

Transfer Policy

1. Policy Statement Objectives:	<p>This policy outlines the approach to internal transfers across Trent & Dove. This policy does not apply to shared ownership properties. Trent & Dove will meet the statutory and regulatory requirements whilst providing assurance to our partners and customers that we will manage all transfer applicants in a fair and transparent manner whilst helping to create sustainable communities and promote sustainable tenancies.</p> <p>The aim of this policy is to ensure all transfer applications are processed fairly and consistently. Trent & Dove will always aim to meet the needs of our residents whilst making the best use of our housing stock and meeting our strategic objectives. The company has to make decisions around transfers with regard to the overall tenant base. This policy should be read and applied in conjunction with the Allocations and Lettings Policies.</p>
2. Scope:	<p>This policy applies to all T&D:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleagues • Customers (existing tenants) • Partners
3. Content:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy statement and objectives 2. Scope 3. Content 4. Links to Legislation, other Policies and Guides 5. Contact 6. Applying for a transfer 7. Eligibility criteria 8. Transfer banding 9. Appeals 10. Transfer completion 11. Management transfers 12. Legal compliance 13. Monitoring and Review 14. Organisational responsibilities 15. Policy approvals and reporting
4. Links to Legislation, other Policies and Guides	<p>This policy makes reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lettings Policy • Allocations Policy • Lettable standard
5. Contact:	<p>Lettings Manager or Tenancy Services Manager</p>

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6. Applying for a transfer

6.1 Trent & Dove residents should apply online via the Trent & Dove website. Customers who need assistance to do this should contact Customer Services on: 01283 528528 or by email to: Enquiries@trentanddove.org

6.2 Residents can request transfer for the following reasons but not limited to:

- Current home is no longer suitable for the size or needs of the household (eligibility for different sizes and types of home applies, please refer to the Allocations Policy).
- To move to a different area (where Trent & Dove Housing own stock) for employment or to move closer to a support network. We will require evidence to support applications in respect of this.

All transfer applicants will be reviewed and assessed in accordance with the Banding criteria set out within the Allocations Policy.

7. Eligibility criteria

Upon receipt of a transfer application an initial check for eligibility will be carried out (see 8.1 below). A visit will be carried out, to assess whether the request to join the Housing register for a transfer will be accepted. As part of the assessment process, Trent & Dove will also consider options other than transfer, for example, if undertaking minor modifications to the property would allow the tenant and other household members to stay in the current property. The applicant will be assisted where appropriate to apply for a mutual exchange, which may expedite the time taken waiting to move and meet the needs of at least two applicants who wish to move. Applicants in Band 4, with no housing need will only be eligible to move by means of a mutual exchange.

Where a transfer application is received, and the applicant cites problems with for example the area they live in, or neighbours, we will fully investigate with a view to resolving the issues without the need for the family to move. If, after a period (up to 6 months, depending on the nature of the problem) we are unable to rectify the issues raised, the transfer application will be reviewed.

The visiting officer will advise what evidence is needed to support the application and will carry out a property inspection to confirm that the condition of the property is in accordance with the requirements of the tenancy agreement. The Officer will advise whether any action is needed at this time, to bring the property to the required standard. Confirmation of the outcome of this visit will be provided to the tenant(s) in writing.

Where the property does not meet the required standard Trent & Dove will work with the tenants to address the issues of concern. Once the property is brought to the required standard, follow-up visits may be carried out, to ensure that the standard is maintained, for a period of up to 6 months.

The transfer application will only be accepted when the company are satisfied that these conditions are met. Any subsequent offer of a transfer will be subject to a pre-transfer inspection, where the condition will once again be assessed.

If the property meets the required standard at the pre-transfer inspection, arrangements will be made to view the potential new home and given an indication of likely move date.

Information will be given on what the tenant needs to do ahead of moving home (including any work to the existing property and the requirement to leave it clean and clear of all possessions). See section 7 below for further information.

7.1. Trent & Dove may consider the following applicants ineligible for a transfer:

- Tenants who are on a starter tenancy
- Applicants who owe money to Trent & Dove Housing Limited on a current or former tenancy account (including but not limited to rent arrears, Court costs, rechargeable repair costs and former tenancy arrears)
- Tenants living in properties and gardens that do not meet the property lettable standard
- Applicants with outstanding day to day repairs that have not been reported to Trent & Dove
- Applicants who have been served a notice due to breach of tenancy unless Trent & Dove consider the notice to no longer be valid
- Applicants who provide false, inaccurate or misleading information in relation to their transfer application
- Applicants who Trent & Dove is taking possession action against
- Applicants who are the subject of an active ASB case
- Applicants who Trent & Dove is taking Tenancy enforcement action against (including, but not limited to, injunctions and closure orders)

7.2. Trent & Dove reserve the right to reject or suspend an application that is deemed ineligible by the above criteria for a period of 6 to 12 months. Exceptional cases will be dealt on a case-by-case basis where the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria but can evidence the necessity to move. These will be dealt with as Management transfers (see section 11 below).

Applicants will be notified in writing of the reasons that their application has been rejected or suspended.

8. Transfer banding system

8.1 Applications for transfer will be assessed in line with our Allocations Policy that outlines our banding system.

8.2 We will consider management transfers a priority (see below). These will be assessed in line with our Allocations Policy and the Lettings Manager will make a final decision.

8.3 Temporary decants will be handled within the current framework for dealing with customers who need to move on a temporary basis.

8.4 Changes in circumstances may affect the banding awarded to an application. Trent & Dove will review in line with Allocations Policy and inform the applicant.

