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1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy sets out how we will allocate our garages to local residents, and how we will manage these resources effectively, including income collection and repairs.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Lewisham Homes manage over 2,000 garages on behalf of Lewisham council. The garages we manage are let to tenants and leaseholders living in properties managed by Lewisham Homes, as well as to other residents who live in the borough of Lewisham.
- 2.2 This policy aligns to our corporate plan by contributing to our ambitions 'Build and invest in safe, attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods', and 'Be an efficient and high performing business, maximising opportunities to deliver more'.
- 2.3 By managing the garage stock effectively we maximise the number of garages in use at any time, and prevent them from falling into disrepair or being misused.

3. Allocation and agreed use

- 3.1 Lewisham Homes maintain a waiting list of applicants for garage spaces on an estate/area basis. Anyone over the age of 18 living in the London Borough of Lewisham can apply to rent a garage but priority will be given to existing tenants and leaseholders of Lewisham Homes. New applicants will be considered in the following order:
 - 1) Disabled tenants/leaseholders (blue badge holders) on the estate where the garage is situated.
 - 2) Other tenants/leaseholders on the estate where the garage is situated
 - 3) Other tenants/leaseholders on neighbouring estates
 - 4) Tenants/leaseholders of Lewisham Homes from all other estates
 - 5) Anyone else whose principal residence is in the London Borough of Lewisham

- 3.2 Garages in Lewisham may be charged at different rents to reflect demand in different areas. These will be reviewed from time to time. All charges are exclusive of VAT, which will be charged to non-tenant/non-resident leaseholders.
- 3.3 When a garage becomes available, the highest applicant on the waiting list will be contacted and will be given 2 working days to decide to accept the offer. If an applicant is in debt to Lewisham Homes they will only be offered the garage on the condition that the debt is cleared within five working days. After this time has passed, the garage will be offered to the next person on the waiting list.
- 3.4 All vehicle and/or belongings are stored at the risk of the licensee. Lewisham Homes accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage to items stored in a garage space.
- 3.5 Garages are let on the basis that they are used for the primary purpose of storing a private motor vehicle. The vehicle must be taxed or have a valid Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN). The garage agreement sets out conditions of use which must be followed. Any failure to comply with these conditions may result in termination of the agreement.
- 3.6 Under no circumstance may a garage be used to run a business, be used as accommodation for animals/pets, or to store items which are dangerous, offensive or illegal.
- 3.7 Any item stored in the garage is at the residents risk. Licence holders are encouraged to obtain their own contents insurance, as Lewisham Homes' are not responsible for any contents kept in garages that may be lost, stolen or damaged.
- 3.8 All garages must be paid for in advance. All new lets are encouraged to pay by direct debit.
- 3.9 Lewisham Homes will take steps to terminate the licence where rent arrears have built up on a garage account, the garage has been abandoned, the garage agreement has been breached, or where vacant possession is otherwise required in line with this policy and the garage agreement.
- 3.10 No-one is permitted to join the garage waiting list or let a garage if they owe money to Lewisham Homes or are in breach of a tenancy/lease condition. This may be checked at application stage, prior to a let, and periodically thereafter for existing licensees. Where a tenant/leaseholder owes us money and we are taking legal action to recover this, we will check if they also have a garage account and if so will arrange for that to be terminated.
- 3.11 Garages must be made available for access by Lewisham Homes' staff or to contractors working on our behalf, where reasonable notice is given. This will usually be at least 48 hours, but may be less in an emergency.
- 3.12 The licensee is responsible for reporting any repairs to our Repairs Team promptly. Repairs will generally be carried out in line with Lewisham Homes' responsive repairs guidelines, depending on the urgency of the repair required.

- 3.13 Where a repair cost is likely to be high, we may decide that it will be uneconomic to repair the garage. If this happens, we will arrange to take back possession of the garage and will try to offer the licensee an alternative garage.
- 3.14 Where a repair is expected to take longer than the timeframes in our responsive repairs guidelines, we will take back possession of the garage and offer the licensee an alternative garage. If the licence holder prefers to keep their current garage, they will be unable to claim any refund of rent charges or other compensation.
- 3.15 Where a repair is required and takes longer than advised, preventing the licence holders from using their garage, we will try to offer the licensee an alternative garage until the repairs are completed. If the licence holder prefers to keep their current garage, they will be unable to claim any refund of rent charges or other compensation from the point of being offered the alternative garage.
- 3.16 Lewisham Homes may recharge the licensee for the cost of certain work in line with our policy for rechargeable work. This will typically include deliberate or accidental damage, lost keys, as well as clearance, storage and disposal costs.
- 3.17 One weeks' written notice by either Lewisham Homes or the license holder is required for the garage licence to be terminated. Four weeks' notice is given for rent arrears and garages identified for development.
- 3.18 Empty garages may from time to time be used by Lewisham Homes for internal use. Decisions on the use of such resources will be made in line with delegated authority levels, after having taken into account the costs or savings of this option, our business needs, and the impact on our residents.
- 3.19 The licensee must only park inside the garage and not outside or on the forecourt. Any space outside the garage is not included in the terms of the agreement.

4. Monitoring and controls

- 4.1 Lewisham Homes will monitor the implementation of this policy in the following ways:
- Maintaining a garage waiting list
 - Monitoring garage rent accounts
 - Required access for inspection
 - Photographic records where required
 - Monitoring repairs costs
- 4.2 Lewisham Homes have a complaints procedure that should be used for any complaints regarding this policy or its implementation.

5. Legislation and regulation

5.1 Section 24 of the Housing Act 1985, which governs Local Authorities power to determine rent for the tenancy or occupation of properties, does not apply to garages. Lewisham Council can therefore fix what it considers to be a reasonable rent in respect of the letting of its garages.

5.2 Other relevant legislation includes but is not limited to:

- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 – Section 41
- Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977

5.3 In line with our legal duty we can:

- Immediately dispose of perishable goods or goods that would involve an unreasonable cost or inconvenience to store;
- Serve a notice on the owner to collect goods
- If goods are not collected within one month of notice being served, Lewisham Homes becomes the owner and can sell or dispose of items.

6. Equality, diversity and inclusion

6.1 As part of the review of this policy we have undertaken an Equality Assessment. There was no impact on any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

6.2 We have continued to give priority to disabled applicants who wish to rent a garage to store a vehicle in their local area.

7. Communication

7.1 This policy will be communicated to residents through the Lewisham Homes website.

7.2 All new and existing garage licence-holders will be informed of the updated policy.

Replaces: Garage policy 2019	
Date approved: 06 May 2022 Executive Leadership Team	Effective date: 06 May 2022
Next review: 06 May 2024	
Policy owner: Head of Income and Support	