

Allocations and Voids Policy

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1. Introduction/Policy statement

At Regenda Homes we provide high-quality affordable homes accessible through a range of options to suit customer's needs, including social and affordable rent. We believe that providing great homes is only part of the story. Properties where people feel safe and comfortable become a catalyst for strong vibrant neighbourhoods and supportive communities, where individuals can thrive.

The aim of this policy is:

- To ensure effective void management to quickly make void properties available to others and reduce the cost of empty properties
- To make the best use of available housing
- Provide tenants with the best opportunities to have sustainable tenancies
- Let homes which are compatible with the purpose of the housing we provide
- Co-operate with local authorities to create, strong vibrant neighbourhoods and supportive and sustainable communities
- Assist Local Authority partners to meet their statutory duty in relation to housing and homelessness.

This policy sets out:

- How tenants can terminate their tenancies
- The management and governance of void properties
- Applying for housing and the process for our decision making when letting homes

2. Definitions

Will and Should: Within this document will is used when Regenda Homes or others always need to comply with requirements and should is used when it is advised to.

Void property: is one that does not have a tenant in place. In other words, it is sitting empty.

3. Scope and exemptions

This policy sets out Regenda Homes approach to managing, allocating and letting vacant properties for the following types of housing:

- General needs (Social and affordable rented housing)
- Housing for Older People (HFOP) (Social and affordable rented housing)

It does not apply to the following types:

- Market rented housing
- 'Rent to Buy' homes
- Shared ownership homes
- Homes marketed for sale
- Temporary housing
- Supported housing

This policy covers:

- How to apply for housing with Regenda Homes and how we allocate our properties
- Banding and Eligibility criteria
- Reviews and appeals
- Garages
- Void management and standards
- Ending of a tenancy

4. Policy detail

4.1 Applying for and allocating homes

Applicants who are in housing need can apply via the following routes. Appendix 1 outlines the nomination agreements with our Local Authority partners across the Northwest.

- Regenda Homes waiting list – by completing a Regenda Homes application form and being accepted onto our waiting list.
- Management moves or transfers – this is only for current Regenda Homes tenants who need to transfer properties due to a housing related need.
- Mutual Exchanges – by registering with House Exchange or with the local Choice Based Lettings schemes that hold a separate exchange list as part of the CBL (Choice Based Letting) systems.
- Local Authority (LA) nominations – by completing a council application form and being accepted onto their waiting list.
- Choice based Lettings scheme (CBL) - by completing an application form with the provider that manages the CBL scheme and being accepted onto their waiting list.

4.1.1 Regenda waiting list

Regenda Homes holds their own waiting list, but this only applies to some of our areas where we have not committed to 100% allocation through the choice-based lettings schemes.

An application can be made by completing a Regenda Homes application form either online or via a paper form and providing the information requested. The registration of an application may be delayed or cancelled if the information requested is not provided.

The purpose of the Regenda application is to correctly identify the housing priority for each applicant. Once an application has been registered applicants will be notified of their date of registration, band assessment and application number.

Regenda has high demand for most properties, and therefore many requests for application forms are made from members of the public and many forms are received. It would be unrealistic under current market conditions to accept every application form, as this would give false hope to some applicants as they would not be rehoused. Therefore, if an application does not meet our eligibility criteria, they will be deemed ineligible and not registered. Applicants who are not registered due to a lack of housing need will be advised that they can re-apply in the future if their circumstances change.

We have 2 banding categories for our own waiting list which means in areas where we allocate solely through our waiting list it will be based on 50% to category A applicants and 50% to category B applicants.

We will refer to our Housing Management system which holds our waiting list positions to see which category we need to allocate the property to. We will then contact the person at the top of the list and carry out further checks as mentioned under the eligibility section.

Applications from Elected Members, Board Members and Employees

Applications can be accepted from employees, elected members, board members and their close relatives. Applicants must disclose any such relationship at the time of application. The Regenda Conduct and probity policy details our approach to housing staff, their relatives, involved customers and Board Members. In these cases, lettings are subject to final approval by the Director of Housing Management.

Housing register renewal

Applicants must keep their application details up to date, Regenda Homes reserves the right to close inactive applications. Regenda Homes will require applicants to renew and update their application on six monthly basis. If applicants wish to remain on the register, they must contact us within 28 days. Providing none of the housing circumstances have changed and the previous assessment remains valid the application will be re-opened, and the previous priority of the application will remain unaffected. Where circumstances have changed an application will be re-assessed in accordance with this policy.

