

# **Holt & Neighbourhood Housing Society**

## **Allocations Policy**

The Holt and Neighbourhood Housing Society was founded in 1965, with the sole objective of acquiring old or new properties and making them available to local people as tenants of the Society. The Society currently has 34 properties. As the years have gone by it is increasingly necessary that the Society provides in a small way some relief for local people, from ever increasing house prices. Caused in the main by Holt's location on the beautiful North Norfolk coast, with the consequent purchase of available housing by second home and holiday house owners.

It should be made clear that the Society is NOT a registered provider, this means the committee can have the final say on who lives in our properties and allows us to stay true to our founding principle of local homes for local people. With the proviso that we adhere to the following points.

### **Criteria for Allocation of a Holt & Neighbourhood Housing Society Property.**

When a property becomes available for allocation, the Society will review the applications of all persons registered on the Society's housing list to identify who will be allocated the property. In deciding who will be offered the property the following criteria will be used:

- Connection to Holt
- Suitability of property to meet housing need of applicant
- Need for affordable housing

Where there is more than one applicant who meets the above criteria, it will be the applicant who has been on the Society's list for the longest, who will be offered the property. Therefore, it makes it very important for the applicant to regularly update the Housing Form, or update the Society to inform us of any changed circumstances, which may affect their application.

Decisions as to which applicant will be offered a property will be made by a subcommittee comprising 4 committee members.

### **Connection to Holt**

That the applicant(s) shall have a strong connection with Holt and its surrounding parishes. This can be either via employment, family or personal circumstances.

As part of the offer process the committee will check all information given on the Housing Application form. This makes it very important for the applicant(s) to give serious thought to who they might choose as their 2 referees, as the referees will be contacted and asked about the applicant to confirm their suitability to be a tenant, they may also be asked to confirm your local connections as stated on your application form. The applicant can also provide employment contracts, Council tax and Utility bills, letters of support from employers, their Doctor. Anything they feel might strengthen their application, as part of this process.

The committee, made up of some members with local knowledge will be able in certain instances to help provide input on the prospective tenant's local connections. This will not disadvantage applicants who might not be known to the committee as all applicants will be treated equally, the committee's local knowledge will in these cases confirm the prospective tenant's local connections.

### Suitability of property

The society will seek to match the size of household to the available property and will not offer a property which is too small or too large for the household, other than in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Society where this meets an urgent housing need and /or is affordable to the applicant. For example, a family will not be offered a one bedroom flat. Similarly, a single elderly person will not be offered an upstairs flat or 2/3-bedroom house.

The Society will not exclude anyone from applying for one of their properties. To take two examples, rent arrears or previous criminal convictions will not be considered an automatic ban on application. The suitability of the applicant to be a tenant of the Society will be considered on the individual circumstances of each case. Help is available via the District Council Housing Team which the Society and prospective tenants can use to help resolve any difficulty which might otherwise prevent the offer of a property.

### Need for affordable housing

Financial need for a Society property must be demonstrated. All income and assets must be shown on the Society's housing application form and will be expected to be updated and fully disclosed should a property be offered. Where an applicant has sufficient income or assets to meet their housing need by buying or renting a property they will not be eligible for the offer of a Society property.

The circumstances of the applicant which may have a significant impact on an applicant's housing needs must be considered. These might include but are not limited to, illness, injury, personal and or family issues or bereavement.

The Society reserves the right to take exceptional circumstances into account in making decisions as to how an applicant meets the above criteria.

The applicant must prove their eligibility to rent a property. The government now requires proof of eligibility through the Right to Rent legislation. Supporting documentation (for example passport, birth certificate) will be needed by the society prior to the start of a tenancy. This is detailed on the application form.

## Type of Tenancy

In all cases The Society will offer a new tenant a Short-term Tenancy of 12 months to give both parties time to see whether the arrangement works. At the end of this period in most cases the tenancy will roll forward.

It is hoped that tenants, particularly young people taking up housing offers by the Society will be able in time to purchase their own homes or move to larger properties in the private rented sector. It is recognised that this is not always possible and that many tenants will remain with the Society but it does give some degree of flexibility to the Society. A short term tenancy is not there to provide an excuse for The Society to evict a Tenant. Something that The Society has never had to do.

All Government legislation pertaining to equality will be adhered to by the Society.

It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that they provide accurate information when applying to join the Society's housing list and when responding to any reviews of their housing application. Any applicant who provides false or misleading information or fails to mention information relevant to their application for housing and in particular their local connections, will have the following procedure applied.

Suspended from the offer process while further checks are made.

Removal from Housing List if misrepresentation or failure to supply relevant information is found.

## Local Area

The Society has Defined our Local area to include Holt and all other parishes which are adjoining, that being:

Stody, Thornage, Letheringsett with Glandford, Cley-next-the-Sea, Salthouse, Kelling, High Kelling, Bodham, Hempstead and Edgefield

