

Shared Ownership Allocation Policy

Responsible Officer	Head of Sales and Marketing
This policy is applicable to	Karbon Homes
Approved by	
Date approved	
Frequency of review	Every 5 years
Date of next review	July 2029
Implementation date	1 st August 2024
Key related documents (policy, procedure, customer literature)	Shared Ownership Affordability Policy
Sources of best practice or guidance used in developing this policy	Homes England – Capital Funding Guide

Version Control

Version (see note 1)	1	Author of Policy:	Sarah Whitworth Interim Head of Sales and Marketing
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (see note 2)	Initial/Full	EIA Date:29/07/2024	
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) (see note 2)	Initial/Full	DPIA Date:29/07/2024	

Document change history

Version	Date	Changed sections

Consultation

Consultation Group (if applicable)	Date of Consultation (if applicable)
Staff	
Union(s)	N/A
Customers	N/A
Human Resources / Organisation Development	N/A
Health and Safety Working Group	N/A
Data Protection	N/A
Other stakeholder (please state)	N/A

Policy statement

Karbon Homes is committed to providing excellent standards of service to its customers. This policy outlines Karbon Homes' approach to allocating New Build Shared Ownership homes.

Risk policy is designed to control

To ensure that Karbon Homes documents its approach and is compliant with regulation/legislation.

Definitions

Shared Ownership – is a scheme to help people become home owners who cannot afford to buy a home on the open market. Through Shared Ownership people can buy a share in the property and pay rent on the remaining share.

Abbreviations

1.0 Purpose of policy

- 1.1 We have adopted this policy to determine the order in which applications for new build shared ownership properties will be reviewed and allocated.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 To ensure Karbon Homes;
- Allocates new build shared ownership homes in a fair and consistent manner
 - Check all applicants fit the criteria of the scheme

3.0 Policy detail

- 3.1 To establish eligibility, Karbon Homes will assess interested purchasers by using a two-stage process.

The first stage will require applicants to complete an Affordable Home Ownership Approval Form which requests details of their household members, current housing situation, employment, earnings and any other income. This will establish if applicants fit the basic eligibility criteria for Shared Ownership, which includes;

- Household income is £80,000 a year or less

- Inability to afford the deposit and mortgage payments necessary to purchase a home that meets their needs

One of the following must also be true of the applicant:

- a first-time buyer
- Previously owned a home but cannot afford to buy one now
- forming a new household - for example, after a relationship breakdown
- an existing shared owner, and wants to move
- owns a home and wants to move but cannot afford a new home that meets their needs.

Once we have confirmed that applicants meet the basic eligibility criteria they will be referred to a suitably qualified Independent Financial Advisor who will complete an initial affordability assessment.

The second stage will then require the applicant to complete a more detailed assessment of their income and expenditure, by completing a budget planner with the assistance of the Independent Financial Advisor. This will establish the ownership share of the property that the applicant can afford to purchase, as well as obtaining an Agreement in Principle, which confirms how much an applicant is able borrow from a mortgage lender. Where a mortgage is not required, proof of funds will need to be provided.

We will review all applications in the order in which they are presented to us, on a first come first served basis, and we will offer an available shared ownership property to the first applicant that passes the first stage initial assessment, and provides an acceptable Agreement in Principle or proof of funds in accordance with the second stage of the procedure.

You will note that the role of the Independent Financial Advisor is central to the application process. Karbon Homes have access to a panel of Independent Financial Advisors who specialise in supporting applicants to purchase under the Shared Ownership initiative. Where applicants choose to use their own Financial Advisor, it will be a requirement that they use the approved budget planner provided by Karbon Homes as the basis for their application.

We have two scenarios where the above policy will be applied differently, allowing certain applicants to be given priority over others. The first arises where applications are received from serving military personnel and former members of the British Armed Forces discharged in the last two years. These Ministry of Defence personnel will be given priority for our Shared Ownership schemes where:

- they have completed their basic (phase 1) training, and they are one of the following:
 - Regular service personnel (including Navy, Army and Air Force)
 - Clinical staff (with the exception of doctors and dentists)
 - Ministry of Defence Police Officers

- Uniformed staff in the Defence Fire Service
- they are ex-regular service personnel who have served in the Armed Forces for a minimum of six years, and can produce a Discharge Certificate (or similar documentation) as proof, where they apply within two years (24 months) of the date of discharge from service or
- they are the surviving partners of regular service personnel who have died in service, where they apply within two years (24 months) of the date of being bereaved.

The other exception to the basic first come first served policy is where Shared Ownership homes are being delivered in a National Park, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or on a rural exception site. In those schemes, planning law will require that we apply a different prioritisation of applicants, so that priority is given to applicants with some form of connection to the local area. The detail as to what “local connection” means will in each case be set out in the planning permission and planning agreements imposed by the relevant local authority and will be notified to applicants at the beginning of the application process.

4.0 Customer Vulnerabilities

- 4.1 This policy is applied in line with Our Approach To Vulnerability Policy. Everyone matters. We want people to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect, and access to our services. We will offer support, reasonable adjustments, and adaptations to remove barriers. We will discuss with our customers what is reasonable and appropriate. In delivering this service we may need to escalate a particular case – if we do then customer vulnerabilities will be considered as part of the decision-making process.
- 4.2 We will support people with vulnerabilities to deliver this service. We will work alongside external agencies such as social services, the police and fire services and other appropriate agencies to help and support people with vulnerabilities in the delivery of our services but also to ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements as a social landlord. Details are provided in the appropriate areas this policy. All our customer policies are available on the website.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years. The review will be brought forward if there are significant changes to best practice, regulatory or legislative requirements.

6.0 Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 This policy is applied in line with Karbon’s Equality and Diversity Policy and the associated legislation including the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010. At Karbon we aim to eliminate discrimination, promote

equality of opportunity, foster good relations and define the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

- 6.2 However, we like to go even further. Beyond these protected characteristics we also take into consideration additional factors such as socio-economic status and language barriers which may also play a part. Our vision is for everyone to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect and access to our services.
- 6.3 To help us achieve this, we will work to improve accessibility for all, offering reasonable adjustments, adaptations and discussing ways that we can work to remove any barriers. A reasonable adjustment involves making a change to the way that we usually do things.
- 6.4 All of our customer policies and key information are made available on the Karbon Homes website. Reasonable adjustments that can help for example to make our information and services more accessible are sign language and language interpreters. We will work to improve accessibility for everybody that we deal with offering reasonable adjustments, adaptations and discussing ways that we can work to remove barriers that you may experience. A reasonable adjustment involves making a change to the way that we usually do things.
- 6.5 We work together to look at options and agree what adjustments would be reasonable in your individual circumstances. If you would like to find out more please get in touch with the team.

7.0 Data Protection and Privacy

- 7.1 We have a clear policy on data protection and sharing data with other partners/third parties under the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and other associated legislation. This is clearly set out in the Data Protection Policy for the Karbon Homes Group which, along with its associated procedures, must be followed throughout the operation of this policy.