Changes in circumstances

Applicants who move to a new address or whose circumstances change after they have been accepted onto the Housing Register (e.g., someone joining or leaving their household) should immediately contact Regenda Homes to notify them of the change. A new application may be required. Regenda Homes reserves the right to reconsider an applicant's priority band assessment on the grounds of change of circumstances at any time until an offer of accommodation has been accepted and a tenancy agreement signed. If an applicant's circumstances have changed prior to the allocation of a property and records held by Regenda

Homes have not been updated, we reserve the right to revoke an offer. It is an applicant's responsibility to keep Regenda Homes updated with any circumstances relating to housing.

Closed applications

Applications will be closed in the following circumstances:

- A request has been received from the applicant (or their advocate)
- The applicant has accepted a tenancy as a sole or joint tenant
- The applicant has bought a property
- Notification has been received from an executor or personal representative that the applicant is deceased, and s/he was the sole applicant
- It is discovered that the applicant has given false or misleading information in their application
- Information is obtained that gives reason to believe that the applicant is no longer eligible
- If a response to correspondence is not received within 28 days
- If 3 reasonable property offers have been refused

Applicants can request an explanation of the reason/s for their application closure and can request a review of the decision (see Reviews and Appeals section). If the applicant makes a request to re-open their application within 28 days of it being closed it will be re-opened (where eligible) and receive the original assessment of Band and priority date provided no relevant circumstances have changed.

4.1.2. Management Moves/Transfers

Regenda Homes may make homes available to existing customers by way of a management move to help us make best use of stock or assist an emergency transfer.

Emergency transfers will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where it is no longer safe for a tenant to continue living in their home. Regenda Homes may ask for supporting evidence from (but not limited to) partner agencies such as Police, Social Services, other agencies to support any request for an emergency transfer. Examples of such circumstances include:

- Exceptional cases of Anti-Social Behaviour and harassment, including serious or targeted hate crimes and serious racial harassment.
- In cases of Domestic Abuse
- Where there are considerable Safeguarding concerns
- In tower blocks where a residents personal circumstances change, and it is no longer safe for them to continue living in the block
- Emergency Health and Safety issues i.e., fire/flood and a temporary move is not appropriate
- Where the current property needs major works/investment, and a temporary move is not appropriate
- Based on medical grounds where the property is no longer suitable, and adaptations are not feasible
- Older residents having concerns about security, keeping their properties warm during the winter months, and are also living in fuel poverty
- Where a move resolves a problem of under-occupancy

- Where a move resolves a problem of over-crowding

In these circumstances we will search our list of immediately vacant properties to try and find a new temporary or permanent home, which fulfils the housing needs of the tenant, this may involve moving out of the local area. The decision to make an offer of an emergency transfer will be made by the Housing Manager.

In circumstances where there are current rent arrears/rechargeable repairs, but a transfer is found to be necessary then approval will also be needed from the Income Manager. If approved, the debt will be written into an addendum linked to the new tenancy agreement with an agreed repayment arrangement.

We reserve the right to refuse a management move/transfer, some of the circumstances when we may do this include, but are not limited to the following:

- The tenancy held is a starter tenancy or is less than a year old.
- The property that the applicant is seeking has the same property characteristics to that which they already hold a tenancy for in the same area.
- A breach of the Tenancy Agreement is identified, (such as non-payment of rent, perpetrator of ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour), damage to property, alterations made to existing home without appropriate permission/documentation, unkempt garden etc).
- The transferring tenant does not permit a property inspection before the proposed transfer.
- A detailed property inspection has taken place and the condition of the property does not meet the required standards

Non-emergency transfers will be advised to join the Regenda waiting list and register with the Local Authorities, other Registered Providers, and the Choice Based Lettings Schemes.

4.1.3. Mutual Exchanges

Regenda Homes encourages existing customers who wish to move to join their local housing register and/or seek a mutual exchange to maximise their chances of obtaining a property that meets their needs.

Regenda Homes are part of House Exchange which is free to register for tenants and some choice-based lettings schemes will also have their own mutual exchange registers. Exchanges can only take place between Housing Association/Local Authority tenants. Further details about mutual exchanges can be found in our Mutual Exchange policy.

4.1.4. Nominations

In some of our areas we have a nominations agreement between the Local Authority (LA) and ourselves to offer a % of our void properties to the applicants they have on their waiting lists. These agreements set out how Regenda Homes and the Local Authority will work together to assist those people on the Local Authority Housing Register. There may also be separate agreements in place for specific schemes, for example in Section 106 agreements.

Usually, the nominations agreements are for us to allocate at least 50% of our void properties to the LA. We would therefore allocate the other 50% through our waiting list split by 25% to category A and 25% to category B.

