

Policy title:	First Come First Served Policy		
Scope:	Aspire Housing		
Policy owner:	Director of Development & Regeneration		
Approver:	Executive Director – Place		
Date:	September 2024	Review Due Date:	September 2027

POLICY SUMMARY

This policy applies to every allocation of a Shared Ownership home to a prospective customer. We will ensure all prospective customers are aware of our policy approach when offering them a Shared Ownership home. We will ensure all prospective customers are aware of the process prior to expending any cost to themselves.

Associated Policies and Procedures:

- Shared Ownership Sales Policy
- Leasehold Management Policy
- Surplus Income Policy

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Overview.

This policy supports the Group’s values and is a commitment to improving lives and supporting colleagues by providing a clear, consistent and customer focussed service provision, that ensures that all prospective purchasers are treated fairly when considering applying for one of the Group’s shared ownership homes.

In line with the Homes England Capital Funding Guide we must offer all our shared ownership homes on a first come first served basis.

The demand for our shared ownership homes can sometimes outstrip supply, it is therefore imperative that we are clear in how we allocate and offer our shared ownership homes to prospective eligible customers.

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1.2 THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR A SHARED OWNERSHIP PROPERTY:

Basic requirements which must be met to be eligible for Shared Ownership are when both of the following are true:

- your household income is £80,000 a year or less and you cannot afford all the deposit and mortgage payments for a home that meets your needs on the open market

One of the following must also be true:

- you're a first-time buyer
- you used to own a home but cannot afford to buy one now
- you're forming a new household - for example, after a relationship breakdown
- you're an existing shared owner, and you want to move
- you own a home and want to move but cannot afford a new home that meets your needs on the open market

Note: For some homes you may have to show that you live in, work in, or have a connection to the area where you want to buy a shared ownership home.

1.3 POLICY STATEMENT

Our first come first served policy is based on whoever first registered an interest in a property/new development. This is applicable for both whole developments we release off plan and individual homes we release as and when they come available.

This will ensure we are giving all applicants equal opportunity as this contact can be made through our website, via email or via telephone call, so it is not reliant on an applicant being able to complete the application forms immediately as some of our buyers require assistance with completing online forms.

We also operate a plot to applicant ratio. This will be done to ensure a number of potential customers are not inconvenienced unnecessarily with potential abortive costs.

Our plot to applicant ratio is: 2:1, this means the first two applicants that submitted their initial enquiry to us will be offered the opportunity to complete the 'Eligibility Application form', if both applicants are approved, they will then be progressed to the second stage which involves a financial assessment. If both applicants meet the requirements of the assessment, then we will offer the property to the applicant who enquired first.

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Where additional information is required from the applicant when assessing the application, the information required must be provided within 5 working days. If this information is not received within this timeframe to allow for the assessment to progress, the Group reserve the right to cancel the application and consider other applications for the same plot/resale property.

As part of the assessment process, applicants will only be deemed to have passed their assessment once they have satisfied all requirements as outlined within the Surplus Income Policy.

1.4 SHARED OWNERSHIP RESALES

The same eligibility criteria is applicable to any Resale home. Where customers have expressed an interest in a shared ownership home that is available for resale then, following a viewing, customers will be treated on a first come first served basis, with the first customer to complete their application (including a successful financial assessment) being offered the home.

1.5 PRIORITY GROUPS & LOCAL CONNECTION REQUIREMENTS

The exceptions to the 'first come, first served' policy are:

- Qualifying Armed Forces/military personnel, who will be prioritised. There is more information on who qualifies in the 'Shared Ownership FAQs' section of our website.
- Where the development is within a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a rural exception site. In this instance, there may be a requirement that customers with a connection to the local area be prioritised. Any such restrictions will be advised in the allocation policy and marketing material for the development

1.6 MINIMUM DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS

Customers will be required to put down a minimum deposit of 5% of the share they are purchasing and will need to be able to provide evidence of the source of these funds.

2. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

As a homeowner, you will have certain rights and responsibilities. These include taking care of all the repairs and making sure your home is maintained in accordance with the specific terms of your lease. You should understand that, although Aspire Housing owns a percentage of the property, you will be occupying 100% of it and are therefore 100% responsible.

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Our new-build properties are covered by a multi-year new-build warranty against defects in workmanship. However, the contractor is also responsible for correcting defects resulting from poor workmanship or faulty materials within the first 12 months following handover of the property to us.

An Aspire Housing representative will visit your home, by appointment, to check that all defects have been satisfactorily rectified at the end of the 12-month period. If you wish to make any improvements or alterations to your property, you must first seek written approval from Aspire Housing. This is not required for simple improvements such as redecoration. If you do make improvements or changes, they will not alter the percentage share that you own, and any increase in the property value will be split according to the share you own. You may wish to discuss any increase in value before completing any alterations.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEE

To ensure the First Come First Served Policy is adhered to for all homes and to ensure all prospective applicants are clear on this policy when applying for a home or registering their interest for a development.

To ensure all applicants are clear and understand the plot to applicant ratio when submitting an Eligibility Application form.

Upon initial enquiry request a copy of the process will be sent via email to the customer along with the relevant property information, a copy of this email trail is automatically saved within Dotdigital and Advice Pro (in-house database).

4. RESPONSIBILITY OF ASPIRE

This Policy will be monitored and reviewed considering any significant changes implemented by Homes England.

The Policy shall be reviewed every 3 years or earlier as policy/legislation dictates.

5. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

This policy has been considered against our Equality and Diversity Policy. Where people have specific needs to access the policy, or progress a matter via the policy, reasonable support would be given. By way of example, this may include the provision of the policy in alternate forms e.g. braille, large print or audio versions and ensuring that the process followed was reasonably adapted to reflect the needs of the individual.

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