



CLEARING HOUSE

Sensitive Lets Policy & Procedure

Monitoring

This policy is reviewed every two years or in line with service changes, whichever comes first.

1. Introduction

The Sensitive Lets process is a letting process for RSI units where an appropriate match cannot be made from clients already on the Clearing House waiting list. The process works outside of standard Clearing House waiting list procedures; rather than Clearing House matching a client to a property, referral agencies put forward their clients for a specific property advertised on the Sensitive Lets list.

The Clearing House team work alongside key partners in identifying when properties need to be let via the Sensitive Lets list; there are a variety of reasons that a property would be let via the Sensitive Lets list, but the most common are:

- Where there are issues within a cluster of RSI units resulting in serious antisocial behaviour; Clearing House would look to nominate a client who will be less vulnerable and will be robust enough to manage issues at the block while the housing provider and TST address the ASB. The focus would be to avoid housing a particularly vulnerable tenant in the property if they are unlikely to benefit from being there.
- Where the housing provider has specific requirements relating to their charitable governing articles. This may be where the housing provider works specifically with clients of a certain age group or gender, for example, and Clearing House does not have a suitable client on the waiting list.
- Where it is a shared property. These are very rare within RSI but do occasionally become available and it is not always possible to make a suitable match from the clients already on the Clearing House waiting list.

Where Clearing House is unable to identify a suitable client on the waiting list the Sensitive Lets process is used to find a suitable tenant. Additionally, referrals via the Sensitive Lets process are not required to meet all of the eligibility criteria that 'regular' referrals are, but may be required to meet differing or additional suitability and eligibility criteria (see section 3, below).

- Clearing House will always refer to the existing waiting list in the first instance, when notified of a void property. The Sensitive Lets procedure will only be enacted in the event that it is not possible or appropriate to nominate an existing client from the waiting list.

2. Aim

The focus and aim of the Sensitive Lets process is to best utilise the RSI housing stock, this is done by ensuring that properties are let to those who can benefit the most from living in them. The process can assist housing providers in addressing issues at properties that have had on-going antisocial behaviour. The process also means the property will be let to somebody with a history of homelessness; therefore best utilised for its intended purpose and kept within RSI, reducing the possibility that the property would be let outside of the identified RSI client group.

3. Eligibility and Suitability

The eligibility and suitability for Sensitive Lets referrals differ from the regular Clearing House criteria, the main difference being that there is no requirement to be identified as a *verified* rough sleeper on CHAIN; the set criteria are:

- Client must have a CHAIN number but this can be a non-verified CHAIN number i.e. they do not need to have a 'bedded down street contact' on their CHAIN record to qualify for referral.
- Clients must be willing to engage with the TST support service for the duration of their tenancy; addressing drug and alcohol needs, health issues as well as training and employment.
- The client must agree and understand that they will move on from their accommodation and support once they have been assessed as no longer requiring support.
- The referral worker has completed the Clearing House information session with the client and the client has understood the information.
- The client understands and accepts that they will be issued with a two year fixed-term tenancy that is renewable as long as on-going support is required.

Clients offered a tenancy via the Sensitive Lets process will receive the same type of tenancies, and be entitled to the same levels of TST support as "regular" Clearing House clients; once housed there should be no distinction between Sensitive Lets tenants and non-Sensitive Lets tenants (e.g. with regards to eligibility for transfers, etc.).

Further eligibility criteria will be stipulated in certain instances as some housing providers are required to meet their charitable governing articles such as, but not limited to:

- The client must be within a certain age range

- The client must be a certain gender

With regards to suitability for accommodation; this will vary for each property and while a brief description will be put on the website, referring agencies are required to call and discuss the issues with Clearing House in detail. The suitability will almost always relate to the client's vulnerability and specific support needs, for example:

- *"Client must have no current or recent support need around drug/alcohol use"* (e.g. if we have had reports of serious on-going ASB related to drug use and/or drug dealing or serious alcohol related ASB at a property).

It should be noted that if a property is being let by the Sensitive Lets process and is listed as having issues in relation to drug/alcohol ASB, the issues will be significant; again, referral agencies must call to discuss in detail the suitability of their client.

In instances where ASB is an issue at the scheme the Sensitive Lets process may be used as one part of an action plan to address the problems there. Housing providers and TSTs will be working to address issues at a property and where necessary involving the police and taking action against tenancy breaches of current residents.

4. Process

When the Clearing House has identified a property as a Sensitive Let and agreed this with the housing provider, Clearing House will advertise the property and include brief details around the sensitivity of the let on the Clearing House website. Any referring agency interested in the property should contact Clearing House to discuss in detail issues at the property and its suitability for their client.

Referral agencies will then be required to call, at a time specified on the website, to register the interest of their client and to book the sensitive let, this works on a first come first served basis. The referring agency must speak with the client about the property and get the client's consent before referring them. The client must be fully aware of the issues at the property they are being nominated to so that they can make a fully informed decision to enter into the process of being housed there. The referring agency which is successful in booking a Sensitive Lets property (i.e. the first to call at the specified time with a suitable client) must complete and submit a Clearing House referral via the CH website. This referral must be completed within 48 hours of the property being booked (or a timescale agreed with Clearing House). All referrals must meet the minimum standards for referrals, and must be completed in full.

- Failure to complete referrals appropriately and within the agreed timescale will result in the referrals being rejected for the property.
- If the referral information shows support needs that clearly make the referral inappropriate for the Sensitive Let, the referral will be rejected.

- If the referral is accepted but the process does not result in the client moving into the Sensitive Lets property, the referral will be cancelled.

If your client is already on the Clearing House waiting list but you believe that they would be suitable for a Sensitive Let, you can contact Clearing House to discuss this. It may be that your client was not nominated because:

- They had not chosen the borough which this property is in (clients will only ever be nominated to properties in boroughs they have chosen).
- Clearing House will have already assessed the client as not suitable for the property, but Clearing House is happy to discuss this with you if you believe they would be suitable.

Referring agencies can only book one property per phone call and voicemail messages are not accepted as bookings for the properties. Once a booking is taken, the second caller for the property has the option to put their client forward as a 'reserve' candidate in the event the initial nomination is not successful.

5. Getting Help

For help and advice about this policy or procedure please contact a member of the Clearing House Team by calling 020 3856 6008 or emailing ch@mungos.org.

Sensitive Lets listings can be found at:

http://www.mungos.org/clearinghouse/sensitive_lets

6. Related policies and references for more information

- Referral and Waiting List Policy & Procedure
- Minimum standards for Referrals Guidance
- Nomination Procedure Guidance