

Policy Name:	Referral and Allocations Policy and Procedure
File No:	P29
Version:	3.0 (Final)

Policy Custodian:	Head of Youth Services
Policy Champion: (if applicable)	Youth Services Managers

This document also relates to the following St Basils policies, procedures and guidelines:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Data Protection
- Security of Information
- Safeguarding
- Assessment and Support planning
- Comments, Compliment and Complaints
- Move on and Fair exit
- Eviction and Abandonment
- Rent & Service Charge Arrears

Consultation Framework:

Consultation of this policy has taken place with the following parties during the following periods of time:

Custodian	07.02.2018 – 21.03.2019
Champions	07.02.2018 – 21.03.2019
Senior Leadership Team	27.03.2019
Staff	Policy Development Day 10.07.2018
Committee	13.05.2019
Board	10.06.2019

Approved by:	The Board	Approved date:	10.06.2019
Issue date:	18 th June 2019	Review due by:	August 2022

Policy Statement

This document sets out St Basils' policy and procedures relating to the allocation of accommodation and support services.

The procedures of this policy are written to give employees, young people, and other partner organisations guidance on the services St Basils provides, and how these services may be accessed.

Through the organisation's range of accommodation and support services it aims to help local authorities in delivering their strategic housing functions, and to support their aims of promoting sustainable communities.

This policy will be used to regulate the processes of young people's allocation to accommodation and/or support from St Basils. This policy should be used together with St Basils' Assessment and Support Planning Policy.

St Basils provides Accommodation and Services across a number of Local Authorities and recognises that its referrals and allocations policy needs to reflect the needs of local services and meet its contractual requirements with our funders.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all employees, in all departments and services as well as young people who are, or apply to become St Basils' residents and/or support service users.

For the purposes of this policy the term 'employee' will include all employees (whether full time or part time), volunteers, casual workers and contracted workers.

Definitions

Referral is the action of transferring a young person's application from one completed process to begin another resulting process. For example, when a young person's completed assessment finds that they may benefit from supported accommodation, they may then be referred on to the allocations process, which aims to find the young person accommodation/support which is appropriate to their assessment's findings.

Allocation is the process of matching a young person to potential accommodation and/or support services based on the findings of their assessment; this is the role of St Basils Allocations staff.

Letting is the process of legally renting a property to someone. Once a young person has been offered a property under the allocations process, they may accept it by completing the lettings process, this process is completed by the project the young person is moving in to.

Legislation

- The HCA's regulatory framework April 2015
- Housing Act 1996
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Sex Offenders Act 1997
- CLG (2007) Providing Housing and Support: lessons and good practice (Bristol University, School for Policy Studies)

General Principles

In allocating accommodation and/or support services, St Basils aims to ensure that:

- Through the use of thorough assessments, accommodation and/or support services are allocated appropriately to young people, with the aim that the services provided give the maximum benefit to those accessing them.
- The processes of referral and allocation are open, fair, and consistent with the organisation's commitment to equal opportunities. Help is available to aid those wishing to make an application, complaint or appeal relating to allocations where needed.
- The processes of referral and allocation, and related processes, are carried out with the minimum delay, recognising that many young people referred to the organisation are homeless or in severe housing need.

St Basils will publicise its services to statutory and voluntary agencies, local community organisations, and groups and other organisations that may have contact with young people in housing need.

The organisation may use local allocations criteria to meet specific local priorities and needs, and/or commissioner's requirements.

The following principles apply to the processes of Referrals and Allocations:

- Each young person's application must be considered on an individual basis
- Young people must be informed of the outcome of their application(s), the reason for any decisions they receive, and the processes of appeal, in a timely and appropriate manner. Assistance to make an appeal should be provided where needed
- Where services cannot be offered from within the organisation, or where other providers' services would be more appropriate, young people must be given information to help them to access other suitable services which may be available to them from other providers
- Where St Basils carries out assessments for referrals to accommodation and/or support services (those of St Basils and other providers) for an area on behalf of a commissioner, young people must be directed to the services which are likely to best meet their needs, the services of other providers must be considered in this process
- Young people must be given clear information on how their applications will be assessed, including the criteria used to do this; the criteria for access to services under each contract will typically be published - most projects should not need to publish this information individually)

Roles and Responsibilities

Each local service will have its own eligibility criteria and as such each Manager will create the procedure for the service(s) they are responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied within their own area. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed with the Head of Youth Services prior to any action being taken. Managers are responsible for providing information in a timely, open, honest and understandable way.

Training Requirements

St Basils will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in referrals and allocations receive training as part of their induction and continuing development on:

- St Basils local Referrals and Allocations policy and procedures
- needs and risk assessments (or equivalents where applicable)
- services and support provided by other agencies

Staff and managers have a shared responsibility for recognising training needs.

