

	Lettings Policy
Policy statement	Paradigm supports Local Authorities (LAs) with their strategic housing functions and their duties to meet identified local housing needs. We ensure wherever possible that our homes meet the needs of each household and are safe, secure and affordable. We develop and build new homes and ensure these meet the needs of the local community. This policy covers the allocation of rented properties known as general needs (social, affordable) and some supported housing schemes.
Objective	• To ensure the lettings process is fair, transparent, and accessible for all; and • To minimise the period properties are empty; and • To ensure that customers are allocated homes that meet their needs as closely as possible with the homes that are available; and • To make the most effective use of the way we let our homes to create diverse and inclusive communities.
Scope	This policy applies to the letting of Paradigm's empty homes, both new build and relets, across general needs. It also applies to market rent homes, intermediate rent homes, key worker homes, some supported housing schemes and temporary accommodation owned or managed by Paradigm. This policy does not apply to commercial lettings, leasehold and shared ownership homes or garages, which are dealt with under separate policies. Separate lettings policy statements are in place for the Lea Bridge Hostel and the Welwyn Hatfield Foyer.
Policy	Local Authority (LA) Nominations (Tenancy Offer) We will work closely with LAs in our areas of operation to meet the local housing need. We will enter into nominations agreements with each LA in our areas of operation. We aim to review these agreements every five years unless otherwise agreed with the LA. Nomination agreements generally provide for the LA to receive 100% of nomination rights at first letting, and 75% of nomination rights for homes that are available for relets. This means that Paradigm generally may use up to 25% of any homes that become empty (void) for relets to nominate our own customers to, which we do on an exceptional basis through our Management Move approach, set out later in the policy. Nominations are generally made via a Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL) where that is the allocation scheme the LA uses, and homes will be advertised using the relevant LA's CBL system. Where a home has specific requirements that may restrict who the home may or may not be allocated to, these requirements will be set out in the advertised description of the property. It is the responsibility of the LA advertising the home to ensure that any requirements for letting a home are met. For example, a home may have an age restriction or a specific planning (Section 106) local connection criteria.

From time to time, for management reasons that relate to the internal decision-making of an LA, a home may be let without being advertised by the LA. This is known as a "Direct Let". Paradigm does not generally have any involvement when a local authority will choose to nominate under a direct let.

The nominating LA will set the criteria for an applicant's eligibility to receive an initial nomination to a Paradigm property. However, this is always subject to Paradigm applying our own pre-tenancy assessment, which includes affordability, eligibility, and risk criteria to any customer nominated to a Paradigm home.

Local lettings Plans (LLPs)

We work in partnership with LAs to develop Local Lettings Plans (LLPs) to promote, enhance, support and sustain balanced communities.

LLPs are particularly relevant for new and mixed tenure housing schemes and we encourage their use in areas. We will consider the economic mix, vulnerability, affordability of incoming customers, and may include specific criteria in response to antisocial behaviour and/or other issues in a particular locality.

We will also consider the strategic lettings priorities of the LA when developing LLPs. Where LLPs are in operation, they will take precedence over other eligibility criteria detailed in this policy. Local Lettings Plans will be publicised when a property is advertised.

Sensitive lets

From time to time, a home becomes vacant that has a particularly sensitive history that needs to be considered when we ask an LA to nominate a new customer. In such cases, we may require an LA on an exceptional basis to provide a nomination under a Direct Let that takes into account the specific history of that home.

For example, we may ask for a Direct Let for reasons of sensitivity where a home has become vacant following repossession for severe breach of tenancy which has caused extreme disruption to neighbours and/or the surrounding community.

If we identify where a sensitive let would be required, we will seek to agree the sensitive let with the relevant LA.

Signing up or letting to a new customer

Paradigm will take steps to ensure that we create long-term and sustainable tenancies wherever possible. We will therefore undertake some checks and assessments to try and enhance the likelihood of success for every new tenancy.

Prior to signing up a new customer, we will carry out pre-tenancy assessments for all new lettings that relate to specific areas as follows:

Affordability - This assessment will review the income and expenditure of a potential customer with a view to maximise the financial sustainability of the tenancy. We will also check if any rent arrears are owed to Paradigm from a previous tenancy.