We will provide the LA with the property details, and they will send us a list of applicants on their waiting list. We will then contact the person at the top of the list and carry out further checks as mentioned under the eligibility section.

4.1.5. Choice Based Lettings Schemes

Regenda Homes allocate most of our homes through a Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL). We use this system because it offers a choice to customers about where they wish to live and requires social landlords to agree a consistent allocation policy. A CBL is a single housing register, a single allocation system and a single allocation policy which allows you to search for, apply for and bid for social rented properties in your area. Housing Associations advertise their void properties through the CBL scheme, so you only need to apply once. Each CBL scheme has its own allocations policy and will be dealt with as per that policy and not Regenda Homes allocation policy.

Usually, the CBL Policies are for us to allocate up to 100% of our void properties within a specific Local Authority area through this scheme.

We will provide the CBL team with the property details so they can advertise them through the online portal. Applicants are then required to bid on the properties they are interested in before the advert closes. The CBL team will then send us the list of people who have bided on the property in priority order based on their banding. We will then contact the person at the top of the list and carry out further checks as mentioned under the eligibility section.

4.1.6. Local Lettings Policies

Where we have concerns about the sustainability of a neighbourhood or scheme, we will develop Local Lettings Policies (LLP). These can be used to adjust the standard allocations criteria in a specified neighbourhood or scheme or for a specified housing type to achieve specific outcomes. However, the Group also recognises the need to be flexible and responsive in tackling issues and problems on schemes or estates as they may arise, any such variations would only be implemented following consultation with the Local Authority. They would be temporary and part of wider solutions to tackle problems, they will be reviewed regularly.

Examples of some of the types of LLP's put in place may include:

- Imposing a minimum age
- Giving priority to applicants who have a local connection within an area
- Allowing properties to be under-occupied on estates with extremely high child densities or where properties are in low demand
- Giving increased priority to existing tenant's family members where this would help rebuild communities
- Offering incentives to tenants to introduce their family and friends
- Giving increased priority to applicants who are working to improve the economic balance of communities.

Regenda Homes have several Local Letting Policies in place particularly within Rural areas through consultation with the Local Authority and parish Councils. Local lettings policies will be implemented in other areas where the need arises to ensure its sustainability. These will be documented and approved by the Director of Housing Management and reviewed every two years

4.1.7. Difficult to lets

Properties that are difficult to let will be offered based on first come first served, rather than on an assessment of housing need. We will check the waiting list to see if anyone has asked for this property or comparable properties in the near locality. If no suitable applicant is on the list the property can be advertised in the most suitable way. Separate lists of interested applicants will also be collated within our Independent Living schemes due to the lack of demand for this type of accommodation.

Interested applicants will be offered a viewing appointment, and tenancy checks will be carried out at that appointment. Once all checks have been completed the property will be offered to the first person who expressed an interest. A formal offer of accommodation will not be made until the information and/or supporting evidence has been provided and failure to do so may lead to an application being closed.

A property will be categorised as difficult to let if one of the following applies:

- Four offers have been made from the waiting list and refused
- The property has a history of multiple refusals or void periods of 4 weeks or longer
- Comparable properties in the near locality have a history of multiple refusals or void periods of 4 weeks or more
- The property is so dissimilar to other properties in the area that it would not suit applicants on the waiting list
- There are environmental issues connected to the property that would make it unattractive to those on the waiting list.

4.1.8. Offering a tenancy

If an applicant has been successful in being eligible for one of our properties, then a formal offer will be made. Once the property is suitable to view, we will arrange a viewing and the applicant is given 48hrs to decide if they want to accept the property. When the property becomes ready to let, an appointment will be made to sign the tenancy agreement and be given the keys to the property.

Regenda offer the following tenancies:

- Starter tenancies
- Assured Periodic tenancies
- Licences
- Assured Shorthold tenancies
- Secure tenancies
- Assured Periodic Protected tenancies
- Garage tenancies

We also do any day tenancies which means the tenancy may commence on any day of the week and we ask for one weeks rent to be paid in advance on the day of signing for the property.

4.1.9. Affordable Rents

Affordable rent housing means accommodation that is:

- Provided by a registered provider pursuant to a housing supply delivery agreement between that provider and the Homes England or the Greater London Authority and the accommodation is permitted by that agreement to be let at an affordable rent;
- Provided by a registered provider pursuant to an agreement between a local authority and the Secretary of State and the accommodation is permitted by that agreement to be let at an affordable rent; or
- Provided by a local authority and the Secretary of State, Homes England or the Greater London Authority has agreed that it is appropriate for the accommodation to be let at an affordable rent.

Affordable rent housing is exempt from the social rent requirements, and they are typically higher than social rents. The intention behind this flexibility is to enable properties let on this basis to generate additional capacity for investment in new affordable housing.