Communication

This policy will be communicated effectively to all employees via a range of different media avenues and can be produced in other formats where needed.

Responsibility

The Head of Youth Services is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and monitored.

Continuous Renewal Clause

This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years by the organisation to ensure it is in accordance with good practice guidance, prevailing legislation and statutory frameworks. However this policy may be assessed before that time as necessary – such as:

- if it becomes ineffective
- to reflect substantial changes in practice
- following inspection, as recommended by auditors
- or changes required by law

Disclaimer

This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the St Basils intranet/Shared: Drive. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online. Hard copies of this document are considered uncontrolled - please refer to the St Basils Intranet for latest version.

Referral & Allocation's Procedure

1. Eligibility Criteria

- 1.1 When the organisation is approached by a young person (or a partner organisation acting on their behalf) looking for accommodation and/or support services, the criteria in 1.2 will be used to work out whether they qualify.
- 1.2 St Basils have a number of access points throughout the West Midlands and to be considered for St Basils' accommodation and/or support services applicants must meet the following criteria:
- They are aged 16-25 years old. (Up to 25th birthday)
 - They are homeless; or at risk of homelessness, or in housing need, or require support as a step towards living independently.
 - There is evidence they are eligible for public funds/benefits, or there is another viable way that their accommodation/support may be funded.
 - They have proof of their identity
 - The young person's application meets the relevant funder's requirements about their local connection, where applicable.
- 1.3 The organisation reserves the right to offer services with requirements which differ from those stated above, subject to the Articles of Association.
- 1.4 Some services may have additional criteria as outlined in the relevant support contract to those stated above.

2. Assessment Criteria

- 2.1 In order to be considered for housing and or support within St Basils the young person will be assessed at one of St Basils access points. The young person will be offered an interview within 10 working days unless they are homeless on the day.
- 2.1.1 All referrals are initiated by the completion of a Referral Form which is completed by St Basils or the Local Authority/Partner making the referral.
- 2.1.2 The assessment will be used to determine the type of service the young person will need and or is eligible for and will include a Housing or Needs Assessment and a Risk Reader.
- 2.2 Where a young person is assessed by a partner organisation (e.g. Youth Offending Team, Social Services et.) and referred to St Basils' services, satisfactory assessment and documentation standards will be agreed with the relevant organisation; they will also be given support to match a young person's assessment to St Basils services which may appropriately meet the young person's needs.
- 2.3 Before a young person's application is referred for St Basils accommodation or support services the additional criteria under 3.1 must be considered.

3. Additional Considerations

- 3.1 There is no list of things which will make a young person automatically be rejected from St Basils' accommodation or support services. However, beyond the criteria in 1.2, where there is a need for further consideration the following processes will be used to assess applications from applicants covered by Table 1 (below) – some of the things listed here alongside a robust risk assessment may cause a young person's application to be rejected.

- 3.2 Where there are additional considerations attached to an application, these will be considered by a the Youth Service Manager or the Allocations Panel deemed appropriate as stated in Table 1, on receipt of their application for accommodation. Applications for support services will be considered by the receiving Youth Services Manager.
- 3.3 When a young person is selected from the waiting list, any additional considerations will be discussed with the Youth Service Manager before they are referred and invited to view the property; this allows for Managers to highlight any concerns that a referral may be inappropriate specifically for the young person due to particular circumstances which may be being dealt with at the project. If after a viewing, or offer of services the Manager feels it would be inappropriate for a young person to move in, this must be discussed with the Allocations Officer; projects must not contact a young person directly to raise such concerns

Table 1

Referral	Process for consideration
Conviction for serious offences – potentially posing a high level of risk	Considered where a robust risk management plan is in place - decision to accept to be made by a Youth Service Manager.
Arson conviction	Considered where a robust risk management plan is in place, where our insurers grant clearance - decision to accept to be made by a Youth Service Manager.
No entitlement to public funds	Alternative means of supporting the young person to meet their legal and financial obligations must have been clearly identified - decision to be made by a Youth Services Manager.
Previously evicted from St Basils, not for rent arrears – e.g. anti-social behaviour.	Considered for another project subject to a Risk/ Needs Assessment, Safeguarding, and Health and Safety considerations - decision to be made by a Youth Services Manager.
Banned Young People	Will not be considered unless there has been a relevant change in circumstances so that the ban would no longer be appropriate - decision taken by a Youth Service Manager. Agency bans do not prevent young people from using the Single point of Access (SPA) to access services from other providers – however, banned young people will not be able to access St Basils’ accommodation through the SPA.
Former rent arrears	Young people who owe St Basils rent arrears from a previous stay will only be considered if they have been following an agreement to repay the rent arrears or are willing to make a Rent Arrears Agreement as a condition of their tenancy, as detailed in the Rent and Service Charge Arrears Policy. A decision will be made on a case-by-case basis by a Youth Services Manager
Risk of Suicide/Self Harm	Considered where a robust risk management plan is in place. Decision to accept to be made by a Youth Services Manager.
Complex Needs	Considered where a robust risk management plan is in place. Decision to accept to be made by a Youth Services Manager.

