

Lettings policy for Intermediate Rent homes

Policy ref: Lettings Policy for Intermediate Rent Homes

Approved by: Originally by Senior Management Team and KHA board

Policy author/policy holder: Assistant Director Homeownership & Contract Services

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1 :: Overview

- 1.1** Our Intermediate Rent scheme aims to assist people who are able to afford more than social rents but who cannot afford to access affordable home ownership options (such as Shared Ownership) in the short term. If you are eligible, you could rent a home, new or second-hand, at less than the market rate. The rent charged is normally 20% lower than the market rent for a similar home in the same area.
- 1.2** This policy explains how we will decide to let homes under the Intermediate Rent scheme. It takes account of the eligibility changes to the Shared Ownership scheme which apply from January 4th, 2016 and mirrors them for the Intermediate Rent scheme. It also applies to both new homes and re-lets of existing properties. From time to time, local arrangements, usually requested by the local authority, will require us to vary our policy. Where this is the case, any variations will be made clear to all applicants.
- 1.3** The policy takes into account our status as a charitable housing association. We follow the guidance on the housing need and affordability of customers for our homes set out in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs' Charity Commission guidelines. These guidelines require our policy to be based on affordability as well as ensuring those who can obtain satisfactory housing in other ways are not assisted by Intermediate Rent. For more information about this, please see the Charity Commission's website at: www.charity-commission.gov.uk/supportingcharities/homeown, or ask us for a copy.

2 :: Qualifying criteria

2.1 Who can apply?

Intermediate Rented homes are provided for households who have been assessed as eligible by the Local Help to Buy Agent using the following criteria:

- Total household income must be less than £80,000 and you must be unable to afford to buy a suitable property on the open market without assistance
- Applicants must be able to afford 80% of the local market rent from their own means, without further assistance. For example, if you are in receipt of Housing Benefit you would not be eligible



- Applicants should make a commitment to enter home ownership through low cost home ownership products in the short to medium term (within five years) and be able to demonstrate how the discounted rent will enable them to save a deposit.

2.2 If you have different circumstances

- 2.2.1** In certain circumstances, so long as you can demonstrate that you have no other realistic housing options open to you, you may still be considered for a property even if you do not meet all of the criteria. In these circumstances we will ask you to support an application with written evidence.

3 :: Applying

- 3.1.1** You will be invited to viewings of suitable properties and will be provided with key information such as likely monthly outgoings, your responsibilities as an assured shorthold tenant and local amenities.

3.2 After your viewing

- 3.2.1** If you decide to apply for a tenancy, you will be invited to complete an application form and return it to us as quickly as possible. You will then be considered along with other interested parties, if we have received more than one application for the home you are interested in (please see section four “Lettings and affordability criteria”).

3.3 Verification of your application

- 3.3.1** We can only progress a letting when we have received all of the following information from you:

- Proof of addresses (e.g. a Utility bill).
- Proof of identification (e.g. photocopy of passport or drivers licence).
- Proof of landlord (e.g. rent book or letter of confirmation).
- Proof of earnings (photocopy of last three months wage slips & bank statements).
- Proof of savings (e.g. photocopy of building society pass book).
- The credit history of applicants may be checked with a credit referencing agency (sometimes by a letting agent if one has been instructed to act on our behalf). Applicants that have undischarged County Court Judgements against them are unlikely to be considered.

- 3.3.2** If you are offered a property, we may conduct a Land Registry search (whilst completing the sales transaction) to confirm that you do not own a property somewhere else. If this check indicates that you do own another property (or did recently), that we are unaware of and is not being disposed of, our offer may be withdrawn.

- 3.3.3** If a letting agent has been appointed to act on your behalf, they will carry out the checks detailed in 3.3.1.

3.4 Joint applications



If you make a joint application for a tenancy, both of you must be named on the tenancy agreement.

3.5 Holding fees

3.5.1 In most instances we will ask you for a holding fee to secure the property whilst we draw up your tenancy. This will usually be £150 if you rent the property direct through Knightstone Housing but this amount may vary if a letting agent is appointed to act on our behalf. You can ask a member of our team about this if you are unsure.

3.6 How many times can I apply?

3.6.1 There is no limit to the number of applications you can make (unless any local restrictions apply) and our Intermediate Rent team will be happy to advise you on any points which you may be unsure about.

4 :: Letting criteria

4.1 Since the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) January 2016 revisions to the Shared Ownership eligibility criteria, your household size no longer determines the number of bedrooms a property which you are applying to rent can have. You can therefore apply to rent a home with any number of bedrooms, so long as you are able to sustain the cost of this. If there are any local criteria or planning restrictions which prevent this, these will be made clear in the information we provide about the property.

4.2 There are now no special circumstances which make some applications a higher priority than others, except in the case of members of the British armed forces (who will take priority over all other applicants) or occasionally, local arrangements (usually planning conditions) where a specific lettings policy may apply. If there are local priority criteria, these will be made clear in the information we provide about the property.

4.3 The lettings process

4.3.1 Before approving your application, we will confirm with the local Help to Buy Agent that you are registered with them. If you are not registered with them, we can assist you with this.

4.3.2 Where no local lettings criteria apply, the offer of a tenancy will be in date order of application.

4.3.3 Once a property has a let agreed, we do not accept further applications for the home unless the existing letting falls through. In these circumstances we would offer the property to the next qualifying applicant in date order.

5 :: Equality and diversity

5.1 Knightstone's Equality & Diversity policy and will not discriminate against you on grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.



- 5.2 To demonstrate that our policies are fairly applied, we monitor all applications and sales reports via a continuous recording system, although this monitoring will not affect our final decision about how to let a home.

6 :: Timescales

- 6.1 We will do everything we can to help you into your new home in the shortest possible time and we ask that you do your best to work with us to achieve this goal.
- 6.2 We will normally expect you to move in within two weeks of receiving your holding fee but this does rely on you supplying all the information we need to process your application and set up your tenancy.

7 :: What do I do if I am not happy with the lettings process?

- 7.1 If you feel that you have not been treated fairly for any reason, or have any complaint about the lettings process, please contact the Sales Manager at Knightstone's office in the first instance. Knightstone's complaints procedure can also be used. A copy of this is available from our office or on our website at www.knightstone.co.uk.

