

Sefton Council.

Extra Care Allocations Policy.

2023-2028.

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1. Introduction.

Extra care housing is specialist housing provision that combines accommodation with care and support services designed to offer safe, private, and secure accommodation whilst allowing service users to retain the independence of having their own home.

Extra care housing combines accommodation with care and support services. There are many different types and sizes of extra care housing.

Sefton has a population that is living longer, and people tell us that their preference is to be able to remain in their own home, with the ability to access care and support if needed at some stage. For those who already have support needs, or whose health is declining and indicates that they may need more help in the coming years, extra care housing offers the option to meet these needs. Sefton wants to develop extra care accommodation that is innovative and can be utilised further as hubs of the local community, for residents and non-residents alike and to be focal points for inter-generational community activity.

Our needs indicate that we will require 1306 units of accommodation (approximately 15 schemes) across the borough to further enable us to reach our ambition of the national best quartile for residential care home admissions.

The aim of the policy is to promote independence and well-being; facilitate a balanced, vibrant, and sustainable community for residents with care and support needs within the setting of extra care housing which will play a key role in preventing and avoiding admissions to residential care and hospitals and contribute to our preventative agenda.

This policy covers all Extra Care Housing within Sefton. Additional Extra Care allocation guidelines for specific and individual Extra Care schemes may also be introduced, to ensure that the housing needs of people are most appropriately met under this policy.

The Extra Care Allocations Policy details the eligibility, process and system for applying for Extra Care Housing in Sefton.

2. Context.

The Extra Care Allocations Policy is being developed in part to help us to deliver some of our key strategies including:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2019).
- Sefton 2030 Vision (2016).
- ASC – Market Position Statement (2021 -2026).
- Sefton Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020 – 2025).
- Sefton Older Peoples Strategy (2019-2024).
- Sefton Housing Strategy (2022-2027).
- Sefton Extra Care Housing Prospectus (2021).

The allocations policy will set out a clear pathway that is open and transparent and available to Sefton residents. It will ensure those in need are prioritised fairly and objectively whilst also keeping a balanced community that can thrive.

3. Extra Care Eligibility.

To be considered for Extra Care housing applicants must meet the following criteria:

3.1. Local Connection.

To access affordable rented Extra Care Housing within Sefton the applicant must demonstrate a local connection. To demonstrate a local connection, an applicant must have been living in the borough continuously for the previous 24 months.

3.2. Age.

55+ will be the initial qualifying criteria, however, someone below this age with for example a long-term disability, considerable care needs and older carers of adults with disabilities will be considered.

Couples are eligible to apply where one or both meet the criteria.

3.3. **Support Needs.**

One applicant must meet at least one of the following criteria: -

- Have a support and / or care needs as identified through a Care Act Assessment.
- Currently living in a residential home and or nursing care setting.
- Have care and support needs due to a range of difficulties or disabilities as identified by an Adult Social Care assessment; or
- Be an older carer of a partner or with a son/daughter or dependent with a learning/ physical/ or mental health disability who requires care and support.

3.4. **Homeowners/Income/Financial Assessments.**

The Government believes that authorities should avoid allocating social housing to people who already own their own homes unless there are extenuating circumstances. The Council does not intend to restrict access to the Extra Care on the basis of financial means. However some Landlords, depending on their status (e.g. charitable) may take the financial circumstances of applicants into account and refuse to allocate a property if they consider that the applicant has the financial means to secure their own accommodation.

In deciding whether someone has sufficient financial resources to meet their own housing needs, landlords may look at income, savings, equity and investments and the price of buying or privately renting a suitable home in the locality according to their published policies.

Applicants or joint applicants who have equity in their home will be considered as financial resources available to them, unless there is good reason why it should not. Landlords may make use of their powers to offer a fixed term tenancy which can be terminated if housed applicants are not actively marketing their property for sale. Landlords should have published tenancy policies regarding this.

Applicants or joint applicants who own a property will be required to provide evidence that their current home is for sale, in addition the applicant or joint applicants who are owners are not permitted to sub-let their home and be allocated a tenancy.

Applicants must agree to be financially assessed by Adult Social Care to determine if they should make a contribute towards the 24-hour support that is available. The 24-hour support is not negotiable as it is a fundamental part of Extra Care housing.

