

# TRANSITION HOMES

built by the community for the community



## ALLOCATION POLICY

Transition Homes Community Land Trust has been formed to provide 'affordable' housing which:

- (a) enables ecologically sustainable living and
- (b) is low cost – i.e. as cheap as development costs allow.

This policy relates to Clay Park Dartington, which includes eleven affordable rented units (on assured tenancies; or license [Young Devon flats]) and 12 shared ownership properties.

### 1. Allocation criteria

All applicants will need to meet the following four criteria:

#### a) Housing need

Potential residents will need to show that they have a housing need – as a minimum requirement, that they are unable to afford housing on the open market in this area, which includes those in insecure private rented accommodation.

Applicants for rented housing will be selected via Devon Home Choice (see below) and those for shared ownership via Help to Buy South West.

Applicants who would be vacating a Registered Social Landlord rental property will also be considered.

For rented housing, applicants' need will be assessed according to the Devon Home Choice Band that the applicant falls under. Allocations will be made in the following sequence:

1. Those in Bands A - D who have a local connection as defined below with the primary parish of Dartington
2. Applicants in Band E with a Dartington local connection
3. If there are still vacancies, those in Bands A - D with a local connection to one of the secondary parishes (see below)
4. Applicants in Band E with a local connection to one of the secondary parishes
5. Applicants in Bands A-D with a South Hams district wide connection.
6. Applicants in Band E with a South Hams district wide connection.

#### Flats for United Response clients

Two self contained one bedroom flats will be specifically for people with additional support needs as well as a housing need and the allocation for these flats will be agreed between United Response and South Hams District Council.

#### Studios for Young Devon clients

Four self contained studios will be specifically for young people in need of support as well as a housing need and the allocation for these studios will be agreed with Young Devon and South Hams District Council.

#### b) Commitment to sustainable living

In addition, because of the sustainability principles that underpin the development, potential residents will have to have a positive motivation towards key elements of sustainable living, which will be assessed via a questionnaire and pre-application workshop (see 3, below), and will include: reducing energy & water use in the home, contributing to onsite food growing, utilising compost toilets, maintaining a house built of natural materials, managing the site sustainably and minimising car use. There will be conditions relating to these issues in the tenancy agreements and leases.

### **c) Local connection**

First priority will be given to those with connections in the primary parish of Dartington, then to the secondary adjoining parishes of Totnes, Harberton, Rattery, Littlehempston and Staverton [in no priority order] and subsequently, if necessary, to the rest of South Hams.

To demonstrate a local connection, potential residents will need to show either:

- (i) The person has lived in the primary parish of Dartington, secondary parishes of Totnes, Harberton, Rattery, Littlehempston and Staverton for 3 out of the 5 years preceding the allocation.
- (ii) The person has lived in the primary parish of Dartington, secondary parish of Totnes, Harberton, Rattery, Littlehempston and Staverton for 6 out of 12 months preceding the allocation
- (iii) Immediate family have lived in the primary parish of Dartington, secondary parishes of Totnes, Harberton, Rattery, Littlehempston and Staverton themselves for 5 years preceding the allocation: immediate family in this case meaning parents, siblings and non-dependent children.
- (iv) The person has permanent employment or is self employed in the primary parish of Dartington, secondary parishes of Totnes, Harberton, Rattery, Littlehempston and Staverton normally working there at least 16 hours per week which has continued for the 6 months preceding the allocation without a break in employment of more than 3 months. This should not include employment of a casual nature.

### **d) Household size accords with the home available**

Because of the high level of demand, and the constraints on eligibility for housing benefit, applicants for rental housing will only be considered for homes that meet their current family need i.e. a separate bedroom is allocated to each:

- Married or cohabiting couple
- Adult aged 16 or more
- Pair of adolescents aged 10-16 of the same sex
- Pair of children under 10 regardless of sex

Applicants for shared ownership property may if they wish be considered for a property that has one more bedroom than their family currently needs.

### **e) Additional Shared ownership financial requirements**

Applicants for the shared ownership dwellings will also need to demonstrate that they do not own any interest in any property elsewhere and are able to afford the deposit and mortgage repayments.

## **2. Selection criteria**

In the event that a selection has to be made between applicants who meet all the above criteria, then the extent of their housing need will be taken into account and then, the length of local connection with the parish in question will be taken into account.

### **3. Allocations process (first lettings)**

Allocations will be made once development finance is in place and a contractor appointed, with a construction programme agreed. Allocations will be made in phases corresponding to the delivery of phases of housing, and will commence 6 months prior to completion. This will enable prospective residents to begin getting to know each other, contribute to constructing the community building and contributing to the layout and landscaping of the site.

Once an applicant for rental housing has been accepted for this scheme they will no longer be able to bid for other properties advertised on Devon Home Choice.

Adverts will be placed on the Devon Home Choice and Help to Buy South West websites which briefly describe the scheme including the time scales and invite those interested to request an information pack from Transition Homes.

The information pack describes the scheme in detail emphasising the expectations of living a sustainable lifestyle. Those who are interested in becoming residents at Clay Park will be required to attend a workshop and then to complete a questionnaire.

The workshop will include presentation of the scheme and opportunities to ask questions, visit the site and discuss with one another interests and expectations.

The questionnaire will explore potential residents' positive motivation for sustainable living and how they would contribute to the community.

People registered with Devon Home Choice (for rented properties) and Help to Buy South West (shared ownership) who have attended one of the workshops and completed the questionnaire will be eligible to be considered for an allocation by bidding for a property on the relevant website.

Applicants who do not attend the workshop or who do not return the questionnaire will not have their bid considered.

Exceptionally, Transition Homes may turn down applicants who clearly are not able to support the sustainable lifestyle being offered

Because some households may decide later on that they do not wish to proceed, or obtain other permanent housing in the meantime, there will be reserves identified for each house size and tenure type.

Allocated households will be invited to take part in a programme of discussions, social events and activities, with support, encouragement and information sharing, so they begin to develop a community and strengthen their commitment to the scheme.

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### **4. Liaison with South Hams District Council and Help to Buy South West**

Transition Homes will work closely with South Hams District Council and Help to Buy South West including providing information about allocations made and informing them of vacancies. Applicants should therefore note that to enable South Hams and Help to Buy South West to meet their statutory duties their information will be shared with them.

### **5. Equal opportunities policy**

We take pride in our diverse, local communities and work hard to meet their needs, always ensuring that we are fully compliant with the relevant aspects of the Equality Act 2010.

## **6. Right of appeal**

Decisions on applications are made on behalf of Transition Homes by its Allocations Sub Committee. If an applicant feels that the decision made about their application has not been in accordance with the stated criteria, they may submit an appeal, in writing, to the Transition Homes Company Secretary. A Panel of at least two Transition Homes Directors plus one additional independent person, nominated by South Hams District Council will then hear the appeal, within 15 working days. Members of the Appeals Panel will not have been involved in the earlier decision making process. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be binding on all parties.

## **7. Review**

This policy will be reviewed by Transition Homes CLT annually to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of those in housing need in an efficient, fair and transparent way.

### **Contacts**

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