

## **Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust**

### **Allocations and Lettings Policy**

*October 2020*

#### **Purpose of policy**

To set out access to Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust managed housing projects and to summarise for outside agencies some basic information about each scheme and about the allocation of units.

The aim of the work of the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust is to provide supported residential accommodation for young women who are in housing need. It aims to provide a safe and secure environment for all women who approach us for help and support, regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or background or any protected characteristics as per the Equalities act 2010. We are therefore unable to accept applicants who are unable to share accommodation on this basis.

MPMT manages two Supported Housing projects, a 21-bed space hostel at Tressillian Rd and a 6-bed space second stage hostel at 19 Erlanger Road

#### **Exclusions**

Neither Project is equipped to accept referrals from pregnant women or women with a serious active drug or alcohol habit or very severe mental health issues that are not being addressed through support or therapy. We are also unable to accept people with a history of arson, violence or sex offences. However each case will be considered on its merits before a decision to refuse an application due to exclusions. Therefore those receiving treatment or willing to engage with support may be accepted despite having higher or complex support needs.

#### **1. Tressillian Road**

(See also Service description for information to issue to prospective residents)

#### **Basics**

- Tressillian Road is a 21-bed hostel with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities. There is a communal lounge, dining room and garden.
- Meals are provided in terms of breakfast materials being available and one hot evening meal per day during Monday to Thursday. Self-catering available as an alternative and at other times.
- A minimum charge (currently £ per week) is levied to cover a communal facilities service charge.
- Bedding and furniture are provided and some basic kitchen equipment/ crockery and cutlery are available.
- A nighttime curfew is in operation and the scheme is staffed 24 hours per day.
- The scheme would suit anyone with quite high to relatively low support needs and a keywork system is in operation, currently with a ratio of one worker to 5/6 residents.

- Residents are expected to attend house meetings on a regular basis and to participate in some form of education, training or employment goal as part of their self development whilst resident. The Trust runs several educational classes on the premises, which residents are encouraged to participate in.

### **Selection criteria**

- Female
- Aged 16 to 21
- Be able to pay the rent whether through receipt of income support or other welfare benefits or through wages. In cases where an applicant is 16 or 17 years old appropriate documentation of the estrangement and entitlement to benefits will be required.
- To have experienced or be experiencing some kind of housing difficulty.
- To have some level of support need
- In most cases to have some connection to LB Lewisham (family, school, college work etc)

### **Referral agencies / referral process**

- Although MPMT will consider referrals from any agency that works with our client group all vacancies are passed to the London Borough of Lewisham SHIP team via their website in the first instance and via the Pathway Manager. This role coordinates lettings to all supported housing in the borough. As part of the Pathway system for supported housing, referrals will also come to Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust from the short term assessment centres in the borough, although these referrals will also be put forward via the SHIP team.
- Although SHIP has first refusal on all vacancies, if after 1 week no names have been received then the Trust will make the vacancy available to other agencies.
- Referral agencies should telephone the project prior to making a referral to check availability of spaces or the waiting list. All non-SHIP referrals should be made using the MPMT referral form, which can be obtained by telephoning the office on 0208 691 5911.
- Referrals made from areas other than LB Lewisham should be able to commit to rehousing the referral at a later date, as should agencies with access to move on accommodation.

### **Selection process**

- Every applicant to the service is interviewed and a risk assessment takes place. Referral support workers or family members are welcome to attend the interview with the applicant. The interview covers a procedure whereby information is obtained and provided about the applicant and about the Project. (See separate notes for interview guidelines, checklists and procedure).
- Interviews are generally carried out by project (key) workers and cases where clarification is required will be referred to the Project Manager in the first instance.

- If an applicant is unavailable when contacted to attend an interview or fails to attend an interview the application will be deferred for 2 weeks after which time it will be returned to the referral agency.
- Following the interview so long as the selection criteria is satisfied and the referral is felt to be appropriate the nominee will either be offered accommodation at once if a vacancy exists or be accepted onto the waiting list.