ASB - We will check for any previous Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), previous evictions including those of former customers.

Accessibility & Support - Customers will be asked about any specific disability issues or other support needs to ensure the right adjustments are in place to help them sustain their tenancies.

Other Risks – A risk assessment will be undertaken to determine the suitability of the nomination for the property and to understand any potential risk to the public that might

exist from existing unspent convictions. These risk assessments will be kept on the housing management system in line with data protection legislation.

Right to Rent – We will carry out statutory Right to Rent checks where a nomination is received from a source other than via an LA.

Refusing nominations

We reserve the right to decline nominations in accordance with the provisions in the nomination agreements and in this policy as already outlined, and additionally in the circumstances listed below:

- The proposed customer has been previously evicted by a landlord due to a tenancy breach or has abandoned a previous tenancy.
- The proposed customer has an existing debt with Paradigm and there is no agreement in place for the debt to be paid.
- If the proposed customer has arrears with a previous landlord (including any previous Paradigm tenancy) but has not maintained a repayment agreement for at least 6 months prior to nomination.
- The proposed customer has an unsatisfactory tenancy history, for example allegations of ASB, failure to provide access to the property, or failure to properly maintain the property in a reasonable condition.
- The affordability assessment undertaken by Paradigm indicates the property rent and service charges are not affordable for the proposed customer.
- The risk assessments undertaken by either the LA and/or Paradigm identifies that housing the proposed customer poses a potentially serious risk to the safety and well-being of either the proposed customer, Paradigm staff and/or neighbours, and the identified risk(s) cannot be mitigated or managed.
- Where the proposed customer is a care leaver nominated to a general needs home, we will decline the nomination if we are not satisfied that there is a clear transition plan from social services that provides appropriate and adequate support for the customer.
- The proposed customer is a potentially dangerous offender and, following a risk assessment through an appropriate agency (for example, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements [MAPPA], Probation, Police, Social Services), we are not satisfied that an appropriate level of support and/or monitoring can be put in place to manage or mitigate the risk.
- The home is too small for the household and by letting the home to that household they will be statutorily overcrowded.
- The identity and/or the 'Right to Rent' status for proposed customers and all adult occupiers cannot be verified.
- The proposed customer, LA or support provider has failed to provide full details of all the required information in support of their application.
- The information provided by the proposed customer and/or LA does not satisfy Paradigm that the customer's support needs are currently being met or are unlikely to be met in the future if the letting goes ahead.

All refusals are recorded on the housing management system and may be used when undertaking future pre-tenancy checks.

