

# Garage Allocation and Management Policy



<b>Reference:</b>	HS_POL_HOU_GALL_4	<b>Author:</b>	Assistant Director of Housing and Resident Engagement
<b>Scope:</b>	Housing Solutions	<b>Approved by:</b>	Executive Team
<b>Legislation:</b>	Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Data Protection Act (1998) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018) The Housing Act 1985 The Equalities Act 2010 <b>Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; <i>Anti-social behaviour powers</i></b> <b><i>Statutory guidance for front-line professionals</i></b>	<b>Date of approval:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Regulatory/ Governance:</b>	Consumer Standards	<b>Date of next review:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2027
<b>Related Policies:</b>	Health and Safety Policy Data Protection Policy Subject Access Request Policy Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Safeguarding Policy Confidentiality Policy Complaints Policy Vulnerable Customer Policy Rent Setting Policy		

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to issue guidance in relation to the allocation of Housing Solutions' rented garage stock and management of our garage licenses.
- 1.2 Housing Solutions own a number of lock-up garages within Maidenhead and surrounding areas, which it makes available to rent to Housing Solutions customers and other local residents.

1.3 Housing Solutions holds a separate waiting list, of all applicants wishing to rent a garage, from which all allocations are made.

1.4 This policy aims to:

1.4.1 Make best use of its available garages, by letting them to customers and local residents.

1.4.2 Ensure garages are allocated fairly and efficiently, and as quickly as possible to maximise rental income.

1.4.3 Operate a garage allocations system that is easy to understand and transparent.

1.4.4 Clear processes when a garage license comes to an end.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The roles and responsibilities relevant to this policy are:

<b>Board</b>	Supports the organisation in the fair and consistent application of this policy.
<b>Executive Team</b>	Responsible for approving this policy and any amendments from time to time.
<b>Assistant Director of Resident Services &amp; Community</b>	Responsible for overseeing the operational delivery and service quality of garage services and compliance with this policy
<b>Housing Services Manager</b>	Responsible for overseeing operational delivery and appeals
<b>Lettings Team Leader</b>	Responsible for the day-to-day management of the teams delivering operational services to all prospective and current licensee's.
<b>Housing Officer</b>	Responsible for management and informal resolutions
<b>Income Officer</b>	Responsible for rent account management
<b>Community Safety Officer</b>	Responsible for anti-social behaviour case management and enforcement action.
<b>All Staff</b>	All staff are responsible for helping residents to sustain their tenancies wherever possible.

## 3. Our Approach

### Eligibility

3.1 Garage waiting list applications will be accepted from anyone aged 18 or over.

3.2 Residents will not be eligible to apply for a garage if they have any outstanding rent arrears, or sundry debts with Housing Solutions. This includes debts which have been passed to a collection agency due to non-payment. No offers will be made until the whole outstanding debt has been cleared.

3.3 Residents may not be eligible if there is an historic or ongoing case of unacceptable behaviour towards Housing Solutions employees or contractors,

- 3.4 All applicants must provide two forms of proof of their current address (utility bills, bank statements and tenancy agreements will be acceptable) and must complete a garage application form.
- 3.5 Housing Solutions will ensure that no applicant is discriminated against as a result of the application process, by ensuring that staff offer assistance with completing forms to any applicants who may find it useful.

### **Processing Applications**

- 3.6 All returned garage applications will be assessed for eligibility by the Lettings Team. Applicants may be asked to supply further information if necessary and their application will be deferred until such information is supplied.
- 3.7 All eligible applications will be registered on the waiting list. If an applicant's circumstances change, a new application form must be completed.

### **Annual Re-registration**

- 3.8 To ensure the garage waiting list remains up-to-date, applicants are required to re-register annually, on the anniversary of their application.
- 3.9 Failure to re-register will result in an applicant's removal from the garage waiting list.

### **Allocation**

- 3.10 Garages will be allocated in the following order:

**Priority 1** – Housing Solutions Tenants in properties for which the garage/s were initially built, with a disability or age requiring a garage in close proximity.

