



**First Come, First Served
Policy**

Issue control	
Policy:	First Come, First Served Policy
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Policy Author:	Shared Ownership Sales and Marketing Manager
Approved by:	Executive Team
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Policy grade:	2 (Executive Team)
Equality Assessment completed:	Yes
Data Protection Impact Assessment required:	Yes
This document is uncontrolled when printed	

Printed versions of policies may go out of date – the latest version will always be on the Policy Hub located on the Gentoo Intranet. If you are unable to access this, please contact the Governance Team.

For support and advice regarding the policy, please contact the Policy Owner. For queries on the policy register, please contact the Governance Team.

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Policy Statement

- The purpose of this policy is to align with current regulatory guidance provided by Homes England. This policy applies to the reservation of our new build homes to prospective purchasers using Shared Ownership.
- We will ensure all prospective buyers are aware of our policy approach when offering them an affordable home and prospective customers are aware of the process prior to expending any cost to themselves.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

- We are committed to the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging throughout the organisation and aim to:
 - Treat everyone equally, fairly, and with respect.
 - Provide fair and equitable outcomes for colleagues and customers.
 - Welcome and value difference and not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any individual or groups.
 - Challenge the behaviour of those who do not uphold our values and go against our principles.
 - Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training, or other developmental opportunities.
- We are committed to the principle of diversity and inclusion for all colleagues and customers, regardless of sex, race, religion or belief, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or disability.
- This policy and the associated procedures (if applicable) will ensure that customers and colleagues are treated as individuals with fairness and respect. An Equality Assessment has been completed on this policy.

Scope, Escalation and Monitoring

Scope

- The scope of this policy covers Gentoo Group.
- This policy applies to purchasing a new build affordable home using Shared Ownership.

Escalation

- Where the Board or a Committee has concerns about significant issues in any area of this policy, they must escalate these concerns to The Executive Director of Property.
- Where a colleague has concerns about significant issues in any area of this policy, they must escalate these concerns through their line management structure, and ultimately to the Executive Team.
- Where a colleague continues to have concerns about significant issues in any area of this policy, they should refer to the whistleblowing section within the Group's Working Professionally Policy, which can be found on the Policy Hub on the Gentoo Intranet.

Monitoring

- This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless business needs or legislative changes dictate that we review it before this time.
- This policy may be subject to an audit in line with the internal audit plan.
- This policy is a grade 2 and changes will need the approval of the Executive Team.

Core Purpose, Vision and Themes

- Our core purpose is to provide warm, safe and decent homes for our customers of today and tomorrow.
- Our vision is to become the best provider of social homes in the country.
- Our values are what we stand for and what we want to be known for. They are what makes us, us.
 - We care about people.
 - We take accountability.
 - We shape the future.
 - We bring leadership.
 - We deliver.
- We live our values in everything we do from the boardroom to the front room, to deliver our priorities for our customers.
- We have identified six themes which will guide the delivery of our services and support the Group's vision and ambitions for the next 10 years.

- The best provider of social homes in the country.
- A housing provider that listens and sorts things out.
- Helping our communities thrive.
- Achieving growth through partnerships and innovation.
- A professional, caring, great place to work.
- Embracing modern technology and data.

Regulation and Legislation

- The Shared Ownership Sales and Marketing Manager will ensure this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice. The regulations and legislations applicable to this policy are:
- Homes England – Capital Funding Guide

Roles and Responsibilities

- The key roles and responsibilities in Gentoo for this policy are set out below. If applicable, additional responsibilities for this policy are detailed in the relevant supporting procedures.

Role	Key responsibilities
Executive Director of Property	Overall accountability for compliance, governance, and effectiveness of the policy.
Executive Team	Approval of the policy and oversight of material compliance or performance issues.
Director of Development and Regeneration	Accountable policy owner, responsible for implementation, resources, controls, and escalation.
Shared Ownership Sales and Marketing Manager	Operational implementation, colleague training, customer information, decision oversight, and monitoring.
Shared Ownership Sales Team	Application administration, evidence checking, communication, and maintenance of the audit trail.
Independent Financial Adviser (panel)	Independent eligibility and affordability assessment using the required documentation, without transferring the final allocation decision away from Gentoo.

Definitions

- The following definitions are used throughout this policy

Shared Ownership – is a scheme to help people become homeowners 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.

- Financial Adviser – suitably qualified and appropriately regulated mortgage or financial adviser

Term	Definition
Domestic properties	Any Gentoo property that is occupied for residential purposes under a tenancy agreement and where Gentoo are responsible for maintaining the property.
Domestic leasehold properties	Any domestic property that is occupied by a third-party for residential purposes under the terms of a residential lease, but the Group retains ownership of the freehold.
Properties managed by others	Any domestic or non-domestic property that is owned by the Group but is managed by another organisation under the terms of a contract or similar agreement.

Associated Procedures and Processes

- Shared Ownership Policy – this will be reviewed every three years, unless business needs or legislative changes dictate that we review it before this time.

Policy Detail

- As demand for our new build affordable homes can often outstrip supply of our Shared Ownership homes, they are now offered on a first-come, first-served basis.
- This policy gives our definition of first-come, first-served:
- First come, first served should determine the order in which eligible applications are progressed, but it should not override the requirement for applicants to satisfy all applicable eligibility, affordability, funding, legal and risk assessment requirements.