The rent for affordable rent housing (inclusive of service charges) must not exceed 80% of gross market rent. 'Gross market rent' means the rent (inclusive of any applicable service charges) for which the accommodation might be expected to be let in the private rented sector. Property size, location type and service provision must be considered when determining what gross market rent a property might achieve if let in the private rented sector.

When a tenancy of affordable rent housing is let to a new tenant (or re-let to an existing tenant), registered providers must re-set the rent based on a new valuation, to ensure that the new rent is no more than 80% of the relevant market rent. However, if the accommodation is re-let to the same tenant because of a probationary tenancy ending, the rent must not be re-set.

Affordable rent housing must not be converted (including when they are re-let) to:

- Market rent (other than in the circumstances set out in chapter 4 of the governments rent setting policy); or
- Intermediate rent

4.1.10. Housing under 18's

The Regenda Group may re-house applicants who are under 18 years old, but these applicants will only be granted a tenancy if a guarantor can be identified until they reach the age of 18. Tenancies will only be offered to a young person if another person is appointed as trustee and an appropriate legal guarantor is identified that will also be required to act as a litigation friend. This can be a family member or a named individual in the organisation that is referring the young person (such as social services). Further details can be found within our Housing under 18's policy.

A policy is a statement that defines requirements that provides the governance framework for

4.2 Banding for Regenda Waiting List

We operate a priority list known as Category A and a general list known as Category B. Applicants are placed into the category depending on their circumstances. The category is then governed in date order with the applicant who has been registered for the longest time being at the top of the list.

Priority / Category A

- Non intentionally homeless/ threatened with homelessness (court order etc or given notice to leave tied accommodation.)
- Under threat of physical violence (including domestic and racial harassment)
- Vulnerable and living in fear of crime
- Severe overcrowding (needing another 2 bedrooms or more)
- Severe under occupation (having 2 spare bedrooms or more)
- Permanent mobility problems which result in inability to use essential facilities in current accommodation e.g., WC, bath, kitchen
- Care Leavers or armed forces personnel with additional housing need

General / Category B

- Ill health/ permanent disability where quality of life would be improved by moving to more suitable accommodation
- B&B's and Houses in Multiple Occupations and temporary hostels
- Overcrowding (needing another 1 bedroom)
- Under occupation (having 1 spare bedroom)
- Move-on from supported housing
- Living with family/ friends
- Separated families
- Living in Caravans / mobile homes / Boats
- Need to live / work in area
- Families with children in flats above ground floor who wish to move
- Daily support required/ given
- Leaving prison (with no home to return to)
- Qualifies on age grounds (Independent living schemes or properties that have an age restriction)
- Housing is impacting on welfare, (Anti-social behaviour, financial hardship, Property condition)
- Living in unsanitary conditions (no heating, lacking basic amenities)

4.3 Eligibility criteria

People aged 18 or over will be eligible to apply to rent Regenda Homes properties subject to the below. 16–17-year-olds may be able to apply within the CBL schemes, but an offer of a tenancy may be delayed until the age of 18. Applicants for housing who have applied through the Local Authority or CBL schemes will usually already have been confirmed as being eligible for social housing. There may be occasions where we will undertake further checks as per the below before a formal offer of a property is made.

If an applicant does not have a genuine housing need, then in the main, we will not accept them onto the waiting list. However, we may do so where there are few applicants on the waiting list in areas of low demand.

Regenda will obtain the following when deemed necessary to determine the eligibility and suitability of the applicant for a tenancy:

- Proof of address for the last 3 years and Landlord references where applicable
- Police checks for anyone listed on the application and or probation reports.
- Credit reference checks
- Right to rent checks
- Income and Expenditure
- Photo ID and proof of age of everyone listed on the application
- Medical records if you require a property due to medical need
- Support plans where required

Property Size

Regenda Homes will use the same property size eligibility criteria as that used to assess benefit eligibility for assistance with housing costs as per the below table

Household	Bedroom Need
Single Applicant aged 18 or over	One bedroom
Couple aged 18 or over who live together as partners	One bedroom
Person aged 21 or over	One bedroom
Single child from birth	One bedroom
Two children, both under 10 years old	One bedroom
Two children of the same sex, aged 10-21	One bedroom
Two children of the opposite sex, one or both over 10 years old	Two bedrooms
Pregnant women will only be considered for an additional room for a baby after baby is born.	

To make the best use of stock, Regenda Homes will always seek to maximise the occupancy of a property according to these rules. However, there may be occasions where an allocation is made to a household who will under occupy a property. Any such decision will be at the discretion of the Housing Manager who will first ensure that a property is affordable to the household.

