



NAS Policy 102. Waiting lists

1. The Society recognises waiting lists as evidence that there is an insufficient supply of allotments in the relevant locality, and believes that allotment providers should make every effort to address the shortfall, in accordance with the statutory duty to provide allotments where there is a demand for them.

2. Fair and efficient management of waiting lists is an important part of supporting the right to cultivate an allotment garden. Lists should be maintained using procedures that are transparent and not open to abuse.

3. The Society upholds the traditional practice of offering vacant plots to persons on any waiting list in the strict time order in which their name was entered on the list, as the fairest method of allocating plots until such time as the supply of plots is brought into line with the demand for them. Exceptions to this practice accepted by the Society include:

(i) Where the circumstances of a current tenant in good standing are such that they would be willing to surrender their tenancy voluntarily, to enable the first person on the waiting list to start gardening immediately, in return for the promise of priority on the waiting list should their circumstances change for the better.

(ii) Where existing tenants on other sites under the jurisdiction of the allotment authority are required to relocate as a consequence of a site closure undertaken in full compliance with the law.

(iii) Where the circumstances of the person entitled to be offered the next available plot are such that the provider is willing to exercise discretion, in a transparent and fair manner and in accordance with its own rules, and offer the plot instead to the next person on the waiting list.

4. The Society accepts that providers may wish to prioritise waiting lists according to residential location, whether defined by distance from a site or local authority boundaries, and/or on ground of special needs. The Society encourages providers to be open about their prioritisation rules, and sensitive to exceptional circumstances affecting particular applicants. The Society believes, however, that it is unfair to apply new systems of prioritisation retrospectively to current waiting lists, and both unacceptable and potentially unlawful to use any such prioritisation to apply pressure on existing tenants in good standing to surrender their plots, unless the possibility of such changes taking place in the future was made clear when waiting lists were joined or tenancies accepted.

5. The Society believes that the provider's procedures for notifying prospective tenants of a vacancy should be fair and transparent. The Society also recognises the need for a speedy process if plots are not to become derelict while vacant, and the right of people on a waiting list to know where they stand on the list at any particular time. For these reasons, the Society welcomes measures to ensure the ongoing accuracy of any waiting list.

6. The Society opposes the closure of waiting lists, irrespective of their length, because waiting lists are an important measure of the unsatisfied demand for plots, and thus of the need to expand supply if the allotment provider is to fulfill its statutory duty to provide a sufficient number of allotments.

7. The Society encourages allotment providers with vacant plots and no waiting list to make their surplus plots available to persons resident in other areas, provided that new tenants accepted on this basis are in good standing, and are explicitly advised on the consequences should a waiting list subsequently be opened.