

# Operational Policy



<b>Title: Garage Allocations Policy</b>
<b>Originator: Growth &amp; Development Director</b>
<b>Approved by ELT: 15 February 2023</b>
<b>Date for review: February 2026</b>

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The core business of Magenta Living is the provision of affordable homes to those who are not able to secure adequate housing and housing related services from their own resources.
- 1.2 Magenta Living also offers garage rental alongside this core business offer. This Policy is required to ensure adequate governance around garage allocations.

## 2. Statement of Intent

- 2.1 The intention of this policy is to ensure Magenta Living meets its legal and statutory obligations in relation to garage allocations, and to ensure customers know how garages are allocated in a transparent manner and under what criteria. The allocation of garages is via a single access mechanism, i.e., direct applications.

## 3. Policy Framework

- 3.1 The overall aim of this policy is to ensure that Magenta Living's garages are allocated fairly, transparently, and efficiently to maximise rental income. This policy has been developed with a view to meeting the following principles and key objectives;
  - To operate a garage allocations system that offers informed choice for all;
  - To ensure that every application is dealt with fairly and consistently irrespective of a persons, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief, or age;
  - To operate a garage lettings system that is simple, easy to understand, transparent, open, and fair;
  - To operate a garage waiting list within the Housing Management Database;
  - Garages will be allocated according to the date of application;

- Applicants will be automatically matched to their preferred area where there is availability;
  - The system matches applicants according to the preferred area and cannot match to a specific garage unit.
- 3.2 Applicants must provide the following documentation to support their application:
- Proof of National Insurance Number
  - Proof of address i.e., Utility or Council Tax bill
  - Proof of car insurance
- 3.3 We request the above information so that we can confidently allocate our assets with due consideration to the relevant legislation.
- 3.4 Regular reviews will be conducted to ensure Magenta Living is meeting the intended outcomes and feedback from customers and stakeholders will be encouraged.
- 3.5 The following indicators may be used to evaluate the success of individual policies, but the list is not exhaustive and will be relevant to the provider:
- Turnover of voids
  - Numbers of offers to let a property
  - Average void period
  - Rent loss
  - Average length of tenancy
  - Anti-Social Behaviour (increase/decrease)
  - Customer satisfaction survey
  - Complaints
- 3.6 Applicants are expected to accept one reasonable offer of a garage unit within their preferred areas. Magenta Living is not able to change the areas specified once an offer is made to the applicant. Once an offer is made, the applicant is to respond within seven days. Additionally, if Magenta Living is unable to contact the applicant, we will proceed to the next applicant on the waiting list. Where a waiting list exists and an applicant has refused a garage offer in their preferred area, then their application will be removed from the list.
- 3.7 It is the responsibility of the garage licence holder to ensure all contact details are up to date, including contact addresses and to inform Magenta Living of any changes in details.
- 3.8 Magenta Living will give priority to those applicants living in the respective neighbourhood where the garage unit/site preference is located.
- 3.9 Magenta Living operates a one garage per customer policy to ensure that we can effectively manage the demand for garages.
- 3.10 Garage rents are expected to be paid in full and on time. Arrears resulting in non-payment of rent will result in the garage licence being terminated in

accordance with the terms set out in the licence agreement. Garage rents are managed on a semi-automated escalation basis depending on the level of arrears. GAR1 and GAR2 letters are automatically issued to request prompt payment of arrears. A GAR3 letter is the ultimate step and gives the customer 10 days to pay. If payment is not received, a lock change is requested. A garage will be terminated if arrears remain unpaid.

3.11 The HMRC guidance on VAT enables the rule of 'reasonable proximity' to be applied; Magenta Living has determined that a garage unit should be no more than 200 yards from the customers home to qualify as VAT exempt. Any distance of 200 yards or more will incur the VAT charge. The proximity rule of 200 yards will be applied to all active garage accounts now and in future to ensure a fair and transparent VAT operation.

3.12 Succession or assignment of garages will not be granted. This is to ensure transparency and fairness in the allocation of units and that we can manage demand in accordance with the principles of the policy. We will assess each request and ensure that relatives feel supported during the process of garage termination.

3.11 Furthermore, a 'management priority' approach will be activated where necessary. For example, in cases of supporting vulnerable or at-risk customers, hoarding, urgent decants, fire or flood.

3.13 We will also utilise the garage stock, where appropriate, to support operational duties.

#### **4. Implementation**

4.1 The policy will be effective from 15 February 2023. Staff will be made aware of the policy through our intranet 'Insite.' The policy will be uploaded to the Magenta Living web site for customers.

#### **5. Consultation**

5.1 The proposed policy was discussed with asset management colleagues. The policy was also shared with Senior Leadership Group on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Their views have been fully considered and incorporated where applicable/appropriate within the body of the policy.

5.2 External consultation on this policy undertaken on Magenta Connect. The results of this exercise are exhibited at Appendix 1.

#### **6. Equality Analysis (EA)**

- 6.1 We believe all people should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including, nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion, belief or non-belief, sex, or sexuality or by association with someone with any of these characteristics or perception of having any of these characteristics.
- 6.2 The EA was undertaken on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 by the Asset and Sustainability Director, Head of Specialist Housing Services, Head of Community Regeneration, and the Non-Domestic Asset Manager and was rated as Green. (See Appendix 2 for the full EA).

## 7. Monitoring Performance

- 7.1 This policy's effectiveness will be measured using the following performance indicators including:
- number of voids
  - void turnaround time
  - void income
  - customer feedback/complaints etc.

## 8. Scheme of Delegation

- 8.1 The responsible authority for approving this policy is Executive Leadership Team and was approved on 15 May 2023
- 8.2 The responsible Director for formulating this policy and ensuring its effective implementation is the Growth & Development Director.

## 9. Policy Review

- 9.1 The policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if deemed necessary though the performance monitoring process.

## 10. Amendment Log

Date of revision:	Record of amendments:	Reason for revision:
<i>December 2021</i>	<i>First Version of the Policy</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>January 2023</i>	<i>The offer stage; The succession/assignment of garages; Using indicators to evaluate performance Inclusion of garage income management information.</i>	<i>These changes were flagged as a necessary consideration due to the impact it had on service delivery.</i>

