

HAIG HOUSING TRUST

TENANT TRANSFER POLICY

Contents

1.	Introduction	Page 1
2.	Eligibility for Transfer	Page 1
3.	Removal from the Transfer Register	Page 2
4.	Exceptional Circumstances	Page 2
5.	Choices for Tenants.....	Page 3
6.	Other Housing Options	Page 3
7.	Interviews and Home Visits.....	Page 3
8.	Acceptance onto the Transfer Register	Page 3
9.	Number of properties to be offered	Page 3
10.	Housing Need – The Transfer Points Scheme	Page 3
11.	Assessing Priority – How priority for a transfer is awarded	Page 4
12.	Transfers on Management Grounds, Meeting the Needs Of the Trust or to Make Best Use of Stock	Page 6
13.	Properties with specific Affiliations	Page 6
14.	Low Demand Transfer	Page 7
15.	Larger households resulting from new relationships or extended family members joining the household	Page 7
16.	Appeals	Page 7
17.	Appendices	Page 7

Version 2 – Master copy
Approved by:

Director of Corporate Services
December 2018
Review: December 2021

HAIG HOUSING TRUST

TENANT TRANSFER POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Haig Housing Trust's (HHT) objects include the provision of housing assistance for those who have served in Her Majesty's British Armed Forces, their widows, widowers and dependants (including Civil Partners).
- 1.2 HHT currently provides housing assistance by letting homes at affordable rents to those in housing need. They may be homeless, threatened with impending homelessness, inadequately housed or in other housing need and are without the financial resources to make their own provision by renting in the private sector or buying their own home. HHT has insufficient housing stock to meet the considerable demand so applications for assistance have to be assessed for priority.
- 1.3 Having been housed by the Trust, a Tenant is no longer in housing need and is considered to be adequately housed. However a material change in their circumstances can result in the property they occupy no longer being suitable for their needs.
- 1.4 It is also recognised that some tenants will have accepted housing on an estate that was not their first choice in the hope of being able to move to their preferred estate at a later time. Furthermore it is acknowledged that in terms of aspirations, the Trust's Tenants are no different from any other member of the community in wanting to improve on their current housing circumstances.
- 1.5 The Trust may therefore, in some circumstances, offer a Tenant the chance to move home and applications to transfer will be assessed in accordance with this policy.
- 1.6 There is a cost to the Trust when a tenant transfers to another property whether because of repair or improvement, safety checks or the loss of rent. The Trust will not normally therefore support a request for transfer if the tenant's current property has not been well looked after and requires refurbishment or significant redecoration or if the application fails to meet other eligibility criteria.

2 ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER

- 2.1 To be considered for the transfer register, tenants must normally meet **all** of the following qualifying criteria:
- a) Held the tenancy of their present Haig property for a minimum of three years, subject only to some exceptions. **See paragraph 4 and 14.1a.**
 - b) Be the tenant named on the Tenancy Agreement and in full time residence at the Trust's property. If the tenant with the Service history has moved out of the property, the status of the remaining occupiers will have to be resolved before a transfer request can be considered.

- c) With the exception of Local Housing Allowance / Housing Benefit when paid in arrears, the tenant has maintained a good record of rent payment with no history of arrears or late payment during the previous 12 months.
- d) Conducted the tenancy without any breach of the conditions of tenancy.
- e) Maintained the present property (and garden if applicable) to a standard such that the Trust will incur only minimal costs in bringing the property to a reasonable standard.

3 REMOVAL FROM THE TRANSFER REGISTER

3.1 Tenants **will be** removed from the transfer register if at any time after their acceptance onto the Register:

- a) Rent and any other charges are not being paid regularly as they become due (with the exception of Local Housing Allowance / Housing Benefit when paid in arrears).
- b) The tenant, members of the household or visitors are causing neighbour nuisance, harassment or anti-social behaviour; or if any member of the household is found guilty of any criminal offence.
- c) A Notice of Seeking Possession and / or a Notice to Quit is served and current.
- d) A reasonable offer has been made and refused.

4 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

4.1 The Trust **may** consider an application for a transfer from a tenant who would normally be excluded from the Transfer Register if there has been a significant change in their circumstances since taking up the tenancy or if the request for a transfer is within the first three years of their tenancy, e.g. where:

- a) The size of the immediate family has increased resulting in significant overcrowding.
- b) The size of the immediate family has reduced and the property is no longer of a suitable size.
- c) A medical condition has developed or worsened.
- d) There is a need to escape domestic violence.
- e) They have been subject to harassment.
- f) Their place of work has been relocated or a job has been offered in another location.

