

This policy explains how we manage transfers and direct lets to meet nomination agreements and service level agreements to reduce re-let times and minimise rental loss from vacant homes across different tenures.

Managing Transfers and Direct Lets Policy

Document management

Directorate	Operations
Policy sponsor	Chief Operations Officer
Policy owner	Director of Housing and Healthy Communities
Policy author	Director of Housing and Healthy Communities

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Part 2

Overview

Scope

This policy supports Amplius' values and is a commitment to improving lives and supporting colleagues by:

- Outlining how we will manage transfers and direct lets across Amplius and ensure consistency.
- Making sure that these communities and our lettings are sustainable.
- Reducing the amount of time properties are left empty and minimising rent loss.

Amplius will provide an effective allocations service that meets the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Tenancy Standard. We will also use HomeSwapper as an option for existing tenants wishing to move from their current home.

The term Amplius incorporates all member companies and subsidiaries.

The policy applies to all tenants who apply for a transfer with us.

Legal responsibility is held jointly by:

- Amplius Chief Executive; and
- Chief Operations Officer

Operational responsibility is held by the:

- Director of Housing and Healthy Communities
- Regional Directors

Procedural responsibility is held by:

- Housing Managers/Team Leaders
- Regional Directors

Day-to-day responsibility is held by

- Team Leaders
- Lettings Advisors
- Housing Officers
- Relocations Team
- Onboarding Team

The policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment and the policy may be amended at any time.

Part 3

Policy details

Management Transfers and Direct Lets

Management transfer – This is when a customer moves from one Amplius property to another Amplius property, and their tenancy is transferred to the new property.

A direct let – This is when a customer is offered a move to another Amplius property and given a new starter tenancy e.g. non successor.

A “management transfer” or “direct let” happens when a property is offered outside of the standard housing waiting list or choice-based lettings system. Customers may need to move to a different property within Amplius that better suits their needs.

Any transfer must be authorised by the Regional Directors or Director of Housing and Healthy Communities and meet one of the set criteria outlined below:

- Statutory overcrowding – defined in the Housing Act 1985 Part X.
- Safeguarding Risk - for example, if the customer is experiencing discrimination, harassment or abuse (including domestic abuse) and this is supported by other agencies such as police or MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference). This includes:
 - life threatening situations
 - Violent situations or
 - extreme situations like cuckooing or exploitation.
- Unaffordability – When a customer is struggling with unaffordable rent after all support from the Financial Wellbeing Team has been exhausted. There are no other options i.e. cannot re-apply to the housing register.
- Decanting – When the property needs to be vacated for refurbishment or redevelopment.
- Non statutory succession - where customers are eligible under the local Housing Allocation Scheme.
- Critical Medical need – If a customer’s current property is causing serious health problems due to their medical condition.
- Adaptations – Where a property is available that has been adapted or can be adapted to meet the specific needs of an Amplius customer. This is on the understanding that by not transferring the customer to the adapted property now, we are likely to have to carry out specialist adaptations in future.
- Unable to Adapt – If a property needs adaptations for medical reason, but the Adaptions team has decided that these changes are not possible.
- Cat 1 Hazzard – Statutory overcrowding as referred to by the Local Authority.
- Supported Living Accommodation – Where a Grand Union customer no longer requires this level of support and is bed blocking. A direct let to general needs housing will be supported, alongside a live application to the local authorities housing register.
- Other Criteria - In exceptional cases, consideration may be given to circumstances that don’t meet the usual criteria but could have a significant negative impact on the

customer or community if a direct let is not approved. We will consider all relevant factors and make sure that all other options and support have been tried.

Eligibility

We will usually only accept transfer applications, and offer of re- housing if the following conditions are met:

- The customer's account has no outstanding debt.
- All terms and conditions of the tenancy have been met
- A satisfactory tenancy inspection has been completed.

Verification Checks

If a transfer within our housing stock is possible, we will carry out checks to make sure the offer is suitable. This will include affordability checks for the new property.

If needed, we will ask for up-to-date medical evidence to support the transfer request. We may also require a report from an Occupational Therapist if the move is due to medical reasons.

Transfer Within Amplus

For cases of under occupation and overcrowding (non-statutory), we will refer customers to the Local Authority Housing Options Team. We will encourage them to use HomeSwapper for a mutual exchange.

We will only make one suitable offer to customers who have been approved for a transfer. If the customer rejects this offer, Amplus may cancel the transfer application and not accept any future requests for two years. Should the customer experience a change of circumstances within this period, we may review and restart their transfer application.

Best Use of Stock

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) Level 3 Offender – we will seek appropriate advice and information from the Police, Social Services and Probation. A MAPPA Level 3 offender is as defined in the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and subsequent relevant legislation.

Children in flats –we will not let flats above the ground floor to families with children aged under four years. Ground floor flats can be let to families with children of any age.

Survivors Fleeing Domestic Abuse - we will offer an assured tenancy to all survivors fleeing domestic abuse as standard when moving into their new home, providing security of tenure.

If a transfer application is rejected, we will inform the applicant in writing and explain the reasons for our decision.

The grounds for refusal taken from legislation are not exhaustive. There is no definitive list of grounds for refusing consent and each case will be assessed on its own merits. There is no right of appeal.

Unauthorised Exchanges

If a customer moves without our written consent or the application to exchange was withheld or rejected, the exchange will be unlawful. Both customers will be in the following situation:

- They will have no legal right to live in the property they are in;
- They will still be responsible for the rent and other obligations of their original homes; and
- They will lose their security of tenure because they are no longer living in their original home as their only or main home.

In these situations, the options are:

- Consider making the exchange legal by completing the new Tenancy Agreements or Deed of Assignment, and Licence to Assign forms after the move;
- Demand that both customers return to their original homes;
- End the tenancies by serving a Notice to Quit and a Notice of Seeking Possession to take back the original properties.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Amplius is committed to E,D&I and such will make reasonable adjustments to the policy to recognise, accommodate and support individual needs, where needed.

This policy adheres to the Amplius' approach to Equality and Diversity.

Colleagues will take a proactive approach to ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against or treated differently as a direct or indirect result of this policy.

Additional needs (addressing vulnerabilities)

Amplius recognises that, for various reasons, some of our customers and service users may be vulnerable. Policies therefore will take account of the recommendations made by the Housing Ombudsman and Regulatory recommendations on vulnerabilities. Amplius will take a proactive approach when making a decision relating to a customer or service user and where practicable, tailor and adapt our services to suit the needs of customers and support vulnerable people.

Part 4

Compliance and administration

Legal and regulatory compliance

This policy fully complies with Amplius' legal and regulatory obligations.

- Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Neighbourhood and Community tenancy standard.
- The Housing Acts
- The Data Protection Act 2018.

This list is not exhaustive, and policy authors will undertake thorough research and/or seek professional advice to ensure that Amplius meets its obligations and complies with the current and relevant legislation and regulations.

Evaluation, review and performance monitoring

This policy will be reviewed on a Triennial basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. A policy review may also be required earlier, in response to internal or external changes for example changes in legislation. Prompt and effective action will be taken where improvements are identified.

Performance data for transfers will be produced by the Lettings Team on request.

Information on re-lets against local authority nomination agreement service level agreements will be provided, as applicable, at a local level through the Lettings team.

Lettings Team Leaders will carry out monthly audits to monitor compliance. Compliance checks will also be completed by our external auditors.

Related policies

- Declarations of Interests Policy
- Lettings and Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy

Part 5

Appendices

A. Associated documents - Internal procedural document, colleague use only

- NA.

Part 6

Changelog

Amended date	Summary of changes	Version No