4. Care Needs Assessment and Registered Provider of Housing Assessments.

For successful applications, following notification to the applicant, the Care Provider and Registered Housing Provider of the specific scheme requested may complete their relevant assessments (this will be dependent on occupancy levels and current waiting list).

The Care Provider will undertake a Care Needs Assessment to determine the level of care required for the scheme and the Housing Provider will complete their standard allocation checks which may include for example affordability and reference check. These assessments will be completed jointly for the Extra Care Scheme the applicant has chosen as first preference.

The Housing Provider will have the right to refuse applicants where sufficient evidence gained by the applicants current / previous landlord that the conduct of the tenancy was not satisfactory and / or applicant has breached any terms of the tenancy agreement, for example Anti-Social Behaviour / rent arrears.

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the Housing Providers decision not to allocate a place in the Extra Care Scheme the applicant must initiate the Housing Providers internal appeals process.

The Housing Provider must inform the panel of any such decisions not to allocate an applicant into the Extra Care Scheme and rationale for the decision.

4.1. Balanced Care Profile.

Extra Care housing is designed to provide high quality housing, support and care services which enable, support and encourage people to live independently for as long as they wish to do so. Extra Care housing provides a positive approach to the health and wellbeing of those who live within such schemes. It is therefore crucial to undertake allocations which aim to promote a balanced community within each Extra Care Scheme.

4.2. Age Threshold.

A threshold of approximately 80% of residents aged over 55 should always be maintained. The only exception to this will be in any bespoke and or smaller schemes specifically commissioned which would have a higher percentage of younger adults with mental health, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and or autism.

4.3. Care Need Banding.

To ensure we achieve the aims of Extra Care Schemes we will create a community where there is a balanced mix of residents with differing levels of care need, across the low to high care need range. The three levels of care needs are determined by the number of care hours an applicant has been assessed as requiring and can be seen in the table below:

Care Need Banding	Assessed number of care need hours per week
Low	0 – 7 hours
Medium	7.25 – 13.75 hours
High	14+ hours

4.4. Managing the Balanced Care Profile.

The Extra Care Panel will be responsible for maintaining the Balanced Care Profile. This will ensure that any vacant properties discussed are allocated to applicants which enable the balance of community to be maintained. The balance of community is shown below:

- 30% of residents with Low.
- 40% of residents with Medium.
- 30% of residents who High.

5. Application Process.

To ensure efficient and appropriate allocation of available units in all types of Extra Care schemes, the allocation process will be built within the Adult Social Care management system Liquid Logic.

The Extra Care Application Form will need to be completed before considered for Extra Care housing. Applicants will be asked to provide current information in relation to their care and support needs alongside other additional information inclusive of any housing needs before the application can be checked and assessed.

6. Nominations Process/Agreement.

Sefton Council will have 100% nomination rights on the first let of a property and 100% of subsequent re-letting of void properties in the borough's Extra Care schemes. This is to ensure that Sefton Council can promote a balanced community within each Extra Care Scheme and ensure the objectives of the Extra Care Allocations Policy are achieved by applying the allocations criteria contained in the policy.

This will be secured through a nomination's agreement signed by Sefton Council and the registered Housing Provider.

6.1. Allocations into Individual Schemes.

Sefton Council will be able to make nominations for all Extra Care Housing schemes to our Registered Provider partners who manage the individual schemes as per Appendix 2.

Housing Providers are to notify of vacancies within their schemes via the brokerage portal within 5 days of the property becoming available. (Day 1 of the process).

The council will send the matched Extra Care Housing application over to the Housing Provider via the portal, which will be a formal nomination. (Target to achieve this within a further 5 working days).

The Housing Provider is to contact the individual, invite them to view the property and carry out further checks prior to making an offer (Target to achieve this within 10 further working days).

The Housing Provider is to notify the council via the brokerage portal of the outcome of the viewing, which will be confirmation of tenancy being offered or offer declined with refusal reasons provided. Target to achieve this no more than 15 working days after initial nomination.

If a tenancy is offered the council will update the care management system by closing the Extra Care application and completing a support plan to record the Extra Care provision.