4.4 Right to Rent

Applicants will be subject to a 'Right to Rent' check to ensure that they are eligible to rent a home; these checks will be completed to comply with Chapter 16 of the Immigration Act 2016. If an adult household member is found not to have a Right to Rent in the UK, the household will not be offered a home.

4.5 Capital limits & income checks.

In some instances, Regenda Homes may refuse to offer a property if the applicant has sufficient income, equity and/or savings to be able to afford to rent or purchase a property on the open market

This will apply to Households whose gross household income exceeds £60,000 per year and Applicants and households aged under 55 with savings exceeding £30,000.

Pre tenancy assessments are conducted to ensure an applicant can afford to pay their rent prior to a formal offer being made. We will rate the assessment as Red, Amber, Green (RAG) before

an offer is made. If an applicant cannot afford to pay the rent, we will provide financial support through our financial support officer in our Income team.

4.6 Adapted Properties

We will endeavour to make the best use of our adapted homes as they become vacant. All applications will therefore be assessed to see if the applicant's needs (or the needs of anyone registered for rehousing on the application) are such that the adaptations will support their physical needs; before a tenancy is offered. In instances of low demand, officers will occasionally consider granting tenancies to applicants without such needs to secure income for the void property.

Disabled applicants seeking to move to a non-adapted home may do so, in line with Regenda Homes Adaptations Policy. The home must be deemed viable for conversion by an Occupational Therapist and Regenda Homes before the tenancy is offered to ensure the customer takes an appropriate property that lends itself to conversion.

As part of this process, access to and the availability of funding from Regenda Homes and/or a Local Authority's Disabled Facilities Grant service will be considered in line with the Adaptations Policy and Legislation.

4.7 Housing for Older People

Older people's accommodation must be allocated to a household that meets the age criteria of the scheme and/or have a need for support. Our Independent living schemes have a Scheme Manager who manages these properties.

4.8 Anti-Social Behaviour

If there is evidence that the applicant/member of the household has been identified as perpetrating anti-social behaviour which makes them unsuitable to be a tenant in the property they have applied for, the application may be refused.

This will only be in circumstances where the nature and severity of the anti-social behaviour is a serious threat to Regenda Homes staff, customers, or the community, this includes instances where applicants or members of their household have been abusive or used threatening behaviour towards Regenda staff.

Consideration will be given to how long ago the incidents occurred, whether there were factors involved which were related to the previous address, and how the individual has conducted themselves since. These circumstances are rare.

4.9 Criminal Behaviour

If an applicant/member of the household has been convicted of a 'serious offence' that is unspent, and they may pose a threat/risk to Regenda Homes staff, the customers, or the community the application may be refused. Examples of 'serious offences' but not limited to include:

- Public order offences, nuisance, vandalism
- Dealing, supplying, or cultivating controlled drugs
- Burglary, robbery, theft

- Violence
- Indictable offences
- Offences relating to hate crimes

Consideration will be given to how long ago the incidents occurred, whether there were factors involved which were related to the previous address, and how the individual has conducted themselves since the conviction.

4.10 Unmet Support Needs

With unmet support needs, where Regenda Homes is unable to identify suitable and sufficient support either through working with other agencies or within its own capacity, may be refused a tenancy. However, the aim will always be to find appropriate support to enable an allocation to be made.

4.11 Not Eligible/Refusals/suspensions

Regenda Homes will suspend access to the housing register from certain applicants who either do not currently have a legal right to apply for accommodation or those who are deemed ineligible for not meeting certain qualifying criteria decided by the group or locally by other regional or sub regional CBL partners.

Regenda Homes has a suspension policy which enables us to identify and deal with applicants who are deemed ineligible for an offer of accommodation. It sets out the general principles and approach which must be followed to deal with those applicants and exclude or suspend them from the housing register.

4.12 Withdrawing offers

In certain circumstances we may need to withdraw an offer, this can sometimes occur when:

- The current tenant withdraws their notice
- The offer was made in error
- It is discovered that the applicant would not be eligible for the property under Regenda Homes or the CBL Policies.
- It is discovered that the property has adaptations that the applicant does not need, and we were not aware of at the time the offer was made.
- It is discovered that the applicant has withheld or provided false information
- An applicant is not able to take up the tenancy offered within a 48-hour timescale.
- When Regenda requires the property to address an emergency and it becomes necessary to withdraw an offer to facilitate this. There may be occasions where we require the property for emergency rehousing such as immediate life at risk cases.

All decisions to withdraw offers of accommodation will be at the discretion of the Housing Manager who will seek to balance reasonableness to the applicant against the reason for the potential withdrawal.