### **Outcome of interviews / Unsuccessful Applicants**

- In most cases the reason for accepting/rejecting an applicant will be recorded and communicated to the applicant straight after the interview. Reasons for the decision will be recorded on the interview form, which the interviewee will agree.
- The decision to reject an application following an interview will be ratified by the Project Manager and following this unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the decision made in respect of their case in writing, as will the referral agency responsible for the referral and the Pathway Manager.
- In most cases the referral agency will be advised to locate more appropriate services for the client, although help with onward referral in terms of advice and information can be offered by the resettlement worker if required.
- Unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal decisions made in respect of their application, either in writing or via an interview which will be carried out by the Director within 2 weeks of the appeal being received.
- If an appeal is carried out via an interview the applicant is welcome to bring a friend or representative to the meeting with them.

### **Waiting list**

- All nominees for the waiting list are logged and recorded.

Each application on the waiting list is allocated a priority number. This is generally based on the date the referral form is received by the Trust.

However SHIP cases will always take priority and within that SHIP or the Pathway manager may request cases to be prioritised.

Also if an applicant is in particularly severe circumstances a higher priority may be awarded. e.g. if a person has presented particular vulnerability or very pressing housing need such as street homelessness, fear of violence etc. this will generally be agreed with SHIP/ the pathway manager

As vacancies arise, offers of accommodation will be made according to priority on the waiting list, although availability of an applicant when contacted to attend the Project as and when a vacancy arises will ultimately dictate to whom each letting is made.

- The waiting list is limited to 10 at any given time. Throughout the process all interviews/outcomes/voids and housing of referrals will be updated on the council's website (CDP) in a timely manner.

## **Lettings**

All residents' sign a licence agreement, which is initially for a 28-day duration. After which time, assuming the resident has applied themselves to MPMT then a further tenancy agreement duration 6 months will be issued and renewed.

The service charge for the first week must be paid up in advance of a tenancy commencing.

Resettlement is carried out after an initial period of assessment is carried out and move on is subject to availability of suitable alternative accommodation.

## **Timescales (applicable to both projects)**

1. The aim is to interview all referrals posted on the SHIP website or received by other means within 3 weeks.
2. A decision to accept or refuse an applicant will be made on the day of the interview and communicated either the same day or within 24 hours.
3. Those refused have 10 working days to appeal the decision.

## **2. Erlanger Rd**

### **Basics**

This is a 6-bedroomed unit in a quiet residential street, containing two-second stage flats for people with lower support needs. An off-site part-time Project Manager is key worker for this project. The project is owned by London and Quadrant Housing Association and managed by MPMT on their behalf. All bedding and basic kitchen equipment is provided. All residents have separate rooms.

### **Selection criteria**

- Female
- Aged 16 to 21
- Low /medium support needs.
- Experiencing some kind of housing difficulty

In addition applicants should have basic life skills and be self-motivated towards resettlement, employment and training goals.

### **Referral agencies / Referral Process**

- The Erlanger Rd project takes referrals both internally from MPMT Tressillian Rd project for residents ready to move on to more independent accommodation and also from recognised referral agencies working with the client group. Again vacancies are passed to the London Borough of Lewisham SHIP team via their website in the first instance and internal transfers must be carried out via the SHIP website with agreement of this team. As part of the Pathway system for supported housing referrals will also come to Erlanger Road from the short term assessment centres in the borough, again put forward via the SHIP team.

- A waiting list for the project is maintained, and priority is assigned mainly based on the date when the referral was made. Allocations are generally made to alternate between MPMT internal referrals and external agencies.
- All referrals should be made once the Project Manager has been contacted to establish if a vacancy exists or the waiting list is open for referrals.
- All non-SHIP applicants need to complete the Erlanger Rd referral form and additionally undergo an interview and risk assessment with the Project Manager to assess their suitability for the project.
- Referral forms may be posted or faxed and can be obtained by contacting the Project manager.
- As with Tressillian Rd, decisions to accept or reject an applicant will be recorded and there is a right of appeal to the Director regarding negative decisions. See procedure above.

#### **Timescales (applicable to both projects)**

4. The aim is to interview all referrals posted on the SHIP website or received by other means within 3 weeks.
5. A decision to accept or refuse and applicant will be made on the day of the interview and communicated either the same day or within 24 hours.
6. Those refused have 10 working days to appeal the decision.

#### **Lettings**

Lettings are made, subject to a licence agreement.

**Resettlement** is carried out after an initial period of assessment has taken place and a person can demonstrate their ability to live independently thereafter. Move on is subject to availability of suitable accommodation. (See separate policy for detail on the process criteria and responsibility for move on)