4. Accommodation Based Services

- 4.1 If a young person has met the Section 3 requirements and has been assessed, and has provided all the required documentation and information, they may be referred to St Basils to be considered for the waiting list.

- Where a young person meets the criteria for accommodation, their referral will be submitted for the consideration of an Allocations Panel.
 - The Allocations Panel will only consider planned moves
 - Where a young person requires emergency accommodation, this will be allocated on a first come first served basis dependant on availability of accommodation via the immediate access point.
- 4.2 Young people referred to the waiting list will be informed of the Allocations Panels decision by letter normally within 10 working days. If accepted the young person will be placed on the waiting list and allocated a banding based on their support needs identified during their assessment as covered in Table 2.
- 4.3 Young people who are not accepted onto the waiting list Referral are referred back to the referring access point and will have the right to appeal to the Allocations Panel requesting their application be reconsidered.

Table 2

Banding	Accommodation Type	Notes
A	Immediate Access	Emergency accommodation for young people who are roofless, or are at risk of rooflessness, regardless of support needs, where the local authority has a statutory duty to accommodate. No waiting list kept.
A	Emergency Accommodation	Properties funded and reserved for referrals from specific partners e.g. Youth Offending Team, Social Services.
A	Supported Lodgings	These schemes are provided specifically for care leavers from local authorities – however young people leaving care are not restricted to this accommodation type.
B	24 Hour Cover Schemes (Supported Housing)*	Allocated to young people who require intensive support to achieve independence, including having access to a support worker on the premises at night.
C	Day/Evening Cover Schemes (Supported Housing)*	Schemes catering for different levels of support needs. These projects are not appropriate for young people who require support/supervision during the night.
D	Visiting Cover (Supported Housing)*	These schemes are allocated to young people with lower support needs.
E	Mother and Baby	This fully supported accommodation is allocated to young women (expectant mothers) and Young women with their babies/ toddlers.

** Supported Housing Services – accommodation offering support to young people to assist them in maintaining their tenancy/license, and to develop the skills necessary for independent living. Acceptance of support is a condition of the accommodation.*

5. Allocation of Accommodation

- 5.1 St Basils Birmingham Service operates a waiting list that works on a first-come-first served basis, from the date the application is received by the Allocations Panel (Youth Service Manager for services outside Birmingham) and is managed using a housing management system. Young people will not be considered for the waiting list until all information required is received by the Allocations Panel.
- 5.2 Within Birmingham the waiting list will be managed by the Allocations Officer, in all other areas the waiting list is managed by the Youth Service Manager/dedicated officer.

- 5.3 Once a suitable property and banding becomes available for a young person they will be suitably matched and given the opportunity to view up to 2 appropriate properties. If both offers are rejected, the young person will be referred back to the relevant Access Points to be reassessed and alternative accommodation will be considered.
- 5.4 Consideration will be given to a young person who has a valid reason(s) for refusing the offers made to them, in which case they may be allowed to keep their place on the waiting list and view alternative vacant properties.
- 5.5 Young people should be offered accommodation which is suitable for their needs. If a number of properties are available and appropriate for a young person's needs, the properties should be offered to the young person in order of how long they have been vacant – the property which has been vacant the longest will usually be offered first. Young people must reject a property before they are shown an alternative.
- 5.6 Whilst on St Basils' waiting list young people can access updates on their place and banding on the list by email and or text. Young people will be informed of how to access updates in writing when accepted onto the waiting list. Where reasonably practicable, young people will be contacted when they are nearing the top of a waiting list to give them time to prepare to move.
- 5.7 When offers of support/accommodation are made to a young person, the organisation will ensure that they are made aware of, and understand, the ethos, requirements, and expectations of any services offered to them. They must also be given clear details of how their tenancy will be managed.
- 5.8 If a young person accepts an offer of accommodation they should be given the opportunity to move in as soon as is reasonably practicable. If the time a young person is taking to move into a property is deemed as excessive by the responsible manager, they may withdraw an offer, and the property may be offered to other prospective tenants.

