

INTRODUCTION

Aragon has approximately 2,000 garages for rent and currently no hard-standings for rent. South Northants Homes owns almost 1,400 garages and 100 hard-standings. Effective management of garages and hardstandings ensures the maximisation of income from these assets and links in with general estate management issues. The purpose of this policy is to outline how these tenancies/licences are allocated and managed.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy determines the framework within which the Associations will allocate and manage garage tenancies.

OBJECTIVES

- To let garages promptly in a fair and consistent manner.
- To ensure applicants are treated fairly and in accordance with the Equality, Diversity & Customer Care Policy.
- To minimise the time garages are empty and avoid rent loss where possible, although it is recognised that there is a limited or non-existent waiting list for some locations.
- To keep rent arrears or other debts owed to the Associations to a minimum.

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

Asset Management Strategy
Confidentiality Policy
Data Protection Policy
Equality, Diversity & Customer Care Policy
Parking Policy
Rent Arrears Policy

APPLICATIONS

Any applicant over the age of 18 years old is eligible to apply to rent a garage or hardstanding, or to transfer to an alternative garage or hardstanding. The applicant is required to complete a garage application form, which will be registered on the garage waiting list.

Applications will only be accepted for the purpose of garaging a private motor vehicle. An application may be refused if the applicant wishes to use the garage for other purposes e.g. storage.

An application may be refused if the applicant has behaved in an unacceptable manner, deemed to make him/her unsuitable to be a tenant/licensee. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include where the applicant:

- Failed to pay rent or other monies to either Association or Grand Union Housing Group when it became due
- Has a history of poor behavior. For example, subject to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract or similar agreement, Community Protection Notice, injunction or other order.
- Has been abusive towards staff of the Associations or Grand Union Housing Group
- Has made a false statement to obtain a tenancy.

ALLOCATIONS

The garage and hardstanding waiting list will be operated on a date of application basis. Additional preference will be given to tenants of Aragon/SNH properties and to applicants in receipt of a disability benefit who require a garage so they can park close to their home. Where a tenant already has 2 garages, their application will not be given additional preference.

Where the applicant or a member of his/her household owes a debt to either Association, the debt must be cleared in full before a tenancy can be allocated.

Where there has been a history of rent arrears during the past 12 months, the Allocations Team will review the application and decide whether a tenancy can be allocated. This review will look at the amount of arrears owed and the length of time arrears were outstanding during the 12 month period.

All tenants must sign the garage tenancy or licence agreement which sets out the terms of the tenancy.

BREACH OF TENANCY OR OWING MONEY TO THE ASSOCIATIONS

While it is recognized that the Associations do not have resources to undertake routine inspections of individual garages, we will investigate reports of anti-social behaviour and misuse of garages where appropriate. Examples of anti-social behaviour and misuse include:

- Damage
- Graffiti
- Dumping rubbish in the area
- Major or on-going regular car repairs (not minor day to day maintenance)

The Association will take steps to end a garage tenancy/licence and repossess where appropriate due to breach of tenancy/licence, or if any monies are owed to the Association e.g. property, former tenancy, recharges etc.

Where the garage tenant/licensee is also a tenant with the Association, the tenancy of the home must remain the priority at all times. Therefore, the Association reserves the right to transfer any payment made to a garage account whilst a property account is in arrears across to the property account.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

Many garage sites have been decommissioned and made available for new housing and this process will continue to form an integral part of the Group's asset management strategy. Any site may be reviewed and considered for either potential redevelopment or outright sale, particularly where there are high void levels in the area, vandalism, fly tipping or other forms of anti-social behaviour. While consideration will be given to alternative parking provision, in some cases this may not be the overriding factor.

MONITORING

This policy will be monitored through the annual policy review programme.

Customer Consultation: Policy Reading Group November 2009

Equality Impact Assessment Carried Out: Initial screen

Person responsible for review: Housing Manager/Housing Services
& Policy Manager

Date of review: July 2016