- Any proposed purchaser must fit basic Homes England Eligibility to be able to progress to the first stage qualification:
 - 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. Existing shared owners are required to have disposed of their existing Shared Ownership home at the point of purchase.
 - Owns a home and wants to move but cannot afford a new home that meets their needs. If they have a property to sell, it must currently be in the process of selling with a named purchaser and complete chain. Please note: chains will be confirmed through the estate agents and/or solicitors prior to any reservation being completed.
 - You must be in a position to reserve the home and proceed with the purchase in order to be considered as part of our first-come, first-served allocation.
- **Stage 1:** Proposed purchaser must complete the SO Application form, this is a high-level check of eligibility.
- **Stage 2:** Referral to Panel IFA for Initial Affordability Check & Mortgage / Cash Buyer Sign off.
- The first fully completed Initial Assessment Sign Off Sheet and Mortgage Buyer / Cash Buyer sign off sheet received by Gentoo from a financial adviser that confirms the applicant can proceed with a reservation demonstrates first priority. Once an assessment has been received, a plot can be held – pending viewing, if applicable and full reservation.
- Please note the financial assessment applies to buyers requiring a mortgage and those who do not require a mortgage (cash buyers). Template financial assessment forms have been provided by Homes England and a link for the templates are below. We do require the details in this format in order to proceed with any reservation.

- Priority is established at the recorded date and time when Gentoo receives, through the designated application channel, a complete application pack containing all required eligibility and affordability information, including the Initial Affordability Assessment and the relevant Mortgage Buyer or Cash Buyer sign-off.
- Where information is incomplete, priority will not be established until all required evidence has been received, either in person or via email and verified. Where two complete applications are recorded at the same time, the Shared Ownership Sales and Marketing Manager will determine priority using timestamps of receipt. Where the recorded timestamps are identical, an independently witnessed random selection process will be used and documented.
- **[Capital Funding Guide - 1. Shared Ownership - Guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/capital-funding-guide/1-shared-ownership#signoff)**
- **<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/capital-funding-guide/1-shared-ownership#signoff>**
- Once a plot is held, we would require within a 48-hour period the following steps should happen:
 - Proposed purchaser will be invited to complete a reservation form to review and sign, including plans and specifications for the home.
 - Proposed purchasers must also instruct their chosen solicitor.
 - Proposed purchaser must pay a reservation fee of £500 to Gentoo Homes. Terms and conditions governing the retention and refund are available upon request and are provided at point of reservation.
- If any of the above three steps are not completed within the 48-hour period, the proposed purchaser will be informed in writing that the offer of reservation no longer stands. In instances where multiple interested parties have expressed interest in a home, we will offer the reservation opportunity to the next proposed purchaser waiting for the property, and the 48-hour process will begin with them.
- There will be clear communication throughout to all parties.
- We also make a commitment that only one reservation form will be sent out within the 48-hour period where a home has been held.

- In some instances, there may be additional rules dictating the allocation of our properties. This can include:
 - Priority for MoD Personnel: Priority continues to be given to military personnel (Ministry of Defence) who are eligible for Shared Ownership. Serving military personnel and former members of the British Armed Forces discharged in the last two years.
 - In these cases, applicants that fit the above criteria will be given priority. This is where required by the applicable Homes England programme or government direction; Gentoo will apply the prescribed priority for eligible current or former members of the Armed Forces. Within each applicable priority category, complete and eligible applications will be progressed in first-come, first-served order.
- If you are referred for an affordability assessment, this is not mortgage advice and does not guarantee you can get a mortgage. Please speak to us if you're unsure about what advice you should expect to receive and what this means for you.
- In summary, Shared Ownership homes are allocated based on a first-come, first-served basis, provided that applicants meet the relevant eligibility and affordability requirements and are able to proceed with the reservation at that time. Neither the level of the initial share proposed nor whether the applicant requires a mortgage will, by itself, affect the allocation decision.
- Subject to applicants meeting the relevant eligibility, affordability and ability-to-proceed requirements, Gentoo will not give preference solely because one applicant proposes to purchase a larger initial share or does not require a mortgage.

Performance Monitoring, Reporting and Auditing

Board and Committee Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Key performance measures for Shared Ownership sales are as follows. All are reported on monthly to the Development Team.
- Time to sell
- Having a minimum level of stock
- Having a minimum level of void loss.
- In addition, the Shared Ownership Team are responsible for auditing every file to ensure we are adhering to Capital Funding Guide requirements. For example, showing Financial Adviser sign off.

Internal Audit and Assurance

- Shared Ownership Team are responsible for auditing every file to ensure we

are adhering to Capital Funding Guide requirements.

Records

- Shared Ownership Application Form
- Initial Affordability Check
- Mortgage Buyer / Cash Buyer sign off full
- Key Information About the Home document (KID 1) – provided to customers.
- Key Information about Shared Ownership (KID2A) – provided to customers.
- Summary Of Costs (KID 2B) – provided to customers.

Version Control

Version history			
Version	Amendment details	Date	Revised by
0.1	Creation of policy and initial draft.	July 2026	Tracy Clark-McCabe
0.2	Updated policy format with additional information required.		Governance Team
1.0	Approved by the Executive Team.	October 2026	Governance Team