

Sherwood Close Community Lettings Plan



**CLARION
HOUSING**



Introduction

This booklet contains important information for secure tenants about the process of moving from your existing home to a new home. Please read it carefully and keep it safe so you can refer back to it when needed.

The Residents Steering Group has helped develop this booklet through a series of meetings and have monitored the process.

This Community Lettings Plan has been sent to you to explain the choices and give you as much information as possible so that you are able to make the best decision for you and your family.

The Sherwood Close Project Team is here to support you throughout the process.

If you have any queries or concerns about your options, or anything else, please contact one of the team members listed below:

Team Members involved with moving tenants to new homes:

Desrine Vickers - Ealing Council, Regeneration Officer, T: **020 8825 6141**

Natalie Down - Clarion Housing, Senior Regeneration Manager, T: **0300 100 0303**

Team Members involved with overall scheme management:

Peter Gaffikin - Ealing Council, Regeneration Manager, T: **020 8825 9274**

Contents

2	Introduction
4	How will the process work?
4	What will affect your choice?
5	What does 'phasing' mean?
6	Moving to another home away from the estate
7	Moving to a new-build home on Sherwood Close
11	Becoming a housing association tenant
15	Compensation payments
16	Further information
17	Frequently asked questions



How will the process work?

The Sherwood Close Project Team survey residents on a regular basis to understand their circumstances and find out their housing needs.

The information from these surveys helps officers to allocate the right size home for all tenants who wish to stay on the estate.

People will be moved in phases over a number of years. This will help us to re-house as many residents as possible with only one move.

This Community Lettings Plan has been worked out with estate tenants to make sure the process is fair.

What will affect your choice?

Making the right choice for you and your family is very important and we are here to help. The information below gives you an idea of what it's all about:

Re-housing options

Do you want to leave the estate but stay an Ealing Council tenant in Ealing?

If yes, then you will be given a high priority banding on the choice-based lettings system LOCATA, to enable you to bid for another Council home

Do you want to leave the estate and become the tenant of another housing association in the area?

If yes, then you will be given a high priority banding on the choice-based lettings system LOCATA to enable you to bid for another Housing Association property in the area.

Do you want to stay on the estate and become a Clarion Housing tenant?

If yes, and if there is a property suitable for your needs, then you will be allocated a new home in accordance with your needs and the rules included in this booklet.

Please contact the Sherwood Close Project Team (see Page 2) to discuss the best option for you.

What does 'phasing' mean?

The redevelopment of Sherwood Close will be delivered in three phases. The Council will contact all tenants in each phase at least one year before that phase is due to start to ensure everyone understands what is happening. The table below shows which part of the estate is in each of the phases.

Phase	Blocks
Phase 1	Archer House, 1-10, 12-21, 70-72 Sherwood Close
Phase 2	Crossbow House, 22-37, 39-42, 43-68 Sherwood Close
Phase 3	Target House

The demolition and redevelopment of the estate is phased so that most people only have to move once — the idea being to create a rolling programme of residents moving straight from their old home into a newly built one.

Why are there fewer 1-bed homes on the new estate?

Seven out of every ten homes currently on the Sherwood Close estate is a 1-bed flat. Planning rules no longer allow this proportion of 1-bed homes to be built on new housing developments because this would produce an unbalanced community. This means there will be some people requiring a 1-bed flat, who will not be able to stay on the estate. However, you will be able to stay an Ealing Council tenant by bidding for a 1-bed property using LOCATA.

Request to Return

If you wanted to remain on the estate at the time you had to move out of your old home, but had to move off because there were no homes suitable for your housing needs, you can request to return to the Sherwood Close estate by filling in a 'Request to Return' form. Tenants in Phase 1 will have already made this request if they wished to do so.

There are some rules that apply to the Request to Return:

- You will be told the chance of getting a property in a future phase. For example, because of the shortage of 1-bed properties you may only have a limited chance of getting a 1-bed property in a future phase.
- The housing need of your household will be assessed at the time of request. If your housing need changes during the waiting period, a suitable property may not necessarily be available. For example, if you were looking for a larger or smaller property than before.

Moving to another home away from the estate

If you decide to or have to move off the estate you will be given longer to make a bid through the LOCATA system to find a new home. We will be as flexible as possible to ensure you get a property that suits your needs.

When you have found a new home please contact Desrine Vickers and tell her when you expect to move.

