

Sandwell Move-on Process

Moving-on from supported housing in Sandwell



Version History

Version	Issue/circulation date	Summary of Change
1 st draft	02/02/2009	Initial version
2 nd draft	24/02/2009	Revised following consultation
1.1	01/04/2009	

Version 1.1 Issued 1st April 2009.

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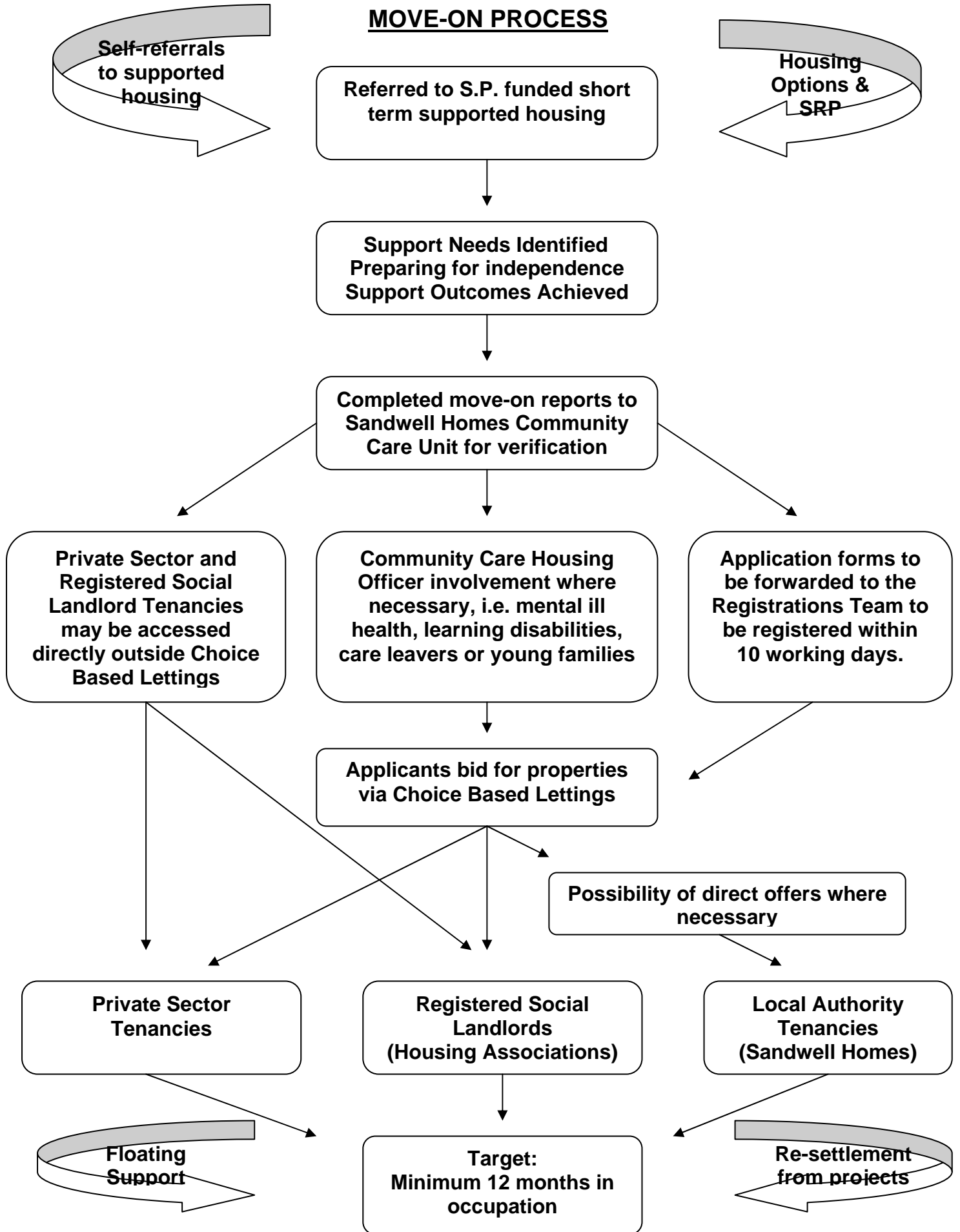
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the process to be used to assist people to move-on from Supporting People funded short-term supported housing in Sandwell.
- 1.2 It is intended to be read in conjunction with the Sandwell Move-on Protocol.
- 1.3 The process sets out the key aims and objectives of the Move-on Process.
- 1.4 This document establishes the scope of the Move-on Process and identifies a range of housing and support options available for people moving-on from supported housing.
- 1.5 The process sets out how an application for Move-on should be made and highlights key information about accessing tenancies through Sandwell Homes Choice Based Lettings system.
- 1.6 The process links directly to the Move-on Report Guidance notes that sets out key information and outcomes that will make up the Move-on Report for the purpose of verifying that a person is prepared for move-on.
- 1.7 The process sets out the key types of tenancy offered by the participating landlords and identifies the additional resettlement and floating support available to tenants who require it.
- 1.8 This document also identifies the proposed outcomes for the Move-on Process, enabling the collection of qualitative and quantitative information for inclusion in the Move-on annual report.