**Priority 2** – Housing Solutions Tenants in properties for which the garage/s were initially built.

**Priority 3** – Non-Housing Solutions residents within the local area.

**Priority 4** – Other applicants.

- 3.11 Garage licences will be allocated by Priority on a date order basis, i.e. the applicant who has been on the waiting list for the longest period of time in Priority 1 will be offered the next available garage within their chosen area.
- 3.12 If the applicant refuses an offer, there is no limit to the number of further offers that can be made.
- 3.13 If the applicant chooses to accept the offer, they must sign a garage licence form, which details the regulations and conditions of holding a garage licence. In addition, the applicant will be required to pay one calendar month's rent in advance, and must submit a completed direct debit mandate to cover the monthly rent.

### **Conditions of Renting a Garage**

- 3.14 When someone rents a garage from us, the following conditions apply:

- Garages are let in accordance with the garage conditions of licence.
- A garage must only be used for the garaging of a taxed, insured and roadworthy domestic vehicle.
- Garages are not suitable for the storage of any other items and must not be used for any criminal or illegal purpose.
- Garages will not be let for the purpose of a business or as a personal residence.
- No vehicle repairs or anti-social activities may be carried out within the garage area.
- Garages cannot be sub-let.
- Housing Solutions will not be held liable in respect of loss of or damage to any property brought onto any garage premises.
- Housing Solutions are not responsible for any items which are stored in garage premises.

## **Rent**

3.15 Garages will be let on a weekly licence and the rent is payable in advance.

3.16 Garage rents will be reviewed and set annually, as part of the Group's annual rent review.

3.17 If rent is not paid, the garage will be repossessed and a recharge will be made for the lock change, clearance of any items and any legal costs which may incur.

## **Termination of a garage licence**

3.18 Housing Solutions will terminate a garage licence under the following circumstances;

- When the licensee agrees and wishes to terminate
- When there is a breach of licence conditions
- When Housing Solutions requires possession for demolition
- When Housing Solutions requires possession for any other purpose

3.19 A garage is not a dwelling and so the licensee has no security of tenure. The garage licence can be ended by Housing Solutions serving a 28 day Notice to Quit

3.20 A licensee may terminate their licence with one month's written notice. If the keys are not returned or they have been lost, we will recharge the licensee for the replacement of any locks or keys.

3.21 On termination of a garage by the licensee, any items will be removed, disposed of and the licensee recharged. If the licensee has been terminated by Housing Solutions, due to eviction for instance, the items that remain will be stored in accordance with our TORT and clearance procedures (appendix 1)

3.22 If there are any outstanding rent or recharges when the garage licence is terminated then the former licensee should make arrangements to pay the outstanding debts

## **4. Appeals**

- 4.1 If an applicant is dissatisfied with a decision made concerning their garage application, appeals must be received in writing within ten working days of the original decision being communicated. Housing Services Manager will investigate the reasons for the refusal and will advise the applicant in writing of their decision. This process will be concluded within ten working days. The decision of the Housing Services Manager will be final.
- 4.2 This appeal process does not interfere with the individual's right to make a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

## **5. Legislation**

- 5.1 Housing Solutions will ensure that we comply with the legislation and guidance set out on page 1 of this policy. We will also remain up to date with any changes in legislation, guidance, and best practice.

## **6. Consumer Standards**

- 6.1 By publishing and adhering to this policy, Housing Solutions is upholding the requirements set out in the Consumer Standards published by the Regulator of Social Housing.

## **7. Equality and Diversity**

- 7.1 Housing Solutions recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Policy, the Human Rights Act 1998, and Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that all tenants and prospective tenants are treated fairly and equally in making decisions under this policy. Housing Solutions works closely with its partners to ensure it clearly understands its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. Housing Solutions will record, analyse, and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability, and disability to support the fair application of this policy.

## **8. Confidentiality**

- 8.1 Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR), all personal and sensitive information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:
  - Anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff, or board member.
  - Sensitive organisational information.
- 8.2 Housing Solutions' employees will only involve other agencies and share information allowed either by statute or by an agreed Information Sharing Protocol relevant to this Policy.

## **9. Review**

9.1 This policy will usually be reviewed on a three-yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice, or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions' policy.