



CLEARING HOUSE

Transfer Policy & Procedure

Monitoring

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

Next review

By March 2023

1. Purpose of the policy

The Transfers policy sets out guidelines for Tenancy Sustainment Teams (TSTs), Housing Providers and Clearing House staff about transfers from RSI housing stock. The purpose of this procedure is to provide clarification about the conditions under which tenants within RSI accommodation may be offered a transfer to another RSI property, and the process for achieving this.

2. Policy statement

The Clearing House is committed to matching clients with appropriate RSI properties. If, in the course of a tenancy, the RSI accommodation no longer meets the client's needs, the Clearing House will work with Housing Providers and TSTs to ensure that transfer options are available to clients. This process relies on all parties adhering to good practice principles about information sharing.

One of the provisions of the RSI project is that eligible clients may apply to the Clearing House, via their tenancy sustainment worker, for a transfer to another RSI property. Transfer applications will be considered where all other reasonable and appropriate options have been exhausted.

It should be noted that transfers via Clearing House are only available between RSI properties; Clearing House does not have access to other types of accommodation.

3. Applicability

The procedure is intended for Housing Providers, TSTs and the Clearing House.

4. Definitions

A transfer may or may not be to RSI accommodation; however this policy only applies to those where the client would be moving into an RSI property:

- **Internal transfer** refers to a transfer made within a Housing Provider's own RSI stock. Moves to the Housing Provider's general needs stock would not be considered under the transfer policy.
- **Clearing House transfer** (also referred to as an **RSI transfer**) refers to a client being placed on the waiting list for RSI properties and being nominated to a RSI property owned by a different Housing Provider.
- **Mutual exchange** is the direct swap of one RSI flat for another RSI flat by mutual agreement of the tenants. These exchanges are facilitated by TST teams.

5. Getting Help

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

6. Related policies and forms

- Complaints and Appeals procedure
- Transfer forms (Internal and Clearing House)
- Mutual exchange form

1. Overview

Requests for transfer via the waiting list are made by TSTs to Clearing House, using the online system. Clearing House carefully considers all transfer using the information on the transfer request form and documentation provided with the transfer request to make a decision about the appropriateness of the transfer request and the suitability of the client(s) for transfer. Transfer allocations are made by Clearing House.

Mutual exchanges are coordinated by TST and any changes communicated to Clearing House.

Internal transfers are coordinated by the Housing Provider and TST and communicated to Clearing House.

2. Areas of responsibility

All Clearing House staff, TSTs, and Housing Providers are responsible for the implementation of this procedure.

3. Internal transfer from RSI unit

One of the key points of the guidance is that RSI stock should remain available to rough sleepers. TST and Housing Providers should notify Clearing House when any internal transfer (within the Housing Providers own stock) is agreed.

The tenant of an RSI property may be eligible to apply for a transfer to another property within a Housing Provider's stock to either another RSI or general needs tenancy.

Housing Providers are under no obligation to offer transfers for RSI tenants to general needs properties – it is entirely dependent on the Housing Provider's organisational policy. An internal transfer to general needs would work in the following way:

1. If the client being transferred no longer requires support or can be linked appropriately with support provided from other agencies, the client may move into the housing provider's general needs stock. In this instance, the original unit remains RSI and the Clearing House must be notified in order to re-let the accommodation to someone who meets the RSI criteria. The property to which the client has moved does not become RSI.

An internal transfer to another RSI property may work in one of the following ways:

1. If the client is still in need of support, the housing provider can request that the new property becomes an RSI unit (complete with continued TST support) and reclaim the original unit for their general needs stock.
2. If the client moves from one RSI property to another RSI property within the RSLs own stock, both units must retain their RSI status, and the Clearing House must be notified in order to re-let the original unit to someone who meets the RSI criteria.

In all cases, Clearing House should be notified so that records of RSI properties and tenancies can be maintained.

4. Transfer via Clearing House

Transfers from one RSI property to another (owned by a different housing provider), are not usually permitted, however, TST workers can approach the Clearing House to request a transfer in exceptional circumstances.

Is a transfer appropriate?

It is important to consider if a transfer request is the best course of action in meeting the tenant's needs:

- **TST/support workers:** consider that this client will need to be supported by another team when they move; would you accept this tenant with their current level of support needs into your support service? Would you be able to support them to sustain an RSI tenancy if they moved to a property within your service?

- **Housing Provider:** consider if you would offer the tenant another tenancy under the RSI scheme; do you consider the tenant well placed to succeed in another RSI tenancy at another property?