Before you move

We will find out your personal needs and also whether you need any items disassembled or reassembled or have any gas/electric appliances that will need disconnecting/reconnecting. This only applies to items currently connected in your home on the day that you move.

We will work with you to arrange for a visit from our removals company to make sure they provide the right amount of boxes, packing materials and tape.

We will work with you and the removals company to book in a moving day that is convenient for you and fits in with the timescales of your new landlord.

If you cannot pack for yourself and do not have family or friends that can help, we will arrange for a packing service.

You should also contact your phone, Internet and satellite providers, two – four weeks before you move to arrange to have these services transferred. A member of the Sherwood Close Project Team will be able to help vulnerable tenants with this.

Moving to a new home away from Sherwood Close

Once you know when you will have the keys for your new property you can arrange for carpets to be fitted before you move in.

Moving to a new-build home on Sherwood Close

Carpets, lino and voile curtains will be supplied and fitted before you move in. You will also receive an additional contribution for curtains.

You will need to contact P. Goddard and Sons so they can help you assess what needs to be taken, how many boxes and packing materials you need and any possessions that need to be dismantled and reassembled.

This is a free service.

Call **P. Goddard and Son LTD on 020 8560 7127**

On moving day

The removals company will arrive at your property at the agreed time. If you are doing your own packing you should be completely packed before they arrive.

You should dispose of any rubbish but if you have large bulky items that you do not want, you can leave these in your old home and notify us that you have done so.

You should take your gas/electric and water meter readings. A member of staff from the Council will also take these for our records.

You will have a full home demonstration during which you will be given the key information about your home and the block as well as the equipment/appliances provided, heating system and parking information.

We will also help you with your housing benefit claims and advice on how to pay your rent and Council tax. We will help you to complete any relevant forms if you need assistance.

If you have any concerns on moving day a member of the Sherwood Close Project Team will be available to help.

After you have moved

You will need to return your keys to the Council by 12 noon on the Monday after you have moved. You can do this at Perceval House. You will be given a receipt for your key.

You will need to contact your gas, electricity and water suppliers to tell them that you have moved — a member of the Sherwood Close Project Team can help vulnerable tenants with this.

The Sherwood Close Project Team will be available to help if there is any further assistance you need in the weeks after you have moved.

If you need to report a defect contact [Lovell's Customer Care team T: 020 8731 3850](#)



Our promise is to make your move a success

We have skilled staff that will help tenants move and you can expect the following:

- We will make sure that you understand the moving process including your rights to appeal as well as your legal rights
- We will support tenants with using the internet to bid for accommodation using LOCATA
- We will provide you with regular updates that are clear to understand and without jargon
- We will come with you to view properties if requested (subject to sufficient notice being given)
- We will organise trips to sheltered schemes for older residents
- We will organise a packing service for vulnerable residents and those with support needs who do not have friends or family to help
- We will help vulnerable tenants (who do not have carers to help) to transfer gas and electric services
- We will arrange for boxes and tape to be delivered to your property
- We will arrange for the removal of your personal belongings by our reliable removal company
- We will arrange for the dismantling and reassembling of furniture for residents who require additional support
- We can make sure that your appliances are disconnected and reinstalled by qualified technicians
- We can provide a handy person service for residents requiring additional support during the moving process
- We will secure vacated properties within 24–48 hours of the keys being returned
- We will process home loss and disturbance payments promptly
- We will work closely with residents groups to monitor and improve service delivery phase by phase

Allocating a new home on the new estate

If you decide to move to a new home on the new estate you will be pre-allocated a home that suits your needs and the rules below will apply. Tenants have worked with us to make sure that these rules are fair and transparent.

We will be as helpful and flexible as possible to ensure you get a property that suits your needs and we promise to make your move a success.

Housing Need

Remember, when you move to a new build home or to a home away from the estate the size of the property allocated will be in accordance with your housing need and will not be affected by the size of your current home.

How will properties be allocated?