9. Appeals

9.1 Appeals regarding the priority banding awarded to a transfer application will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Allocations Policy.

9.2 Appeals which a tenant wishes to make with regards to their application to transfer being refused or suspended will need to be made in writing within 21 days of the decision being communicated to the tenant. These appeals should be addressed to the Tenancy Services Manager

9.3 Where a Management transfer is refused appeals must be made in writing to the Head of Housing within 21 days of the decision being communicated to the tenant.

10. Completion

10.1 Applicants will only be invited to sign for transfer once required documentation and identification has been provided and a pre-transfer inspection has been carried out, and the transfer provisionally approved. At this point a conditional offer will be made. The tenant will be provided with information on what they need to do ahead of the formal transfer day such as any minor works/removal of tenant's own fittings and cleaning/clearing their existing home, including removing all personal possessions.

10.2 Applicants will be able to view the property ahead of making a decision about accepting (within the void repairs period).

All transfer applicants will be offered a tenancy equivalent to the security of the tenure already held.

10.3 The applicant has 24 hours to accept the conditional transfer offer through their preferred communication method. Failure to notify Trent & Dove can result in offer being withdrawn.

10.4 Applicants must pay rent up for their current tenancy up to the tenancy end date before they can be signed up for the new tenancy.

10.5 During the period from the conditional offer, to the end of the tenancy the Lettings Officer will remain in contact with the tenant to ensure that they are ready to move and have completed any necessary actions as identified to them. Once the transfer property is ready the tenant(s) will be asked to attend to sign for the new tenancy and collect the keys to their new home. If they have not already done so they will sign to terminate their existing tenancy. For joint tenancies both parties must sign the new tenancy agreement.

- **During the notice period, up to the point of signing the new tenancy, Trent & Dove Housing reserve the right to withdraw the conditional offer of alternative accommodation if the requirements detailed to them (section 7.1 refers) are not met. This is to ensure that the home they vacate can be passed through the void process and offered to a new occupant as soon as possible.**

11.

Management Transfers

This category is not intended to be used where a tenant requires an emergency or immediate move from their current property, for example due to threats to life or a police incident. These situations will be dealt with separately and on a case by case basis in conjunction with the relevant Local Authority with responsibility for Statutory Duties and the Police/other agencies.

From time to time it may be necessary for current tenants to move to alternative accommodation, outside of the usual Allocations Policy. These occasions will be infrequent and will be to deal with the most urgent situations. Such transfers will be given priority for allocation of a new property. A Management transfer will be considered where the company are made aware that the safety of the tenant (or household) is at risk, should they remain in their current home.

In all cases the request should be supported by evidence from the Police, Social or Health Services or other agencies involved with the customer. All requests for a transfer under this category must be approved as a joint decision between the Lettings, Tenancy Services and Income Managers on a case by case basis. Tenants will only be eligible to move to a property that meets their household needs in areas that Trent & Dove Housing, supporting services and the Tenant themselves agree are appropriate based on the nature of the need to move.

Examples of exceptional circumstances and supporting evidence required may be (but not exclusive of):

At Risk - Where tenants are fleeing domestic abuse, serious anti-social behaviour*, harassment or hate crime situations and there is a potential threat to life (substantiated by a supporting Police risk assessment). *Where the ASB is caused by another T&D tenant, the emphasis will be on dealing with the perpetrator as a matter of urgency, rather than moving the complainant.

- The risk is serious and ongoing.
- The risk means they cannot remain in the current property or location beyond a certain length of time.
- Safeguarding has been put in place through the recommendation of social services or another governing authority.
- The property or location significantly increases the risk and reduces their safety.
- Apart from transferring, there are no practical steps that can be taken by the tenant's household to lower or remove the risk.
- Moving will help or resolve the situation and remove or significantly decrease the risk.

The personal safety and/or mental health of a tenant or a household member is at risk. These situations include but are not limited to:

- Domestic abuse
- Child or adult safeguarding
- Assault
- Sexual assault
- Neglect
- Threatening behavior
- Torture or trauma.

Trent & Dove Housing will expect the tenant to provide current supporting documentation, substantiating the risk they are exposed to. This may include:

- Current Police reports
- Current domestic Violence Order
- Current reports or letters from a social worker
- Current reports or an assessment from a medical practitioner or health professional
- Current reports or letters from a school principal or school counsellor

12.

Legal compliance

Trent & Dove will meet legislative and regulatory framework including but not limited to; [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#), [Homes England](#), [Regulator of Social Housing](#), [The Ministry of Justice Pre-Action Protocol](#), [The Housing Act 2004](#) and [Data Protection Act 2018](#), [Welfare Reform and Work Act 2012](#).

13.

Monitoring & Review

14.1 Any proposed changes to this policy prior to implementation will be fully discussed with the Head of Service, relevant colleagues and any other relevant bodies.

14.2 The effectiveness of the Befriending Service will be reviewed from time to time and the policy will be reviewed where:

* There are significant changes to legislation or regulations

* There are found to be deficiencies or failures to the policy, as a result of complaints or findings from any independent organisations.

14. Organisational Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities of groups relating to this Policy:

The Head of Housing has overall responsibility for delivering the policy and will be accountable for its implementation and colleague training. All colleagues dealing with lettings and transfers are responsible for reading and understanding this policy.

15. Policy Approval and Reporting

The Transfer Policy is reviewed and updated at least every three years and Approved by the Executive Management Team. The Lettings Manager will keep and maintain reports to monitor the overall level and trends in transfers.