Transfers may not be considered appropriate (and rejected by Clearing House) where:

- The tenant is the perpetrator of harassment/abuse, ASB or violence to others.
- The tenant is currently facing eviction (i.e. served NOSP or Section 21 etc.)
- The tenant's support needs have increased and they cannot be safely and effectively supported in an RSI tenancy.
- The tenant no longer requires support to maintain their tenancy (Clearing House is not responsible for the move-on of tenants who no longer require support).
- The tenant has rent arrears that they have not made significant efforts to address.
- The tenant requires an immediate move (even high priority transfers may take weeks to complete and may not happen quick enough to meet the tenant's needs).

We would recommend that any worker contact Clearing House to discuss a potential transfer before submitting transfer requests formally. If you are unsure if the transfer request is appropriate or unclear about the process in any way, please contact the Clearing House and we would be happy to talk through the details: ch@mungos.org or call 020 3856 6008.

A request for a transfer to another RSI unit, via the Clearing House, can only be made by a TST worker (with prior agreement from the Housing Provider). It should be submitted to the using the Clearing House system, by selecting the Transfer Request button on the client's record. Once the application has been submitted the Clearing House will make an assessment within five working days and may contact the TST worker for further information. If the Clearing House Coordinator feels that there are sufficient grounds for a transfer the request will be provisionally accepted subject to the information provided in the next step. If provisionally accepted, the next step will be to complete and submit a transfer referral form for the client. If this shows that RSI accommodation and TST support continue to be appropriate and realistic for the client, their form will then be added to the Clearing House waiting list and their waiting list date will be listed as the date at which their transfer referral was approved by Clearing House. From this point on, the standard referral and nomination policies apply with regard to expectations around updates and communication.

In order to retain some flexibility in the system and to clarify the situation with regards to when a transfer may be approved, the following guidelines have been drawn up. Clearing House will only consider transfer requests if the following criteria are met:

- The TST must clearly demonstrate the tenant's need for a transfer, providing any necessary documentary evidence.
- The TST must demonstrate that they have taken all appropriate and necessary action to support the tenant to deal with the situation. For example, this may include supporting the tenant to contact appropriate agencies (landlord, police or environmental services) and work with them in taking action against the perpetrators.

Given these criteria, the following are some examples of situations that would be considered:

- **Racial and other harassment:** The Clearing House will require evidence to support such allegations. Evidence should be in the form of a police report or RSL report into the allegations. By and large harassment would not necessarily be an isolated experience.
- **Violent attacks:** Clearing House may require supporting evidence to verify such a claim. Evidence may include police reports concerning the incidents of violence, corroboration from independent witnesses, evidence of injuries from a GP or hospital and social services reports/victim support groups.
- **Neighbour dispute:** This may be a persistent and unresolvable dispute where all other possible means of solution have been exhausted, and the Clearing House is

satisfied that a move will solve the problem. Also included in this category would be disputes between tenants in shared housing.

- **Tenant is required to provide support:** If a tenant is needed by a close family member or partner to provide support in a different area, transfer requests may be considered by the Clearing House.
- **Medical need:** If the tenant is medically/physically unable to live in their flat, or if their health is likely to deteriorate if they did, they may apply to the Clearing House for a transfer. Documentary evidence from a medical professional may be required.
- **Education, Training and Employment:** The Clearing House will consider a transfer request where the tenant is engaged in a meaningful occupation, either paid or unpaid, where 1) the cost of travel is causing significant financial hardship or 2) the journey time is more than an hour and a half each way to and from their workplace.

5. Tenancies

Where a tenant is transferred to a different Housing Provider, they will be issued with a renewable two year fixed-term Assured Shorthold Tenancy. This tenancy will then be reviewed after 18 months (in line with the Tenancy Review P&P). The issuing of a fixed term AST will apply to all tenants transferring from one Housing Provider to another, even if they were previously on an Assured Tenancy.

6. Mutual Exchange

RSI mutual exchanges may take place when two RSI tenants wish to exchange their RSI homes. TSTs with tenants who wish to take part in a mutual exchange should facilitate this move by liaising with their own team or other TSTs and with full involvement and agreement from the relevant Housing Provider(s). Contact details for Housing Providers and TST staff are available from the Clearing House team. Where two tenants are identified for mutual exchange, are compatible and successful in their move, the Clearing House must be notified by TST of any change using the Mutual Exchange form which must be submitted to the Clearing House Coordinator.

7. Transfers between RSI units within the same RSL

Housing Providers may, with tenants' consent, and in consultation with TSTs, move tenants between like for like RSI units (i.e. from one self-contained unit to another) without prior approval from the Clearing House. Once the move has taken place, please inform the Clearing House immediately by completing the Internal Transfer Form or emailing details to ch@mungos.org.

8. Appeals

Any client whose Clearing House transfer request is rejected by the Clearing House has a right to appeal against the decision of the Clearing House, providing this is supported by the TST. Appeals must be made in writing to the Clearing House Manager in line with the Complaints and Appeals Procedure.