If Sefton Council is unable to make a nomination within 28 days to the Housing Provider, the Housing Provider may exercise its right to make a potential nomination to the panel, the Housing Provider must inform the panel of the eligibility criteria met and the details of the potential nomination.

6.2. Offers.

The number of offers an applicant can refuse is limited to two. Applicants who refuse two offers of accommodation for reasons found to be unrelated to their housing, support and care needs will need to apply again and join from the date of their new application.

Reasonable grounds for refusal will include:

- Applicant is in hospital or awaiting imminent hospital treatment.
- Applicant has recently suffered bereavement.
- Other reasons which will be considered on an individual case basis.
- Unreasonable grounds will include:

Refusing a specific property because it is not on an applicant's floor of choice, when they do not have a need for a specific floor.

Refusing a specific property because it does not have patio doors into the garden, when they do not have a need for this specific requirement.

Refusing a scheme, they have identified as their preference because an applicant wishes to wait for a period for a potential property becoming available in another scheme which is their first choice.

Other reasons which will be considered on an individual case basis.

7. Extra Care Housing Panel

The Extra Care Housing Panel will be responsible for maintaining a waiting list of successful applications ready for potential vacancies within Extra Care Schemes in Sefton. The Panel will also be responsible for assessing applications from individuals with complex needs and applicants where a risk assessment for other residents has been completed.

The Panel will be responsible for keeping a watching brief on the Balanced Care Profile to ensure balanced communities within the individual schemes. It is the responsibility of the Care Providers to monitor the balance of care within their individual schemes and to provide regular updates to the panel.

8. Review of Decisions

Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision made by Adult Social Care on decisions not to nominate into Extra Care Housing schemes. Reviews of decisions must be regarding the decision rather than the process. All reviews for decisions not to allocate a place within the Extra Care Scheme must be initiated via [Sefton Councils complaints procedure](#).

8.1. Complaints

A request for review is in effect an appeal against a decision not to allocate a place within one of the Extra Care Schemes which the applicant does not agree with. A complaint is different – it is an expression of dissatisfaction with the level of service received, or the way it was provided.

If an applicant disagrees with the handling of any aspect of their application, level of service or decision on the applicant's application for Extra Care, they can issue a complaint directly to [Sefton Council's through the complaint's procedure](#).

8.2. Landlord Refusal

All requests for a review of a decision concerning any aspect of the selection process for a particular property or a refusal to allocate a particular property within Extra Care will be dealt with by the respective Landlord.

These reviews will be dealt with under that landlords complaints procedure. Details of how to make a complaint can be found on the web site of each organisation.

9. Roles and responsibilities

The Council will be responsible for:

- Co-ordinating/managing the Extra care process within the care management system.
- Completion of the assessment and review of eligibility for extra care accommodation and level of care need.
- Completion of the Extra Care Housing Application
- Matching vacancies to people on the waiting list
- Responding to any appeals made by applicants about the assessment, waiting list or allocation.
- Confirmation letters in appropriate formats being sent to successful applicants.
- Sending Letters with advice in appropriate formats to unsuccessful applicants.
- Ensuring the care management system is updated with correct service provision for Extra Care.
- Where information is shared with an external organisation, ensure there is a data sharing agreement in place which meets with GDPR.
- The costs of Extra Care and ensuring the care provider has the relevant information on tenant's care needs.

The Housing Provider is responsible for

- Communicating with relevant care provider on level of care capacity when informing of a vacancy.
- Notifying the council of the vacancy within the agreed timeframe via the brokerage portal.
- Confirming the outcome of the nomination via the portal.
- Completing all housing related documentation. The tenancy agreement must include a relevant clause that secures agreement to making a full financial contribution to the core care support which is provided on site 24 hours per day 7 days a week.
- Investigate and where appropriate and resolve or make recommendations regarding any lettings/ void issues.
- Responding to any appeals made by the applicant in relation to an unsuccessful offer of accommodation in line with their own policies and procedures.

10. Nomination Process for Extra Care – Shared Ownership.

All expressions of interest in relation to shared ownership will be managed by the relevant Registered Housing Provider of the scheme. If shared ownership or outright sale information is sought, then it is the responsibility of the Registered Housing Provider to contact the interested person to discuss the matter.