Moving to another Paradigm home

	We use our Management Move scheme to support existing Paradigm customers in exceptional circumstances who cannot safely remain in their existing home and whose needs cannot be met in any other way than moving to another Paradigm home. We use our nomination agreement rights to nominate existing customers to up to 25% of homes that become available to let, to allocate homes to customers eligible for a Management Move. Circumstances in which we may accept a customer onto the Management Move scheme use direct lettings include but are not limited to: • Moving any qualifying successor or an assignee to more suitable accommodation upon the death of the former tenancy holder. • Allowing 'succession' to someone who does not have a statutory or contractual right to succeed, as set out in our Tenure Policy. • Where a customer needs to flee domestic abuse. • Severe and urgent medical need (for example sudden restricted mobility has created a requirement for flat level access). A customer that has applied for a Management Move will receive one reasonable offer of a new home. The offer of the new home will be decided by our internal Management Move Panel. Any offer of a home under a management move will be made following an assessment of the reasonable and practical needs of the customer. The offer will take into account tenure, size, floor level requirements, disability requirements and affordability. Where location forms part of the reason for seeking a management move, the offer will also take into account the customer's preferences for a new location. Homes With Adaptations We will work proactively to ensure that empty homes are let as quickly as possible and to the most appropriate customer, taking into consideration any special features the home may have, e.g. wet-rooms, stairlifts etc. Tenancy type The range of tenancies we offer is detailed in our Tenure Policy. Each customer is issued with their own tenancy agreement containing the terms and conditions associated with their tenancy. Paradigm will offer a tenancy on the basis of who is nominated on the application, for example if it is to one customer or a couple to be given a joint tenancy. If this is found to be incorrect we will refer back to the nominating LA to confirm. There are some specific schemes where sole occupancy is a condition of the tenancy i.e. Housing Interaction Trust (HIT) and One Recovery Bucks (ORB) properties. Appeals Where an LA nomination for a proposed customer is refused by Paradigm, the customer can appeal the decision. Any appeal must be made in writing within 7 (seven) working days of being notified of the decision. Appeals must be in writing, which can include email, and must include the specific reason(s) for the appeal. Paradigm will not extend the 7 working day appeal deadline. All appeals will be acknowledged within 5 working days of the appeal being received.
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Every customer or proposed customer will be treated fairly and equally, regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, familial status, disability, or any other protected characteristic. We will collect customer data and use this to assess how this policy may impact individuals and groups protected under equality legislation. The policy aligns with the principles of equality and non-discrimination and ensures that everyone is treated fairly in the letting process, regardless of their background.
Roles and Responsibility	The Executive Director - Customer is responsible for: • overall responsibility for this policy • Signing Nomination Agreements with local authorities Assistant Director Customer and Neighbourhoods is responsible for: • Ensuring the operational implementation of this policy • Acting as the service lead Head of Lettings and Customer Support and Team Leaders are responsible for: • Ensuring the Lettings Team adhere to this policy • Ensuring the Lettings and Allocation Officers receive training on which tenancies to issue • Reviewing any risk assessments where the proposed customer may be a risk • Ensuring any refusals by the Lettings and Allocations Officers are recorded correctly and decisions applied consistently in line with the policy • Review all refusals from the Lettings and Allocations Officers • Authorising requests for sensitive lets via the local authority • Ensuring Nomination Agreements are in place with our local authorities and signed by the Executive Director – Customer and the local authority • Verifying Right to Rent checks where a proposed customer has not been nominated by a local authority or via choice based lettings system • Leading on the Management Move Panel Head of Customer and Neighbourhood are responsible for: • Ensuring their Customer & Neighbourhood teams are fully trained on this policy • Acknowledge all appeals within 5 working days on refused nominees and Management Moves • Determine outcome of appeal and notify customer within 5 working days • Notify the Lettings and Allocations Team Leader of the appeal and the determination The Lettings and Allocations Officers are responsible for: • Ensuring each let is carried out in accordance with this policy • Deciding if a nomination is refused based on this policy's guidelines

	• Issuing the correct tenancy at sign up of a property and saving the tenancy agreement on our housing management system • Facilitating viewings of properties • Completing all pre tenancy checks including a Right to Rent check where necessary. These are all recorded on the housing management system. • Obtaining a risk assessment where applicable and recorded on the housing management system • Ensuring the management move list is reviewed for any suitable moves before advertising the property with the local authority • Preparing the advert and ensuring it is accurate, and complies with the requirements of any nomination agreement • To liaise with the Customer Support Team where a customer's support needs have been identified at sign up • Conducting and facilitating viewings with the nominated customers • Requesting a sensitive let from the local authority once this has been approved by the Lettings and Allocations Manager • Collecting the information for Affordability assessments as part of the pre tenancy checks • Ensuring planning restrictions on S106 lets are complied with prior to letting the property Neighbourhood Managers are responsible for: • Verifying customers' applications and approving or declining their addition to the Management Move list Customer & Neighbourhood Officers are responsible for: • Completing end of tenancy visits to clearly set expectations of how the property should be let • Facilitating viewings and sign ups for customers ensuring the viewing and sign up check lists are completed • Explaining a customer's responsibility through a sample tenancy at viewings and sign ups • Identifying when a sensitive let may be needed and advising the Lettings and Allocations Officers • Reviewing customers who have applied for a Management Move every 3 months • Ensuring customers sign up to direct debit payments at sign up
Monitoring / Reporting and Assurance Controls	Nomination agreements are drafted by the LA and are agreed in conjunction with the Head of Lettings & Customer Support, have legal oversight and following consultation with The Executive Director Customer and The Policy Team. Once these nominations are agreed a copy of the agreement is kept on our systems. A spreadsheet is used to routinely update to show what agreements are in place, dates of agreements, when it was drafted and signed. This spreadsheet also indicates when a nominations agreement needs reviewing. The Lettings Team Leaders will review Power BI data which show all the lets on a daily basis. The Lettings Team Leaders and Head of Lettings & Customer Support will review and revise any nominations agreements where required. The local authority completes shortlisting of the nominees. The Lettings and Allocation Officers are only given the details from the local authority of the highest priority nominee.