2 Aims for the process

- 2.1 This section of the process sets out the key aims of the move-on process. These are:
- 2.2 An overall increase in the volume and rate of planned move-on from short-term supported housing in Sandwell.
- 2.3 The delivery of an efficient and seamless move-on service in partnership with all stakeholders.
- 2.4 The involvement of service users in the development and promotion of the move-on process.
- 2.5 The provision of a mechanism for the implementation of Sandwell Council's Allocations Policy with reference to people moving-on from supported housing.
- 2.6 The provision of a toolkit to establish readiness for move-on.
- 2.7 The identification of a range of housing and support options for people moving-on.
- 2.8 The provision of a mechanism for monitoring and recording the numbers of people moving-on and reporting on the outcomes, targets, and performance standards.
- 2.9 To identify areas of unmet need and assist in the delivery of the MOPP (Move-on Plans Protocol) with an analysis of findings to identify areas of improvement.
- 2.10 To report on progress to Sandwell Homes, Sandwell Supporting People Team, Sandwell Housing Strategy (Partnerships in Housing) and stakeholders.
- 2.11 To contribute to the successful implementation of the Single Referral Action Plan with reference to actions relating to move-on.



3 The Scope of the Move-on Process

3.1 This process provides the mechanism for the delivery of the move-on provisions contained in Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council's Housing Policy which states that:

“ Residents of Supporting People Funded short-term supported accommodation in Sandwell will receive additional preference when they register with the CBL when the following conditions are met:

- They are in supported housing having had an appropriate assessment of housing need.
- They have engaged with the supported housing project to acquire the skills needed to live independently.
- The supported housing project provides evidence by way of a move-on report highlighting the applicant's readiness for move-on.
- The applicant's readiness for move-on is verified by an officer of Sandwell Homes.”

3.2 The process will be delivered in partnership between Sandwell Homes Community Care Unit, Sandwell Homes Choice Based Lettings, Sandwell MBC's Housing Strategy, Sandwell Supporting People Team and the providers of Supporting People funded short-term supported housing in Sandwell.

3.3 This process will give people preparing for move-on a template for cataloguing and demonstrating their readiness for move-on.

3.4 This process will allow people who are ready to move-on express their choice in a positive way across a variety of property types and tenures.

3.5 Registered social landlord (housing association), private rented and Sandwell Homes properties are all advertised to rent by Sandwell Homes Property Shops.

- 3.6 Many registered social landlords allocate a portion of their properties through their own allocations policies and keep their own applications lists independently of Sandwell Homes Choice Based Lettings.
- 3.7 The majority of accredited private landlords advertise their properties to let outside Sandwell Homes Choice Based Lettings, via commercial lettings agents, and local newspapers.
- 3.8 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council maintains a register of accredited private landlords who offer a variety of property types including houses, flats and studio flats in shared houses.
- 3.9 For up-to-date information on accredited private landlords in Sandwell please contact Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council's Private Sector Housing on 0121 569 5232.
- 3.10 The Private Sector Housing Team are available to inspect any private rented property whether or not the property is being let by an accredited private landlord.
- 3.11 Move-on applicants are encouraged to apply directly to registered social landlords and accredited private landlords in addition to registering with Choice Based Lettings so that they have access to the widest variety of properties.
- 3.12 Key workers in supported housing projects should make their service users aware of all the housing options available to them as part of their preparations for move-on.