6. Reasons for Removal from the Waiting List

- 6.1 Once accepted, young people will remain on the waiting list for up to 3 months. Young people who have been on the waiting list for 2 months will be contacted by the Allocations Officer/ Manager to find out if they are still in housing need and or wish to remain on list. If so, they will continue to remain on the list for another month.
- 6.2 Young People may be removed from the waiting list for the following reasons:
- They have been on the waiting list over 4 months
 - All reasonable and persistent attempts to contact the young person by the Allocations Officer have been unsuccessful
 - The young person has declined or failed to view 2 offers of accommodation without valid reason. (refer to 5.3)
 - The young person is removed from the list at their own request
 - The Allocations Panel is made aware of pertinent information that requires the young person be referred back to the access point to be reassessed.
- 6.3 However, if at the point of re-assessment they are awarded their original banding they may be referred back to the Allocations Panel to be reconsidered for the waiting list and if accepted they will retain the position they held before reassessment, based on the date of their original application. If their banding changes they will enter the waiting list for the appropriate accommodation at a position based on the date of their application.

- 6.4 If they no longer qualify for services they will be given advice on how to appeal the decision, and of other providers who offer services which they may qualify for, and how to access these services if needed.
- 6.5 If the Allocations Officer takes persistent and reasonable steps to contact a young person about vacancies, but they do not respond or cannot be contacted, and any other organisation(s) involved in their referral have been contacted, the young person will be removed from the waiting list by the Allocations Panel. All attempts to contact young people must be diligently recorded.
- 6.6 When a young person is put on the waiting list, they must be told that they must notify St Basils immediately if there are any changes in their contact details.

7. Property Occupation Levels

- 7.1 Across St Basils accommodation portfolio there is a range of property types. The below table provides guidance on how property types will typically be allocated. Consideration should be given to the size and accessibility of the accommodation available, particularly where the young person has (a) child(ren), or additional mobility needs. Care must be taken when allocating properties to prevent under or over occupation.

Table 3

Accommodation Type	Occupancy
Self-contained 1 bedroom flat	single person, couple, or single person with a young child
Self-contained, 2 bedroom flat	single person and child(ren), couple and child(ren)
Self-contained bedsit	single person, single person with a young child
Bedsitting room with shared facilities	single person, single person with a young child

8. Couples Sharing/Joint Applications

- 8.1 Where a couple approaches St Basils seeking accommodation together, a separate assessment for each individual must be completed. The findings of the assessments should be collated and a joint application should then be made. If accepted for referral to accommodation, the couple should be placed on the waiting list for accommodation with a banding appropriate for the individual with the highest support needs. It may not be possible to accommodate a couple together, subject to their needs and the availability of suitable accommodation. Each member of the couple should be allocated a separate support worker if their application is accepted by St Basils.

9. Age of Children within St Basils Accommodation

- 9.1 Applications from young people wishing to move into St Basils accommodation with their children must be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration all foreseeable factors which relate to the health, well-being, and safety of the young person, their child(ren), and the other residents at the project(s) under consideration.

10. Transfers

- 10.1 It is St Basils' policy that young people will not be permitted to move from one property to another, including within a project, with the exception of Health and Safety issues and Transfers where their current accommodation no longer meets their current support needs (specifically young women who are pregnant).
- 10.2 Transfers may only take place where there is a need for a young person to be moved for a non-urgent health and safety reason or where their current accommodation is no longer suitable for their needs and they have an up to date risk and needs assessment.
- 10.3 The transfer of a young person with an Assured Shorthold Tenancy or a Protected License within St Basils must only take place when agreed by the Youth Service Manager.

- 10.4 All transfers including Health and Safety moves will require the completion of the relevant form for monitoring purposes.

11. Appeals

- 11.1 Any young person who disagrees with the outcome of their assessment, may appeal directly to the relevant service who undertook the assessment.
- 11.2 Allocations related appeals should be made directly to the allocations panel responsible for making the decision.
- 11.3 All appeals must be made in writing, outlining the grounds for the appeal. Help to make an appeal will be given to young people as necessary. In the case of assessments, the original decision will be reviewed by a manager more senior than the decision-maker, who will consider if the decision is in accordance with this policy. Where there is a multi-agency allocations process, the appeal will be considered by a multi-agency panel.
- 11.4 If a young person has a complaint about the service provided in the allocations/referrals process and the allocations Panel, and/or feels that their application has not been handled correctly in line with this policy may appeal directly to St Basils; they may raise a complaint through St Basils Complaints, Comments & Compliments Policy and Procedures.
- 11.5 Young people must be made aware of the appeals procedures they may use if they are deemed not to qualify for services, or if they disagree with an assessment. Where needed, Young People will be given support to make a complaint.

12. Monitoring and Informing Service Development

- 12.1 Information collated on referrals and allocations by needs, client group, outcome etc. will be reported to Senior Leadership Team/St Basils Board to inform future policy reviews, service development, and strategic planning.
- 12.2 St Basils will participate in 'CORE' - a national method of monitoring all new lettings by housing associations.
- 12.3 St Basils will provide the required information to commissioning bodies to assist them in evaluating outcomes, identifying service gaps, and strategic planning.
- 12.4 Through the Single Point of Access and referral schemes we will monitor outcomes for specific client groups to ensure we are providing fair-access.