4.13 Deliberately withholding information or providing false information

Legal action could be taken against any applicant who provides false information when applying for housing (including a fine of up to £5,000).

Under Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 it is an offence to deliberately provide false information; or deliberately withhold information that should have been given. Where an applicant has been found guilty of making a fraudulent application, they will automatically have their application closed. Possession proceedings can be instigated if a tenancy was obtained by giving false information and the tenant may be classed as non-qualifying for the Housing Register

4.14 Tenancy Fraud

What is classed as Tenancy Fraud?

- Unlawful Occupation where someone seeks to occupy a property without consent
- Subletting or key selling where tenants try to obtain an unlawful gain (please note section below regarding Prevention of Social Housing Fraud)
- Obtaining a property by deception or fraud through the local allocations process
- Social Housing Fraud' under the Act is defined as a tenant, who in breach of a term of their tenancy sub-lets the whole of the property and no longer resides at the property.
- Obtaining tenancies by deception or misrepresenting housing need to obtain greater priority for housing
- Unlawful subletting
- Succession and assignment fraud – misrepresenting circumstances to meet the legal criteria in place to succeed to a tenancy previously held by another family member
- Key selling – where the tenant moves out and is paid to hand over the tenancy to someone else
- Right to Buy/Acquire – falsely claiming the Right to Buy/Acquire and associated discounts because of misrepresenting who lives in the property
- Not using the property as the only or main home
- Not notifying when the tenant dies or moves out

Where 'Social Housing Fraud' as defined in the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 (the Act) is suspected we will work with other agencies including but not limited to, the Police, Local Authorities and the Department of Work and Pensions. We will request that the Police/Local Authorities pursue prosecution of such cases in line with the Act.

Prosecution of the offender with a request for an 'unlawful profit order' to be obtained as appropriate, in line with the provisions of the Act.

If investigations find sufficient evidence that tenancy fraud has occurred or the tenant has sub-let the whole of the tenancy, we will seek possession of the property in line with our breach of tenancy procedure.

In cases where the tenant has sub-let the whole of the property and moved out a notice to quit would be served. Possession proceedings would then be instigated once the notice to quit has expired to gain vacant possession of the property.

5. Reviews and Appeals

Applicants have the right to request a review against decisions made in the allocation process. These include:

- A decision to reduce preference
- A decision about the band assessment

- A decision about eligibility to make an application
- A decision to close an application

Further details can be found within our Tenancy Management review policy

6. Making a complaint

If an applicant wishes to make a complaint, they should contact Regenda who will raise the complaint and follow our Customer Feedback Policy. If the applicant has gone through the complaints procedure and remains dissatisfied, they can write to the Housing Ombudsman or the Local Government Ombudsman or apply for a judicial review.

7. Garages

7.1. Applying for a Garage

Regenda Homes owned garages are situated within our communities across our Lancashire, Greater Manchester, and Cheshire regions. People aged 18 or over will be eligible to apply to rent a garage and have the right to rent in the UK. We will let them to any residents including non-Regenda Homes residents, however preference will be given to Regenda Homes residents. All vacant garages are available on a 'first come first served' basis.

The garages are for the private use of garaging a motor vehicle and not for the storage of flammable material, fuel and/or paints.

Regenda Homes will carry out the below eligibility checks on residents who express an interest in letting one of our available garages.

- If the applicant is a Regenda Homes resident, we will check their current rent account for any outstanding rent arrears, or any reports of anti-social behaviour.
- If the applicant is not a Regenda Homes resident, we will ask for proof of address and residence.
- Request a copy of the Car Registration and certificate of insurance

It is the applicant's responsibility to inform Regenda of a change of address during the application and/or the tenancy period. If a garage is let to a non Regenda Homes resident VAT (Value Added Tax) at the current rate will be charged on rents.

7.2. Garage tenancy management and termination

Tenants are responsible for insuring their motor vehicle while being kept in the premises. They must not engage or permit any activities in the premises that may be illegal or may cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours.

Tenants must keep the interior of premises free from damage and they may not make any additions or structural adjustments including alteration to the exterior. Permission will be needed to paint the exterior of the garage. Regenda Homes will recharge the tenant any costs for repairing any damage caused to the garage by the act or neglect of the tenant, his family or other persons associated with her/him.

Regenda Homes employees or representatives may require access to enter the premises to inspect, repair or view the garage at any time. Regenda will give at least 48 hours' notice if this is required.

Rent is due a week in advance and if a tenant falls into arrears, they will be managed under our Income collection policy. The tenancy agreement can be terminated by either Regenda Homes or the tenant serving one week's notice in writing.