- 4.2 Documentary evidence of need will be required e.g. doctor's / consultant's / occupational therapist's reports, witness statements, Police reports and crime numbers, proof of employment offer and acceptance.
- 4,3 The Trust may facilitate a transfer, in furtherance of its aims, to make available suitable accommodation for another beneficiary or potential beneficiary.

5 CHOICES FOR TENANTS

- 5.1 Tenants applying for a transfer will be asked to choose the areas they wish to move to, and the type of housing they would like. Wherever possible, such preferences will be taken into account when the application is assessed and any offer of accommodation is made.

6 OTHER HOUSING OPTIONS

- 6.1 Tenants applying for transfers will also be informed of other possible housing options. Where the Trust cannot meet a priority need, the Trust will try to assist the tenant to achieve alternative housing.

7 INTERVIEWS AND HOME VISITS

- 7.1 All Tenants who apply for a transfer will be visited in their home and will be interviewed by a member of the Trust's staff or an Agent of the Trust. They will be advised at the time of the visit and it will then be confirmed in writing, if there are any matters relating to the property or any tenancy breaches which they need to deal with, before their application can proceed further. They will be re-visited if being considered for an available property.

8 ACCEPTANCE ONTO THE TRANSFER REGISTER

- 8.1 When an application has been assessed the Trust will confirm in writing whether or not the tenant's name has been added to the Register and will give an indication of their level of priority for the size of property and area requested.
- 8.2 The Trust will not agree to accept an applicant onto the transfer list, or may subsequently remove a tenant already on the list, if the applicant has not maintained their existing property in good condition such that it can be re-let without significant maintenance or redecoration work. In exceptional circumstances the Trust may agree to accept an applicant onto the transfer list provided they agree in writing to accept being re-charged for work needed to make their existing home re-lettable.

9 NUMBER OF PROPERTIES TO BE OFFERED

- 9.1 In order to be fair to new applicants for housing and tenants asking to be transferred, only one reasonable offer will be made. Refusal of a reasonable offer will mean that the application is removed from the Register. The tenant will be able to re-apply after one year.

10 HOUSING NEED - The Transfer Points Scheme

- 10.1 The Trust aims to treat all applications for a transfer fairly. However, as there is higher demand for Trust properties than available properties the Trust will not be able to offer a transfer to every tenant who requests it. Therefore there must be a system for assessing priority where there is a high demand for an estate or a type of property and each transfer request will be assessed using the Points Scheme (see **Appendix A**).
- 10.2 Transfer applications with the highest number of points will be considered first for all suitable vacant properties.

11 ASSESSING PRIORITY FOR A TRANSFER

11.1 Medical grounds:

- 11.1.1 Where a tenant has applied to move on grounds of a disability or due to a medical condition, their application must be supported by medical evidence. Priority may be assessed by a qualified Medical Practitioner or Occupational Health visitor.
- a) **Urgent priority** **An emergency medical need** is usually where a tenant (or member of their household) has a life-threatening or progressive condition and their housing circumstances are making the condition worse.
- b) **Medium priority** **An urgent medical need** is usually where a tenant (or member of their household) has a major or adverse medical condition which is made worse by their housing circumstances.
- c) **Low priority** **A non-urgent medical need** is usually where a tenant (or member of their household) has a moderate or variable medical condition which is **not** made worse by their housing circumstances but the quality of their life is affected.
- d) **No priority** **No medical priority for a move** is where there could be a medical issue experienced by a tenant (or member of their household) but this is not related to their current housing condition.
- 11.1.2 Medical priority can be gained by more than one member of the household. The highest medical priority of any household member will be applied to the transfer application.
- 11.1.3 Where a vacant property has adaptations and therefore meets the needs of a disabled person, the tenant on the register with the highest points in need of this type of adaptation, will be offered the tenancy.

11.2 Receiving or giving support to family / friends or to take up employment:

- a) **Urgent priority** Elderly, long-term seriously ill or person with disabilities moving to receive essential support from family or friends.
- b) **Medium priority** Tenant moving to provide support to long term sick or disabled ex-Service person or to receive support, e.g. with childcare or to take up a job offer in another area.
- c) **Low priority** Tenant wishing to move near to relatives for their own support (need must be specified).
- d) **No priority** Tenant wishing to be near relatives but with no support needs.