	In the majority of our local authorities the Lettings and Allocations Officers will use the local authority nominee system (e.g. Locata) which requires evidence that the highest priority nominee has been offered the property. Where a nominee is refused a property by Paradigm, Lettings and Allocations Officers will use the local authority nominee system (e.g. Locata) to record reasons for refusal for the property. Lettings and Allocations Officers will carry out all pre tenancy checks using a pre tenancy checklist. Lettings and Allocations Officers will carry out Right to Rent checks where necessary. All nomination refusals are audited by the Lettings Team Leaders. Rent in advance is collected at sign up to ensure income is collected from customers and they can sustain their tenancies. Payment plans are put into place following sign up by the Rent Recovery team to ensure customers are four weeks in advance. CORE forms are completed on all new lets by the Lettings assistants CORE forms are input into the housing management system. A report is then produced quarterly which compares the number of lettings against the number of CORE forms completed. CORE forms are routinely monitored to ensure there is no missing data. NROSH+ will send emails if any data is missing. Tenancies will be issued in accordance with our Tenure Policy. Community and Neighbourhood Officers and Lettings and Allocations Officers will receive training on the correct tenancies to issue. The Lettings Team Leaders will check new tenancies weekly to ensure the correct Tenancy agreement has been issued and the rent amount on the Tenancy agreement is correct and all saved on the system. The Neighbourhood Manager will review and verify all applications to agree or refuse acceptance to the Management Move list. Customers who have applied for a Management Move are reviewed quarterly by the Customer and Neighbourhood Officers to ensure applications still meet criteria. The number of Management Moves is reported on by the Lettings and Allocations Manager and reported to Assistant Director Customer and Neighbourhoods quarterly. Mandatory annual rent and right to rent training is given to all Lettings and Allocations Officers and records are kept on the learning management system.
Cross References	The Lettings Policy links to several other Paradigm policies and strategies, including: • Tenure Policy • Rent Recovery Policy • Tenancy Management Policy • Void Standard • Customer Support Policy • ASB Policy

	Rent Setting Policy
Policy Owner	Executive Director – Customer
Prepared by	Head of Lettings & Customer Support and Assistant Director Customer and Neighbourhoods (Specialist Services)
Approved by	Executive Board
Effective date	November 2025
Review date	November 2028
Version control	V5 supersedes V4 dated July 2024

Record of Amendments			
Date	Version	Approved By	Details of Amendments
March 2022	V2	Executive Board	Review of policy to take into account Customer restructure and rationalising scheme specific lettings statements
October 2022	V3	Executive Board	The only change to the policy is the inclusion of the clause: the proposed tenant has an otherwise unsatisfactory tenancy history, for example, anti-social behaviour, failure to provide access or poor property condition
July 2024	V4	Executive Board	Reviewed in line with Consumer standards approach. Comprehensive review of criteria used to refuse a nomination to make them clearer and more user friendly. Standardised reference to “Customer” throughout and removed other alternative terms used e.g. applicant, resident. Revised “Scope” section and addition of EDI Section. Removal of references to policies and criteria that no longer apply/exist.
Nov 2025	V5	Executive Board	Revised roles to remove references to Lettings & Allocations Manager and replace with Head of Lettings & Customer Support. Added further policy references. Provided clarity on criteria for Management Moves and amended to “severe and urgent medical need” as opposed to just “medical need”.