Before each phase begins the Housing Needs Survey will be updated. All households will be allocated a property suitable for their needs at that point in time. Initial allocations will be made using the following guidelines:

- **Flats 1, 2 and 3 bedroom** would usually go to single people, couples and smaller-sized families
- **Maisonettes** would usually go to families
- **Houses** would usually go to families with three or more children
- **Ground floor** would usually go to the elderly or those with special medical needs

Every effort will be made to ensure that you are allocated the same type of property as you live in now, provided that your housing need is for the same size home. For example: if you are currently living in a three-bedroom maisonette we will try to offer a three-bedroom maisonette. If two tenants have the same housing need, and there is no priority given on the grounds of medical, age or family make-up as detailed under the Resident's preferences on page 10, we would give priority to a tenant who had previously lived in a three-bedroom maisonette.

Downsizing

If you are downsizing to a smaller property (e.g. from a 3-bed to a 2-bed) you can currently get an allowance of £1,000 per bedroom given up. You will be notified if this changes.

Extra bedroom

If you are living in a home larger than your current assessed housing need, you may be

able to apply to be allocated one discretionary extra bedroom in certain circumstances. Residents with more bedrooms than they need may be affected by the Bedroom Tax if they are in receipt of Housing Benefit. The rules are that you:

- currently have at least one spare bedroom
- do not have any rent arrears
- do not have a record for anti-social behavior or have had a clear record for the last two years
- show you have a need for an additional room
- are able to afford the rent and service charges for the larger property including any shortfall of Housing Benefit due to the Bedroom Tax
- agree to move within timescales specified by Ealing Borough Council

Each case will be dealt with on its merits. If an additional room is granted over and above the assessed need AND you live in a 3-bed, you must also agree to waive the downsizing payment mentioned above, even if you are still giving up a bedroom.

Residents' preferences

The residents involved in designing this Lettings Plan have recommended that the following criteria should be taken into account in addition to the usual criteria for housing needs. These rules would apply where tenants are not able to get the exact property they want.

Council Officers will allocate homes after considering the housing needs in terms of number of bedrooms, medical issues, family requirements and elderly provision.

Where there is more than one household that would like a particular property, priority will be determined by taking account of the following criteria:

- medical need (but only if a particular type of home is required for a health condition e.g. disability means ground floor only).
- elderly (age of oldest tenant – but only if a particular type of home is required that would assist an elderly person e.g. ground floor)
- families with children (but only if a particular type of home is required: e.g. younger children should be on lower floors; two storey homes may be more suitable)
- the amount of time you have lived on the estate. This can be confirmed by your tenancy start date, electoral register date or similar. The longer you have lived here the more priority you would get.

Unallocated properties at the end of each phase

These will be offered to tenants in the next phase with priority given to the level of overcrowding. In the case of equal ranking, priority will be given to the oldest tenancy start date.

Becoming a housing association tenant

If you choose to become a housing association tenant you will move from a secure tenancy to an assured tenancy. The information below tells you what a tenancy agreement is and the difference between being a council and housing association tenant of Clarion Housing. These differences will generally apply to all housing associations

What is a tenancy agreement?

- A tenancy agreement is a legal contract that sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.
- It tells you what to expect from your landlord and explains what you must do as a tenant.
- You can stay in your home for the length of your tenancy as long as you keep to the conditions.

Ealing Council issues secure tenancies, Clarion Housing, like other housing associations, issues assured tenancies.



Are there differences between council and Clarion Housing tenancies?

Secure council tenant

Accountability

Accountable through elected councillors and other participation arrangements

Right of succession

Applies to spouse, including civil partner, or close relative who has lived in the property for at least 12 months

Right to buy

Yes

Right to carry out improvements

Yes – with landlord's consent

Right to compensation for (certain) improvements

Yes – with landlord's consent

Right to consultation

The 1985 Housing Act provides the right to be consulted on major changes to the way your home is managed

Right to exchange

Yes – with landlord's consent

Right to manage

Yes

Right to repair

Yes – in law

Right to take in lodgers

Yes – with landlord's consent

Security of tenure

Yes – in law

Assured Clarion Housing tenant

Accountability

Accountable through a board and other participation arrangements

Right of succession

One right of succession: applies to spouse, including civil partner, or close relative who has lived in the property for at least 12 months at date of death

Right to buy

Sherwood Close residents will have the Right to Acquire in their Clarion Housing tenancy agreement

Right to carry out improvements

Yes – with landlord's consent

Right to compensation for (certain) improvements

Yes – with landlord's consent

Right to consultation

Yes – no changes will be made to the way your home is managed without consulting you

Right to exchange

Yes – with landlord's consent

Right to manage

Clarion Housing is required to consult and involve all tenants in decisions that are likely to affect you and there are many ways you can get involved in the running of the housing association

Right to repair

Yes – a clause in the tenancy agreement

Right to take in lodgers

Yes – with Clarion Housing's consent

Security of tenure

Yes – in law

How much will the rent be?

