and why.

All parties have agreed, as far as possible, to set a common set of rules and to keep exceptions to a minimum but all recognise the need for each body to manage their dwellings appropriately.

Clearly it is not possible to describe every situation where an applicant due an offer of social housing might be bypassed. The following are the most common situations:

a) **The applicant has a social housing tenancy related debt.**

Where information on former tenant arrears only emerges after an offer has been made, that offer may be withdrawn by that housing association and the policy for arrears applied. This would be where the arrears are above 8 weeks' net rent or £500.00 (a payment plan would also need to be in place and paid for at least 6 weeks).

Where information of pending or outstanding recharges only emerges after an offer has been made, that offer may be withdrawn by that housing association. This would apply to recharges for repairs with a total value of over £500 and the case would be referred to the Exclusion Panel for their consideration.

b) **Applicants who are vulnerable and have high support needs or applicants who require a sensitive letting such as MAPPA cases**

There are a number of circumstances where the housing association partner may need to bypass an applicant who is imminently due an offer of social housing. This may be where:

- An applicant may be vulnerable and considered not yet ready to sustain a tenancy
- It is considered there may be a risk to the applicant or others, where for example, a MAPPA case needs to be housed and a sensitive let may need to be planned.

c) **The applicant is not suitable for the social housing allocation with communal entrance/facilities.**

Applicants who are vulnerable or pose a risk to themselves or others can be bypassed by partners.

d) **The property is not suitable for a disabled applicants long term needs**

When considering an offer of accommodation to applicants with a disability, their current and long term needs will be assessed with regards to the suitability of the property

It is not possible to describe every situation where an applicant may be bypassed. Individual cases that fall outside the criteria will need to be discussed by the Exclusion Panel. Discussions may have to be conducted via email as the panel only meets once a month

However, it is important that such applicants do not end up being bypassed because of a lack of pre-offer planning, resulting in an offer not being made because of a lack of information, or an appropriate support package. Where there are applicants who are extremely vulnerable or considered to pose a risk to themselves or others, the case should be submitted to the monthly Exclusion Panel meeting (or discussions conducted via email) to decide whether they are ready to sustain a tenancy and what support package is required, so that an offer of accommodation can be made.

The type of information to be considered by the panel may include:

- Details of any long-term illness, health problem or disability that requires specific or specialist housing, care or support.
- Details of other care and support needs, for example because of vulnerability due to learning difficulties.
- Details of proposed, existing and previous packages of care provision provided by statutory or other bodies where known.
- Relevant and reasonable information with regard to previous history of anti-social behaviour that might impact on the safety of the community.

- Type of accommodation moving from and any additional available accommodation history.

It is also important that no individual housing association houses a disproportionate number of vulnerable or MAPPA cases and a system based on transparency and evidence needs to be established. MAPPA allocations will be made as a percentage of offers for each of the partners - based on the percentage of each organisation's housing stock in Monmouthshire. It is recognised that whilst all partners are happy to accommodate MAPPA cases, the location of the housing stock might not be suitable and therefore the offer will be withdrawn. There must be an evidence based justification as to why any property cannot be used for a vulnerable or MAPPA applicant. PPU and Probation must be contacted before bypassing a MAPPA case and reasons noted in journal. This needs to be considered by the panel and recorded where it is agreed a specific property cannot be used or an individuals' risk or vulnerability means they will be bypassed for a property which their housing needs status would mean they are due to be offered. All offers of accommodation will need to be authorised by the Chief Executive/Director for that particular Housing Association.