8. Void Management

A key principle of void management is to ensure that all properties are repaired to a consistent standard and are designated safe to occupy. Regenda Homes will ensure all its void properties meet our Empty Homes Standard. Please see Appendix 2 for the standards

We categorise void properties in 3 separate ways as follows:

- General void – These are voids that require standard repairs to be carried out to ensure it meets our standards due to general wear and tear of the property.
- Major Works void – These are voids that require major repairs which are works which could not be carried out with a tenant in occupation, and which need to be carried out in a property while it is vacant. They involve remedial works that are necessary for the property to remain habitable; they would include structural repairs; site works and service installations.
- Strategic Void – These are voids where properties have previously been identified for disposal or decant use, they will be removed from the voids process and be placed into this category.

We will recharge for any damage, alterations made without prior permission or removal of rubbish and household items as per our responsive repairs policy. Before letting any home, we will carry out testing on the Electrics, Gas, and smoke/Carbon monoxide alarms.

Regenda Homes have a range of Performance Indicators to monitor the timescales on void properties which are detailed under section 14 of this policy.

9. Termination

All Regenda Homes tenants have a tenancy agreement and within that agreement it states that the tenant must give the Association four weeks' notice in writing before ending the tenancy. The Tenancies will always end on a Sunday. The tenancy may also end if Regenda Homes serves notice to the tenant.

On occasions tenancies may need to end before the four weeks, this will be at Regenda Homes discretion and decided on a case-by-case basis. Keys being returned to Regenda Homes without any notice being given will not end the tenancy, further investigations will be made to establish who has returned the keys and if anyone else is living at the property. Once checks have been made it will be at Regenda Homes discretion to accept the keys as a surrender of the tenancy.

Regenda Homes accepts that a tenancy may be ended by the following:

- A tenant or next of kin/administrator/executor of the estate/legal representative giving four weeks' notice.

This will only be valid by completing a termination form or by informing us in writing/email. for cases where someone is terminating the tenancy on behalf of the tenant due to their death our changes in tenancy policy will be followed.

- The landlord serving notice

Notice to Quit (NTQ) - Regenda can serve a 28-day Notice to Quit on the tenant or the representative of the tenant to end the tenancy in cases such as abandonments or deaths.

Notice Seeking Possession (NSP) – Regenda Homes would serve an NSP for taking back possession of the property in cases of rent arrears, serious Anti-Social Behaviour, redevelopment or decant cases.

Section 21 – Regenda Homes would serve a section 21 on Assured Shorthold tenancies, Starter Tenancies or Licences where we require possession of the property, some examples of this would be if it is a temporary tenancy or there has been a breach in tenancy.

- A tenant surrendering the tenancy

Surrender of a tenancy is a means by which tenants/Next of kin/administrator/executor of the estate/legal representative may end the tenancy which is not in accordance with the terms of the tenancy agreement. It is essential to recognise that surrender, unlike Notice to Quit is a consensual act requiring the agreement of all concerned. This can be done by completing a Surrender form or by informing us in writing/email and will require approval from Regenda.

- The tenant buying the property.

This is where a Right to Buy or Right to Acquire has taken place meaning the tenant now owns the property.

10. Associated documents

10.1 Associated legislation, regulation, and guidance

Associated legislation, regulation, and external standards
Choice Based Lettings Policies
Nomination agreements
Housing Act 1996
Housing Act 1998
Homelessness Act 2002
Chapter 16 of the Immigration Act 2016.
Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
Rent Standard
Tenant Services Authority guidance
Homes (fit for human habitation) Act 2018

Empty Homes standard
Data Protection Act 1998
GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) regulations 2018

10.2 Associated Regenda Homes / Group documents / guidance

Associated Regenda Homes / Group documents / guidance
Voids and Allocations guidance
Conduct & Probity Policy
Mutual Exchange Policy
Local Lettings Policies
Affordable Rents framework
Rent Setting Policy
Housing under 18's Policy
Adaptations Policy
Suspension Policy
Review Policy
Customer Feedback Policy
Regenda Homes Empty Homes Standard
Responsive Repair policy
Tenancy Agreements
Data Protection Policy
Anti-Fraud Policy

11. Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Regenda Homes aims to support our tenants that are experiencing any adversity through management moves as set out in this policy.

We are committed to gathering diversity data for our tenants within our allocations. We will collect any specific needs or reasonable adjustments tenants might have within our allocations to be able to adapt our services for our tenant's and to help support and improve our services.

12. Data Protection

Regenda Homes will ensure that any personal information collected about applicants is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

All applicants will be provided with a privacy notice, detailing how their data will be processed and who their information will be shared with and for what purpose/s.