The rent for housing association homes away from the estate will be as advertised in LOCATA.

The rent for the homes on the new estate will be substantially more than that paid by Council tenants on the existing Sherwood Close estate. This is because the homes are newly built, cheap to run and offer the latest in security and service.

Rents for social housing are regulated by central government and calculated by a formula that takes account of the rents in the local area, the cost of building the new homes and inflation that may occur in the economy.

Compensation payments

Compensation for losing your current home

You will get a Home Loss Payment as long as you have lived in your permanent home for at least a year before you move. If you move and then Request a Return to a new home on the estate, you will receive a Home Loss Payment when you leave your permanent home. When you move back to the estate you will not receive a Home Loss Payment. The figure is set by central government and is currently £6,300 per tenancy. The amount may increase or decrease each year. If you have any rent arrears or other debts to the Council, these may be deducted from your Home Loss Payment.

Financial assistance with moving to a new home away from Sherwood Close

The Council will cover agreed costs incurred as a result of moving. These are called Disturbance Payments and cover the cost of:

- Removals
- Disconnection and reconnection of appliances
- Redirection of mail for six months
- Reconnection of phone, internet, satellite
- An allowance towards carpets and curtains (currently £584 for a 1-bed, £701 for a 2-bed, £818 for a 3-bed, £935 for a 4-bed — this is reviewed every October)
- Moving any adaptations in your home (in conjunction with an Occupational Therapist)
- Dismantling/reassembling furniture
- Loss of wages (for unpaid leave — one tenant maximum)

- School uniform if a change of school is needed
- Refitting alarms
- Any other reasonable expense incurred due to moving.

Disturbance payments can only be paid on the production of a receipt or invoice marked “paid” from a VAT registered company.

Where something costs more than £50 we will need three quotes unless it is a fixed cost such as BT connection charge.

Payments will be made to you by cheque.

Financial assistance with moving to a new build home on Sherwood Close

The Council will cover agreed costs incurred as a result of moving. These are called Disturbance Payments and cover the cost of:

- Removals
- Disconnection and reconnection of appliances
- Redirection of mail for six months
- Reconnection of phone, internet, satellite
- Carpet, vinyl and voile curtains will already be fitted to your new home.
- An allowance towards curtains (currently £80 for a 1-bed, £110 for a 2-bed, £170 for a 3-bed, £200 for a 3-bed house, £260 for a 4-bed house)
- Moving any adaptations in your home (in conjunction with an Occupational Therapist)
- Dismantling/reassembling furniture

-
- Loss of wages (for unpaid leave — proof required — one tenant maximum)
 - School uniform if a change of school is needed
 - Refitting security locks or alarms
 - Any other reasonable expense incurred due to moving

Disturbance payments can only be paid on the production of a receipt or invoice marked “paid” from a VAT registered company.

Where something costs more than £50 we will need three quotes unless it is a fixed cost such as BT connection charge.

Payments will be made to you by cheque.

Further information

The Council, in partnership with Clarion Housing, is committed to working closely with all tenants to make sure that the best options possible are on offer to meet your housing needs.

The Sherwood Close Project Team is here to help you with any queries you may have. They will be available to provide support and assistance throughout the regeneration of Sherwood Close.

As new information becomes available it will be published on the Sherwood Close website **sherwoodclose.co.uk** in newsletters and circulated at meetings and drop-in surgeries on a regular basis throughout the project, helping you to keep up to date with progress and events.

Frequently asked questions

Could I move away from the area?

Yes, but priority for allocations is given to tenants of the home borough and consequently it is becoming more difficult to move to another Council. Please see a member of the Sherwood Close Project Team for details.

How many bids will I be allowed to make under the LOCATA System?

Tenants can make three bids per week.

As the time gets closer to when the existing flats must be empty, tenants will be told how long they have before legal proceedings are started to ensure they move.

What if I refuse to move?

The Council will provide help and support to ensure that you have all the information explaining why the move is necessary.

