



To: All LHOs, ABSTs

Guidance Note on Local Letting Plans	
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Guidance on Local Letting Plans

1. Introduction: What is a Local Letting Plan (LLP)?

A Local Letting Plan is a plan to assist an LHO to develop locally based allocation policies for the LHO area. The LLP should take account of previous letting performance and the trends in demand that will affect future letting performance. LLPs should fit with and reflect clearance re-housing strategies and take account of the impact of local clearances on future letting. They should also take account of particular housing needs identified in the LHO area (e.g. the needs of disabled people) and of any particular letting problems (e.g. low demand for some houses). Ultimately the LLP must respect legislative requirements and Communities Scotland's performance standards, and must also accord with overall GHA policy on allocations (e.g. equal opportunities). Where local letting variations are proposed, the justification for them should be found with reference to the LLP.

Good practice guidance suggests that Local Letting Plans are a means for:

- outlining expectations in relation to future allocations
 - promoting equal opportunities in housing allocations
 - ensuring a periodic debate about needs and demands
 - developing initiatives for low demand stock
 - setting targets and assessing the outcomes of the letting process

The plan is a means of thinking systematically about the year ahead and planning for the future – rather than reacting.

Communities Scotland Performance Standards

Communities Scotland Performance Standards set out a number of self-assessment questions in relation to Local Letting Plans. These include:

- Do we consider the needs of the community when making allocation decisions? Is our approach to this clearly set out in our policy?
 - Is our use of lettings plans and local lettings initiatives provided for in our allocations policy?
 - Is our use of special lettings plans and local lettings initiatives based on a robust analysis of local need and demand?
 - Do our special lettings plans and local lettings initiatives support the objectives of our allocation policy?

2. Contents of a Local Letting Plan

2.1 LLPs may vary in size and scope depending on the number and variety of LHO stock and the presence or absence of serious letting difficulties. The following guidance offers some pointers to the kind of basic information that should be included and to the kind of letting issues that may need to be addressed.

2.2 The LLP should have an introductory section giving very basic information on the LHO and setting out the aims and objective of letting, e.g.:

- reflect good practice
- increase choice for applicants
- minimise rent loss

2.3 There should be a section that sets out the key statistical information in relation to letting. There are three elements to this.

2.3.1 **Context:** stock figures giving a breakdown of sizes and types in addition to other bits of relevant info, e.g. sheltered.

2.3.2 Breakdown of Previous Years Lets:

For the previous 12 months lets the following information should be given in the LLP:

- void rate – voids as a % of stock
- average length of void period
- let rate – no. of lets in relation to number of terminations
- turnover rate – no. of terminations in relation to stock
- refusal rate – refusals as a % of offers
- average time to process offers (offer to acceptance/refusal)
- total lets analysed by:
 - group (e.g. homeless, transfer)
 - household (e.g. single person, family)
 - housing need (e.g. medical, overcrowded)
- no. and % of lets to referrals in relation to agreed targets (i.e. homeless referrals housed within 6 weeks)

2.3.3 Forecast of Likely Allocations for the Year Ahead

This should include an analysis of current demand and expected future demand. Anything likely to impact on future letting (e.g. clearances, decant programmes) should be included here.

2.4 Proposed Allocation Plan for the Year Ahead

This section should give a narrative account of planned letting for the year ahead based on the statistical information outlined in the previous section. Issues that should be addressed are:

- previous letting performance – are there specific problems that have to be addressed?
- homeless referrals – how are they operating locally? What measures need to be taken to resolve difficulties? How does the level of referral fit with other pressures on letting (e.g. clearance, decants).
- clearance re-housing strategies – how do other LHOs and RSLs contribute to re-housing programmes? What effect will clearance have on other lettings or on the wider community? What impact will other LHO clearances have on local letting?
- the needs and re-housing opportunities for people with a disability – what are the shortfalls and mismatches of need and provision?
- local move proposals – is a quota being set for local moves?
- sensitive letting criteria – e.g. avoid concentrations of similar households and avoid lifestyle clashes
- low demand areas – are there any proposed initiatives? (e.g. advertising vacancies)
- Quotas for Temporary Furnished Flats (TFFs) and the NASS contract.
- Homes Mobility Moves

3. Policy Variations

All policy variations (either in existence or proposed) should be covered in this section. For each variation the following information should be given:

- description of stock location, sizes and types, special provision (e.g. suitable for disabled), community issues (e.g. high turnover, anti-social behaviour, local facilities)
- summary of the variation (e.g. restrictions on permitted levels of overcrowding or under-occupation)
- summary of the reasons for the variation and the objectives to be achieved (and how measured)

(NB: Blanket age restrictions are not permissible unless stock is specifically designed or adapted for an age group)

4. Management of Policy Variations and Lettings Generally

This section should set out basic management information in relation to letting generally and should pay particular attention to the policy variations included in the previous section. It does not need to detail procedural arrangements. Information relevant to this section will be:

- how will applications be made and processed?
- what will be done to match a disabled person's needs to a particular property (e.g. involve an OT)?
- if initiatives, such as advertising vacancies in low demand stock, are included how will this be operated?
- if letting committees are involved, how is the committee made up? How often will it meet? What are the rules of engagement (e.g. interview people or only welcome them)?

(NB: Letting committees will not be allowed to interview housing applicants before selection. Committee members must disclose any interest and abstain from participating in a decision affecting relatives and friends)

5. Monitoring Arrangements

This section should outline the monitoring arrangements for the LLP. This should cover such issues as:

- methods of monitoring – quantitative (statistical) and/or qualitative (satisfaction surveys)
- methods and frequency of reporting to LHO committee

6. Consultation

The draft Local Letting Plan should be discussed by the LHO committee and passed to GHA for comment. If the plan proposes policy variations, new local letting initiatives or a new local allocation policy, GHA approval must be sought. The LHO will need to consult with tenants and wider stakeholders before implementing changes.

7. Further information

Further information on this guidance note can be obtained from:

Jackson Greenhorn
Senior Policy Development Officer
Policy and Planning

Jackson.greenhorn@gha.org.uk

Tel: 0141 274 6578