Where necessary we may:

- Enter partnership arrangements with a variety of external agencies to assist in meeting the housing needs of vulnerable applicants.
- Provide and share information with Local Authorities and other statutory agencies to enable the Group to fulfil its strategic housing role and/or to prevent/investigate fraud.

- Co-operate with Local Authorities in helping them fulfil their statutory housing duties, for example, homelessness and accommodating asylum seekers in accordance with contractual arrangements.
- Enter into contracts or agreements and work in partnership with other registered providers for the provision of residential and floating support to build balanced, sustainable communities.
- Work with other agencies to provide support to ensure that applicants who require tenancy support can access the service quickly and easily.
- All lettings are recorded on the national CORE database.
- Data sharing agreements will be put in place with external partners where we are required to share applicants/tenant's information.

Please see our Group's [Data Protection Guidance - The Club \(interactgo.com\)](#) for more guidance or speak to the Governance team.

13. Monitoring and reporting

We have a range of monitoring and reporting methods in place to manage our voids and allocations policy and processes. These are listed below:

Reference	Name
Internal Audits	Internal audits will be carried out as per our audit programme
Orchard Voids workflow and daily tracker	Applications and void properties are inputted into our Housing Management system (Orchard) which enables us to extract data daily to manage each stage of the process
Weekly void meetings	Weekly void meetings take place in each region to discuss every void, timescales, and allocation of the property.
Monthly reports	We produce monthly reports which detail our void performance
Customer satisfaction feedback	We gather and review a range of customer feedback through our data systems and complaints
KPI's	<p>Performance indicators are monitored at a range of levels including Board, Executive Team, Operational management meetings, team meetings and 121s. Target setting occurs annually and sits in line with budget setting and action planning. Targets are set by considering trends, comparison with peers and both internal and external factors. Regenda Homes Board have responsibility for signing off Key Performance Indicators.</p> <p>We have the following performance indicators in place to measure our void performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average Relet (Major/GN/HFOP) • Average Relet (GN/HFOP) • Average Relet (GN) • Average Relet (HFOP) • Average Relet (Major) • Turnover • Terminations within 12 months

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant & available to let • Vacant & unavailable to let • Time in Maintenance • Time in Lettings • Void Rent Loss
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14. Risk Management

Reference	Name	Internal controls
RH OR1.5.1	Failure to performance manage lettings	Void Management Policy in place Void Process Workflow document in place providing operational guidance to staff for completing each stage of the voids process. Orchard Asset Management System.
RH OR1.5.2	Failure to manage lone working within the lettings team	Analysing monthly usage data from H&S Discussion at relevant management team 1-2-1 discussion with officers Homeworking Risk Assessments carried out for all staff
RH OR1.5.3	Failure to adequately deliver allocations process	Periodic case audits by team leader Review of the allocations process and policies Voids spreadsheet and voids group set up to closely monitor allocations An Allocations Procedure document is in place which outlines process to be followed when allocating voids to new and existing tenants.
RH OR1.18	Failure to adequately manage tenancies	Starter tenancy policy and process including tenancy visits
RH OR1.5.5	Failure to appropriately manage void works	Void Management Policy in place Void Process Workflow document in place providing operational guidance to staff for completing each stage of the voids process. Orchard Asset Management System. Weekly void meetings
RH OR1.5.6	Mutual exchanges not being managed in accordance with legal timescales	Periodic case audits and staff training

15. Amendment log

Change	Made by	Authorised by	Effective date
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Appendix 1: List of housing options in each Local Authority area

CBL/Nomination Name	LA Area covered	% committed
Housing Options Oldham	Oldham	100%
Cheshire Home Choice	Cheshire East	100%
Rochdale Home Choice	Rochdale	100%
Be with us	Rossendale & Blackburn	100%
West Cheshire Homes	Cheshire West	50%
Tameside Council Nomination Agreement	Tameside	75%
Trafford Home Search Nomination Agreement	Trafford	50%
My Home Choice	Lancashire region	100%
Property Pool Plus	Sefton, Knowsley, Halton, Wirral, Liverpool	100% apart from Sefton which is 50%
Under one roof	Newton/St Helens	50%
West Lancs Homefinder	West Lancs	50% or some are 100%

Appendix 2: Decent Homes standard

[S:\Lettings\May 2019 versions\Standard forms\Decent Homes Guidance June 2006 \(1\).pdf](S:\Lettings\May 2019 versions\Standard forms\Decent Homes Guidance June 2006 (1).pdf)

<S:\Lettings\May 2019 versions\Standard forms\V3 New Home leaflet.pdf>