11. Equal Opportunities.

The Council is committed to providing housing services to the whole community and will not discriminate against any applicant based on any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

12. General Data Protection Regulation.

The information an applicant provides relating to their Extra Care housing application will be treated as confidential in accordance with guidelines on handling personal data. These guidelines relate to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018 that covers both electronic and manual records and governs what can be done with the data, including collection, retention, sharing, storage, usage, and disposal of it.

APPENDIX 1 - Extra Care Panel Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Panel

The purpose of the Extra Care Panel will be to maintain a waiting list of successful applications ready for potential vacancies within Extra Care Schemes in Sefton. The Panel will be responsible for discussing and assessing applications from individuals with complex needs and applicants where a risk assessment for other residents has been completed.

The Panel will be responsible for keeping a watching brief on the Balanced Care Profile to ensure balanced communities within the individual schemes. It is the responsibility of the Care Providers to monitor the balance of care within their individual schemes and the housing provide to provide regular updates at the Panel meetings on scheme issues.

The Panel meeting is held as part of the nomination process and to ensure the most appropriate use of resources before the Registered Provider agrees a tenancy to an individual wishing to access Extra Care Housing.

2. What does the panel do?

The Panel will discuss and assess applications from individuals with complex needs and those where a risk assessment has been completed. For all other applications the Chair of the Panel will complete the assessment.

The Panel will notify all decisions made to applicants and or advocate in appropriate formats.

The Panel will review and monitor the waiting list for each Extra Care Scheme.

The Panel will utilise the waiting lists to nominate individuals to vacancies whilst taking the Balanced Care Profile into consideration.

3. Panel Process

For those applications which are referred to the panel for assessment, the Panel will assess each against the eligibility criteria and process as detailed in the main Extra Care Allocations Policy.

The Panel is also responsible for ensuring, whenever possible, that there are assessed individuals on the waiting list for the various schemes across the borough. If the Panel is not able to provide a nomination, then the housing provider will go to their own waiting list.

4. Membership of the Panel

The Panel will consist of:

- A member of the complex care brokerage team
- At least one representative from Housing
- At least one representative from Adult Social Care.
- A representative from the Care and Support Provider for the scheme being considered
- A representative from the Registered Provider for the scheme being considered.

The panel Chair will ensure that all relevant officers are invited to attend the meeting.

Where officers are unable to attend the meeting, they will arrange for a suitable deputy to attend.

5. Meetings

The Extra Care Panel will meet every 4 weeks (more often depending on the number of referrals) and meetings will be chaired by a Sefton Council Officer.

The meetings shall be convened by SEFTON by giving the members not less than 5 working days' notice of a meeting unless the business to be considered is urgent.

Members will be required to take an active part and should be able to decide whether individual referrals can fit into the balanced needs of the scheme and will also highlight any risks as part of an individual referral.

6. Access to the Panel

Complex care brokerage team will act as the first point of assessment and refer to the chair of the panel any referrals that are complex and or risk assessments required.

7. Availability of Extra Care Accommodation

Void notification form is to be completed by the registered housing provider and sent to Sefton Council via the brokerage system at the earliest point of notification.

The Panel recognises that the final decision as to who is made a formal offer of accommodation is made by the individual Registered Provider. All verification and background checking regarding the referral will be completed by the Registered Provider with input from the care provider / care manager as necessary.

8. Reporting

The panel will receive report's periodically via the Liquid Logic system on the numbers of nominations and subsequent allocations, the number of available voids and progress of the development of the schemes to relevant bodies.

Monitor: -

- Number of residents who otherwise would have been placed in institutionalised services such as residential and or nursing care.
- Supported living.
- Reductions in care needs.
- Demand for extra care housing.
- Nominations refused.
- Nominations accepted.

9. New Extra Care Schemes

For new Extra Care Schemes, separate Extra Care Panels will be held for all initial nominations into the schemes. These panels will be subject to the above principles surround the Extra Care Panel and the new schemes will be subject to the overarching Extra Care Allocations Policy.

APPENDIX 2 - Extra Care Allocations Process Map.