If you still refuse to move after all the support. The Council will start a process to ensure the property is vacated. The Council will:

- Apply to Secretary of State for permission to use Ground 10a to get legal powers to remove you
- Serve a Notice of Seeking Possession on the property
- Make direct offers of suitable homes for you to move to
- Apply to Court for possession
- Apply to the Court to appoint a bailiff to ensure that the Council gain possession of the property.

Can I appeal if I don't agree with the new home I have been allocated on the new estate?

Yes, you have the right to appeal to understand why a decision was made. The Sherwood Close Project Team will review your case.

If you are still not happy then you can appeal to the Council's Housing Regeneration Manager and Clarion Housing's Development Manager who will review the case. If the appellant wishes, a member of the Residents' Steering Group can also be part of the review panel.

What if I have a complaint about the service?

You can access the Council's complaints procedure as normal.

Who will monitor this process of decanting to new homes?

Sherwood Close Project Team members will monitor the process. Any decisions required that fall outside of the CLP will be discussed with members of the Resident Steering Group, where appropriate.

Can I complete a Request to Return form to come back to the new estate if I have chosen to move to another home away from Sherwood Close and I find that I don't like it after I have moved in?

No, if you had a chance to accept a new property on the estate but chose to leave Sherwood Close and live somewhere else, you cannot complete a Request to Return form; even if there are homes suitable for your needs on the newly developed estate. You can apply to be transferred back to the estate; but you would no longer have a high band rating on LOCATA.

Will Housing Benefit cover the rent levels for the new estate?

If you currently receive full Housing Benefit (i.e. you pay nothing, or only a heating charge) the new rent and service charge levels should still be covered, unless your circumstances change.

If you currently receive partial Housing Benefit (i.e. you pay a contribution towards your rent and service charge) then, unless your circumstances change, you should still pay the same amount towards your rent because your contribution is based on your ability to pay.

If you do not currently receive Housing Benefit, but are on a low income, you may be eligible for Housing Benefit for some or all of the rent increase. To find out if you can claim for Housing Benefit, complete an application form when you move and the Council will assess your eligibility.

I am on a low wage. I have heard that Council rents are lower than the rents charged by Housing Associations — is this true?

It is true that Council rents are usually lower than Housing Associations' rents. There is no guarantee that this won't change in the future. The best thing to do is get advice from a member of the Sherwood Close Project Team.

How long will it take for me to receive my Home Loss payment?

In total you should receive your Home Loss payment approximately six weeks after you have moved.

Am I allowed to keep a pet in my new Sherwood Close home?

Clarion Housing has agreed that current Sherwood Close tenants who already have a pet will be allowed to keep the pet as long as they ask permission and complete a form. If you require a copy of this document, please contact the Sherwood Close Project Team.

I have heard that Housing Associations can evict tenants more easily than the Council

Housing Associations issue assured tenancy agreements, which provide security to tenants as long as the tenant keeps to the terms of the agreement. Eviction is always used as a last resort and only after all other options to help keep tenants in their homes have failed.

There are various grounds on which housing associations can seek to repossess a home and some of these are not available to the local authority. Those that are not available to the local authority are only used in extreme circumstances and are always authorised by the Head of Service before being used. The main grounds used by Clarion Housing to recover possession of their homes are:

- **Ground 8** — this is a mandatory ground which would apply if there are at least eight weeks arrears of rent. It means that a judge has to award possession if it is correctly used. It is only used after careful consideration has been given to the individual's circumstances. Authorisation to proceed using this ground is always signed off by a senior manager.
- **Ground 10** — this is a discretionary ground and applies if: Rent which is lawfully due from the tenant has not been paid by the time the possession proceedings are started and was owed at the time the Notice Seeking Possession was served. If a tenant has been offering the landlord rent and the landlord refused to take it, the tenant will have a defence to the possession proceedings but must pay the amount owed in to court.

- **Ground 11** — this ground covers a persistent delay in rent payment. It is a discretionary ground which means a judge will take into account factors outside the tenant's control, for example, delays in housing benefit payments.
- **Ground 14** — the tenant or a person living with them or visiting them has caused or is likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours or their neighbours, guests or visitors to the area. Or the tenant has been convicted of using the property for immoral or illegal purposes or has been convicted for an arrestable offence committed in the area.

Will Clarion Housing manage all homes on the Estate?

Yes. Clarion Housing is also talking to residents about how they can be involved in managing the new estate.



CLARION
HOUSING

How to contact us:

0300 100 0303

myclarionhousing.com