

The Drive Co-operative Allocation Policy

Accepted as of 13/08/2020

The Drive Housing Co-operative provides an alternative, more collective way of living in London. We aim to address social issues such as isolation, fragmentation of society, stress and insecurity. We provide secure and stable housing and increased agency through collective self-governance. By living communally, sharing resources and consuming as ethically as possible we are able to reduce our ecological impact and promote sustainable living. Currently, we have a solidarity fund to provide rent assistance to members if needed. In future, we aim to limit rents charged to the local housing benefit level in order to provide truly affordable housing.

We have a collective concern for the ethical and sustainable provision of housing, and a shared belief in the benefits of living as part of a community. We believe that the way we live can have a positive impact on our society and the planet. Through living together as sustainably as possible, we are developing and demonstrating a viable alternative to the current unequal, unsustainable model of tenant/landlord relationship or individual home ownership. The empowering effect of secure, self-governed affordable housing, and participation in communal life, has a positive impact on individual and collective mental health.

We expect people with an interest in becoming members to share these values:

1- General Principles

The Drive is a fully mutual Co-operative, and operates in alignment with the 7 Co-operative principles. These enshrine the values through which Co-operatives seek to effect change.

These are as follows:

- **1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership**

Membership of the Drive is open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

- **2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control**

The Drive Housing Cooperative is a democratic organisation controlled by their members, who are required to actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Those serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership.

- **3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation**

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. The capital is the common property of the co-operative. Members allocate surpluses for the purpose of developing the co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

- **4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence**

The Drive is an autonomous, self-help organisation controlled by its members. If it enters into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raises capital from external

sources, it does so on terms that ensure democratic control by its members and maintain its co-operative autonomy.

- **5th Principle: Education, Training and Information**

The Drive provides education and training for its members, elected representatives, managers, and employees, so they can contribute effectively to the development of the cooperative.

We inform the general public about the nature and benefits of co-operation, running and participating in events which raise the profile of co-operatives.

- **6th Principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives**

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

- **7th Principle: Concern for Community**

The Drive works for the sustainable development of its communities through policies adopted by its members.

General Principles, and how they relate to The Drive:

- *1 - Within The Drive, we live by non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian, collectivist principles and proactively seek to eliminate discrimination and prejudice, of any form, in the way we live.*
- *2 - Members have equal voting rights exercised through consensus. Within The Drive, we strive to operate and live on a non-hierarchical basis and make decisions using a consensus model, to better facilitate intentional communal living.*
- *3 In practice, for us, the property, and any revenue raised is owned solely by the cooperative and is held in common for the membership and furthering the aims of the co-operative, but is not divisible amongst members.*
- *4 Our independence and autonomy are what allow us to remain free of the structural injustices inherent in the market and within public bodies, and ensuring that our rights to democratic self-governance are not constrained by external requirements guides our decisions as to which contracts we entertain or businesses we support.*
- *5 Members are expected to take an active role in their learning, with ongoing training provided internally and by external organisations, such as Radical Routes, Seeds for Change, etc. and we will support education, as well as expect self-directed learning, of members to be able to fully participate in all aspects of membership.*
- *6 We are associate members of Radical Routes, Co-operative UK and try to buy supplies from co-operatives. Some of our members play more active roles in co-operative development, supporting initiatives such as Cooperation Town and Coops For London.*

- *7 Recognising that our communities extend beyond our immediate environment, The Drive is committed to working through ecologically informed practices, supporting local initiatives to foster more sustainable communities, and members often actively support causes whose aims align with those of the co-operative movement.*

2-Allocation Policy

2-a Eligibility criteria:

Those are the criteria we use to determine eligibility:

- Aged 18 and over (At the moment, we do not offer accomodation to children)
- Can afford the rent
- “One room, one person, one application” ¹
- Willingness to live by the above mentioned co-operative principles

2-b Application process:

At each step of the process we will find out from the prospective member if they are willing to move further and internal discussion amongst all members that will be formalised through our Ordinary General Meeting.

	<u>As a prospective member you will:</u>	<u>The Drive will</u>
1	Attend a “Social”, an informal event taking place bi-monthly either at theDrive or in a local community.	Advertise through facebook page, our email newsletter, co-operative organisations, and other channels, in accordance with our commitment to co-operative principle 1. State the purpose of the social as a place of tension between interpersonal dynamics and knowledge of the future allocation process; as well as inform prospective members that vacancies come up as and when current members leave and that this is unpredictable.

¹ Membership of the co-operative is given to those who are resident within the properties owned by the co-operative, and license agreements are given on a one-member-per-room basis. So, if a couple wished to move in, there would be two memberships (and therefore two rooms) required.

	Come for Dinner	Ensure that as many members as possible present
	Mutual agreement on moving on the next step	
2	Provide us with the information necessary in the application form, either in writing, video call or any other format that may be suitable	Ensure the information contained in the application form is captured in a way that is comfortable for you, and communicable to our current members
3	Come for a one week's stay	-Communicate with you around possible dates -support you to meet with all the current members in a format that's comfortable for all
	Mutual agreement on moving on the next step (willingness to engage with the principles of the co-op)	
	Ask to be put on the waiting list	Maintain the waiting list and communicate with you when a room becomes available

2-c Allocation ordering:

This is mainly done on a first-come first-served basis. Once we become aware of a vacancy, we will contact people on the waiting list (by date of completion of the application process)

Decisions at each step in the process may be influenced by the following:

- Gender balance within the current members
- Immediacy of need
- Different skill set needed to further the aims of the Drive
- consider the group dynamics of current members and the balance of the makeup of the group (e.g. to reduce the over representation of white/able-bodied/middle class people in the cooperative movement)
- although this is difficult to predict, we prioritise people who envisage staying long term (more than a year)

After this, we invite people to come and live with us, for an initial three months to see how it goes, to make sure that it's right!

Initial 3 months stay

- Schedule an induction session
- Assign a buddy
- Encourage full participation in the life at the Drive with support

Mutual agreement to full membership