4 Applying for Move-on

- 4.1 Applications for Move-on must be made on the approved Move-on Report that is attached as **Appendix 1**. Move-on reports can also be obtained from Sandwell Homes Community Care Unit.
- 4.2 Move-on Reports must be completed by key workers and applicants from supported housing projects jointly.

- 4.3 For additional support completing the Move-on report, Move-on Report Guidance Notes are attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 4.4 Completed Move-on Reports must be printed off and signed by both key worker and applicant before being forwarded to Sandwell Homes Community Care Housing Unit at the following address:
- Community Care Unit
Sandwell Homes Limited
Dartmouth House
Sandwell Road
West Bromwich
B70 8TQ**
- 4.5 Completed Move-on Reports must be accompanied by an up-to-date Sandwell Homes Property Shop Housing Registration Form and supporting documentation.
- 4.6 Sandwell Homes Property Shop Housing Registration Forms are available from Sandwell Homes Property Shops, Neighbourhood Offices or the Community Care Unit.
- 4.7 Once approved, applicants will be registered with Move-on priority and notified in writing within 14 days from the receipt of the completed application.
- 4.8 Key workers in supported housing projects must take an active role in ensuring that their service users are aware of the Choice Based Lettings system operated by Sandwell Homes and that people who have been approved for move-on are expressing an interest in appropriate properties on a regular basis.

5 Choice Based Lettings

- 5.1 Applicants with Move-on Priority will be able to express an interest in up to three properties per week as advertised through the Sandwell Homes Choice Based Lettings Scheme.
- 5.2 Available properties are advertised on a weekly basis. Each advertisement will contain details of the household size best

suited for the property. This is referred to as the Eligible Criteria on the advertisement. Other restrictions may be included in the advertisement.

- 5.3 Properties will be advertised on a weekly cycle, that begins on Wednesday mornings and lasts through to midnight on the following Monday. Properties will be advertised in the property Shops, Property Newsletter and on the web at www.sandwellhomes.org.uk.
- 5.4 Applicants may express an interest in a property (place a "bid") at any Sandwell Homes Property Shop or Neighbourhood Office. Applicants may also express an interest on-line at www.sandwellhomes.org.uk or by telephone on the 24 hour FREEPHONE number 0800 027 0463.
- 5.5 When an expression of interest has been successful, the successful applicant will be informed by telephone and by letter, if the property is available with immediate effect a viewing may also be arranged.
- 5.6 Key workers should attend any pre-offer interviews and property viewings to support their service users with the choices and decisions they may have to make prior to signing a tenancy agreement/contract.
- 5.7 An applicant may be ineligible where there is evidence that they (or a member of their household) are guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant. This could include rent arrears or Anti-Social Behaviour.
- 5.8 An applicant can be excluded from registering on the Choice Based Lettings Scheme due to their immigration status.
- 5.9 Registered applicants who fail to place a bid within a twelve-month period will have their applications cancelled and have to re-apply from the date they wish to actively search for housing.

5.10 Where an applicant refuses three reasonable offers of accommodation their membership will be cancelled and they will not be able to re-apply for 12 months.

6 Rent Arrears

6.1 The Sandwell Homes Registrations and Allocations procedure states that where a tenant or former tenant has rent arrears in excess of £500, consideration should be given as to whether they are eligible to become a member of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

6.2 When considering eligibility, staff should consider whether the arrears would have entitled Sandwell Homes to a possession order. The guidance below may be used to assist staff in making a decision regarding eligibility where rent arrears exist.

6.3 Arrears of under £500 and above £300 should be reduced by an amount agreed with Sandwell Homes Debt Recovery/Rents Teams and make regular weekly or fortnightly payments for a minimum of 3 months.

6.4 Rent arrears of amounts between £500 and £1000 should be reduced to £500 or under and make regular weekly or fortnightly payments for a minimum of 3 months.

6.5 Arrears over £1000 should be reduced by 50% and make regular weekly or fortnightly payments for a minimum of 3 months.

6.6 Key workers should identify if former tenancy rent arrears is an issue for their service user at the earliest possible opportunity, and where identified, an agreement must be made to repay the arrears.

