

1. Statement of intent

- 1.1 The Saffron Group (referred to hereafter as 'Saffron') is committed to meeting its responsibilities to its tenants where they wish to exercise their Right to Buy, Right to Acquire or Right to Shared Ownership.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy is designed to set out Saffron's approach to the Right to Buy, Right to Acquire and Right to Shared Ownership.
- 2.2 Tenants are unable to exercise more than one claim to purchase at the same time.

3. Right to Buy (Preserved)

- 3.1 The Right to Buy scheme allows eligible tenants to buy their home at a discount, depending on their individual tenancy and the type of property they live in. To be eligible within Saffron to exercise the Preserved Right to Buy, tenants would need to have held a secure tenancy at the point of the large-scale voluntary transfer from South Norfolk District Council on 17 May 2004.
- 3.2 Other eligibility criteria are assessed in line with Part V of the Housing Act 1985.

4. Right to Acquire

- 4.1 The Right to Acquire scheme allows eligible tenants to buy their home at a discount, depending on their individual tenancy and the type of property they live in. To be eligible within Saffron to exercise the Right to Acquire, tenants would need to have held an assured (non-shorthold) tenancy for a minimum of two years.
- 4.2 The property for which the Right to Acquire has been exercised, must have been built or acquired by a registered provider after 1 April 1997 through public grant funding or, acquired through a stock transfer from a local authority on or after 1 April 1997. If the property is in a Designated Protected Rural Area as set by the Secretary of State, Saffron will not be able to sell the property and the application will automatically be denied.
- 4.3 Other eligibility criteria are assessed in line with The Housing (Right to Acquire) Regulations 1997.

5. Portability

- 5.1 Portability is the term used where, due to the condition of the property to which a tenant wishes to exercise the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire or if there are plans to demolish the property, the property cannot be sold and tenants can be offered an alternative eligible property to exercise this right.

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5.2 It is the current decision of Saffron that this option will not be given to tenants.

6 Right to Shared Ownership

6.1 The Right to Shared Ownership is available to tenants living in new homes for Social Rent or Affordable Rent delivered through the Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26, with some limited exceptions. The Right to Shared Ownership is contractual and part of grant funding obligations accessed through the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

6.2 The property for which the Right to Shared Ownership has been exercised must have been funded through the Affordable Homes Programme 2021 – 2026 to be considered.

6.3 To make a claim for the Right to Shared Ownership, tenants must have lived in the relevant property for at least a year and have been a tenant of social housing for at least three years.

6.4 Eligible tenants can purchase between 10% and 75% under this scheme.

6.5 Eligibility to the scheme must follow the normal Shared Ownership rules and will be used when assessing a claim to the Right to Shared Ownership.

6.6 Once a tenant becomes a Shared Owner, other policies will then apply and include but not limited to; staircasing, subletting and consent.

7 Notices sent

7.1 All notices which are sent to the tenant by Saffron, will be reviewed and signed off by the department manager or an alternative appropriate manager in their absence.

7.2 Saffron will adhere to the statutory deadlines imposed however, if these are missed, tenants have the right to serve notice on Saffron to bring the process back in line with where it should be.

7.3 Any denials of the claim to the Right to Buy, Right to Acquire or the Right to Shared Ownership will be accompanied by a cover letter, explaining in full Saffron's reasons for the decisions.

7.4 If your claim has been denied based on suitability for elderly persons, you can appeal the decision, if you do not agree, to the First Tier Tribunal. The First Tier Tribunal will not consider any other denial reasons.

7.5 Saffron's complaint process cannot be used with regards to delays or the process of the Right to Buy.

8 Post Sale Restrictions

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- 8.1 On the completion of the sale of the property through Right to Buy or Right to Acquire, restrictions are placed within either the Transfer or Lease and reference on the Title Register. Saffron cannot charge for the first requests which are made and carried out with regards to restrictions, but may for any subsequent owners where the restrictions are still in effect
- 8.2 The Right of First Refusal restriction remains in place for ten years following the original sale of the property through the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire, in line with Section 159 of Part V of the Housing Act 1985. This restriction means that the customer must offer the property back to Saffron before they try to sell on the open market. Saffron must respond within eight weeks of receiving notification from the owner, or the right is waived.
- 8.3 The Repayment of Discount restriction remains in place for five years following the original sale of the property through the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire, in line with Section 151B of Part V of the Housing Act 1985. If the owner wishes to sell the property within this time, they must repay their discount to Saffron, which will be calculated for them.
- 8.4 On completion of a Right to Shared Ownership claim, restrictions will be placed in line with the full terms of the model lease, though there may be additional depending on the property being purchased. There will be a Right of Pre-emption included as standard, similar to the Right of First Refusal, which will be for the duration of the lease granted.

9 Policy Compliance

- 9.1 This policy will comply with the relevant legislation and regulatory guidance such as (but not limited to):
- The Housing Act 1985 (as amended)
 - The Housing Act 1996
 - The Housing (Right to Acquire) Regulations 1997
 - The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
 - The Localism Act 2011
 - Statutory Instrument 2002 (1091)
 - The Capital Funding Guide
 - The Money Laundering Regulation 2017
- 9.2 This policy works in conjunction with other Saffron policies such as (but not limited to):
- Anti-Money Laundering policy
 - Anti-Fraud Bribery and Corruption policy
 - Complaints and Compliments policy
 - Minimum Monthly Surplus Income policy

Right to Purchase Policy

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Board/Committee	SLT
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