

Local Letting Plan – Local Authority Housing Fund Scheme

The Borough Council has been allocated grant funding by central government through the Local Authority Housing Fund to acquire 16 affordable homes to provide more sustainable accommodation for Ukrainian and Afghan households that have arrived via certain government approved resettlement schemes and are in housing need. This local letting plan sets out how these homes will be allocated in accordance with funding requirements.

Background

The Local Authority Housing Fund aims to ensure that resettlement schemes that offer sanctuary to those fleeing conflict or persecution provide sufficient longer-term accommodation to those they support. It also aims to support areas with housing pressures which have welcomed substantial numbers of Ukrainian refugees so that these areas are not disadvantaged by increased pressures from these arrivals on the existing housing and homelessness systems particularly as sponsorship/family placements/bridging accommodation arrangements come to an end.

The fund will also enable effective resettlement and economic integration of the eligible households and deliver accommodation which can be used to support wider local authority housing and homelessness responsibilities to UK nationals after usage by these households.

Proposals

All 16 homes will be let prior to the end of March 2024.

Homes for Ukrainian Households

Funding has been allocated to acquire 14 homes to meet housing need from eligible Ukrainian Households.

Eligibility

Eligible Households for these properties will meet the following criteria

- Households will have an active housing application through the Council's Housing Register (West Norfolk Homechoice)
- Households will have entered the UK via one of the following schemes
 - Ukraine Family Visa Scheme,
 - Homes for Ukraine and the
 - Ukraine Extension Scheme
- Households will be either homeless, at risk of homelessness or live in unsuitable accommodation

Lettings

Due to the limited eligibility for properties, allocations will be via direct lets rather than advertising via Choice Based Lettings

Properties will be matched to households whose household size and make up match the house type of the property (see pages 10 and 11 of the Council's Social Housing Allocation's Policy).

Eligible Households will then be prioritised based on their banding and relevant date on the housing register in line with normal allocations.

Property Swaps

Where an eligible household is homeless, but a suitable property is not available through the scheme at that time, the Council may seek to meet their need through the existing social housing stock via a direct let.

In this case, a property funded through the LAHF scheme will be identified to be let as general needs accommodation in accordance with the standard Social Housing Allocations Policy.

Type of tenancies

Eligible Ukrainian households are granted 3-year visas and have limited leave to remain. They have full recourse to public funds and are eligible for housing assistance for the duration of their visas. However, if their visa is not renewed at the end of the 3 years, they may fall out of eligibility and lose the Right to Rent.

Therefore, partner landlords may offer fixed term tenancies to these households to reflect their immigration status. This approach will apply to all households with limited leave to remain nominated through the housing register, regardless of whether the nomination is linked to the Local Authority Housing Fund.

Homes for Afghan Households

Funding has been allocated to acquire 2 homes for eligible Afghan households. These properties are required to have at least 4 bedrooms due to the average size of eligible Afghan households

Eligibility

Eligible households for these properties will meet the following criteria

- Households will have entered the UK via one of the following schemes
 - Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS),
 - Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
- Households will be currently accommodated in Home Office Bridging Accommodation

Lettings

Allocations will be via direct lets rather than advertising in the normal manner. Eligible Households will be identified in partnership with Norfolk County Council's People From Abroad Team who will liaise with the Home Office.

Prospective nominees will be required to apply to the Housing Register and supply all relevant documentation.

Type of tenancies

Eligible Afghan households are granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Therefore, they will be offered the same type of tenancy that the relevant landlord would offer to any other tenants in line with their tenancy policy at the time.

Relets

Where a property funded through the LAHF scheme becomes vacant during the duration of this lettings plan, allocations will be made in accordance with this lettings plan. If no eligible households are identified, the property will be let in accordance with the normal provisions of the Social Housing Allocations Policy

This will apply to the relet of any properties funded via the scheme rather than relets of homes from existing stock that are used to meet the need of eligible households.

Review Arrangements

This lettings plan will be reviewed after 2 years. At this point the level of housing need within the eligible households in the borough will be assessed and the letting plan may be extended for a further 12 months with further reviews on an annual basis