7 Accommodation Types and Tenures

7.1 Applicants who are approved for move-on from supported accommodation will be eligible to express an interest in three property tenure types through Choice Based Lettings, these are:

7.2 **Assured Shorthold Tenancies** are now the standard form of agreements between private landlords and tenants for the

occupancy/rent of a house or flat let as separate accommodation for a fixed period of time, usually 6 months. Private landlords may request possession of an assured shorthold tenancy six months after the beginning of the tenancy provided that they give two months notice. For further information on Assured Shorthold Tenancies please see Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenancies a guide at www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/assuredassuredtenants.

7.3 **Assured Tenancies** are the most common type of tenancy agreement used by Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations) for the occupancy/rent of a house or flat as separate accommodation. The main advantage of an Assured Tenancy is that tenants have a right to remain in the property unless the landlord can prove in court that they have grounds for possession.

7.4 **Introductory Tenancies** are trial Council (Sandwell Homes) tenancies that will normally last for twelve months. Introductory Tenancies give tenants most of the same rights that Secure Council Tenants have, however tenants can be evicted much more easily. As long as tenants don't break their tenancy agreements during their introductory period they will automatically become a secure tenant.

8 Resettlement and Floating Support

8.1 Tenants moving-on from supported accommodation as part of the move-on process will be entitled to receive continued support from their key worker for up to 6 weeks after they have moved out of supported accommodation to enable them to settle into their new home.

8.2 Where tenants moving-on from supported accommodation require additional or ongoing support for the medium term an application for floating support should be made as part of the move-on preparations.

8.3 To ensure that there is no gap in the provision of support to tenants moving-on from supported accommodation applications for floating support should be made in good time and regular contact should be maintained between the key worker, tenant and floating support provider.

9 Reviews Disputes and Complaints

- 9.1 Where an applicant disagrees with a decision relating to the award or not of priority for move-on under this process they may within 21 days from the date of notification of the decision ask for a review.
- 9.2 A request for a review should be addressed to the Sandwell Homes Operations Director and sent to the Community Care (Housing) Unit, Sandwell Homes Limited, Dartmouth House, Sandwell Road, West Bromwich, B70 8TQ stating the reasons the applicant disagrees with the decision made.
- 9.3 The applicant will be notified of the outcome of the review in writing within eight weeks from the date the review request was received.
- 9.4 All disputes or complaints relating to the processing of applications for move-on via Sandwell Homes Choice Based Lettings must be directed to the Community Care (Housing) Unit.
- 9.5 If the dispute or complaint cannot be resolved immediately, you will be contacted within three working days with the name and the contact details of the person dealing with your dispute or complaint.
- 9.6 You will then be provided with a written response within ten working days, letting you know the outcome.
- 9.7 For further information relating to Sandwell Homes Corporate Compliments and Complaints procedure please contact customer_relations@sandwellhomes.org.uk or telephone 0121 5695047.

10 Outcomes for the Move-on Project

- 10.1 The Move-on Project will deliver an annual report highlighting the key qualitative and quantitative outcomes of the project. These are:
- 10.2 To increase and monitor the rate of planned move-on identifying the numbers referred and approved for move-on by project and in total.

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- 10.3 To increase and identify the numbers moved-on by project, by accommodation accessed type i.e. flat, maisonette, house and by landlord/tenure.
- 10.4 To identify the average length of time to move-on (from move-on priority awarded date to tenancy start date).
- 10.5 To identify the number of unplanned move-on by project and in total.
- 10.6 To identify and increase the options for people moving-on from supported housing including those receiving additional support with resettlement provided by the supported housing project and those needing tenancy related floating support.
- 10.7 To promote and identify tenants who moved-on with assistance from the “help with new home costs” assistance.
- 10.8 To promote and identify tenants who moved-on with the aid of a Community Care Grant (how much).
- 10.9 To promote and identify tenants that moved-on and applied for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), including the number awarded and how much.
- 10.10 To promote and identify tenants that moved-on with the assistance of dual housing benefit.
- 10.11 To identify tenants moved-on to time limited move-on accommodation (i.e. Grange and Gilbert Road).
- 10.12 To identify numbers of tenants that moved-on through the move-on process who are still in occupation of their tenancies after 12 months.