11.3 Lack of bedrooms:

11.3.1 The Trust's properties range from one-bedroom to five-bedrooms, but the majority are three bedroom properties. The following represents the **minimum bedroom standards** based on occupants and is a guide only:

- a) One or two adults 1 Bedroom
- b) Family 1 child 2 Bedrooms
Family 2 children same sex
- c) Family 2 children opposite sex 3 Bedrooms
- d) Family 3 children 4 Bedrooms
Family 4 children

11.3.2 Every transfer request will be assessed to calculate the shortfall in the number of bedrooms that the specific household needs and priority will be awarded as follows:

- a) **Urgent priority** Shortfall of 3 or more bedrooms
- b) **Medium priority** Shortfall of 2 bedrooms
- c) **Low priority** Shortfall of 1 bedroom
- d) **No priority** Meets the Trusts' minimum bedroom standard

11.4 More appropriate types of property:

- 11.4.1 **Low priority** Household in flat or maisonette with resident children under the age of 13 and no private garden.

11.5 Under-occupation:

11.5.1 The Trust aims to make the best use of its stock by releasing under occupied properties for allocation to other larger households in need. To facilitate this, the Trust will award higher priority to tenants who are willing to transfer to smaller accommodation. Those freeing up the highest number of bedrooms will have higher priority over those freeing fewer.

- 11.5.2 In the event of two transfer applicants being able to free up the same number of bedrooms the following priority will apply:
- a) Transfer from house to flat
 - b) Transfer from house to maisonette
 - c) Transfer from house to house

11.6 Exceptional Circumstances:

- 11.6.1 The Trust only provides accommodation to an individual in one property at any time. Where two households, both occupying Trust property, have joined together and this has caused severe overcrowding all the parties concerned will be expected to negotiate to resolve the problem.
- 11.6.2 Lodgers will not be included as members of a household

12 TRANSFERS ON MANAGEMENT GROUNDS, MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE TRUST OR TO MAKE BEST USE OF STOCK

- 12.1 There will be situations where the Trust needs to move a tenant on a temporary or permanent basis, e.g. to enable major works to be completed to their home, or to deal with “one off” management situations such as new developments.
- 12.2 Each “Management Transfer” case will be considered on its merits and the decision made by the Housing and Development Director following reports submitted by the Housing Options Manager with input from the relevant Housing Manager/Surveyor. The Allocations and Voids Committee should be kept informed of intended Management Transfers.
- 12.3 Where the Trust needs to house a family member who has a right to succeed to a tenancy but the property is larger than they need, or where the Trust wishes to achieve best use of its stock, consideration will be given to an application even though the applicant would not normally be considered a priority for a transfer under the Transfer Points Scheme. The decision to make an offer will be taken by the Housing and Development Director, following a report submitted by the relevant Housing Manager. Any appeal will be heard by the Chief Executive.

13 PROPERTIES WITH SPECIFIC AFFILIATIONS

- 13.1 Some of the Trust’s properties have specific affiliations to one of the Services, a Regiment or Service Charity. When allocating these homes, where housing need is equal, priority will be given the ex-Service person with the specific link.

14 LOW DEMAND TRANSFER

14.1 Where a transfer application is made and is assessed as having low or no priority, the Tenant may be considered for a transfer if there is no demand from anyone else on the register. The following are all valid reasons to move but will normally be awarded low priority:

- a) The tenant has children and would like to move from a maisonette or flat to a house. The tenant must have occupied their property for at least one year.
- b) Tenants wishing to move to another area
- c) Tenants wanting to move to another similar property on the Estate

15 LARGER HOUSEHOLDS RESULTING FROM NEW RELATIONSHIPS OR EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS JOINING THE HOUSEHOLD

15.1 There are occasions where a tenant has formed a new relationship with someone who has children or they would like to accommodate members of their extended family and wish to be transferred to accommodate the larger household.

The Trust will not accept responsibility for housing the larger household in these circumstances. The Trust will however try to provide advice and guidance on other housing options. It will normally require the tenant to make alternative arrangements for the additional family members but they will be given time for them to do so.

16 APPEALS

16.1 Appeals against Tenant Transfer Request Decision.

Applicants may appeal against the decision taken by the Housing Options Manager in relation to their eligibility, the priority they have been awarded or removal from the Register. Appeals should be submitted to the Operations Director in writing within 4 weeks of their being notified of any decision, or of their becoming aware of not having been offered a property.

16.2 Appeals against Management Transfer Decisions.

Appeals should be submitted to the Housing and Development Director in writing within 4 weeks of the tenant being notified of any decision.

17 APPENDICES

- A** Transfer Points Scheme
- B** Tenant Transfer Procedure
- C** Tenant Transfer Process
- D** Letter: enclosing Transfer form
- E** Letter: acknowledge receipt and advising HM visit
- F** Letter: no response to HM
- G** Letter: confirming actions agreed during HM visit
- H** Letter: enquiries further to HM visit
- I** Letter: accepting to Transfer Register
- J** Letter: reject on eligibility
- K** Letter: reject following full assessment