



HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Policy Date	
Approved by	
Review Date	



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Allocations Policy sets out the priorities and procedures for the allocation of social housing in the Arun District. It applies to applicants joining the housing register for the first time and current Arun District Council (ADC) or Registered Provider tenants wanting to transfer.

1.2 ADC is committed to the principles of Choice Based Lettings, enabling people to make well-informed decisions about their housing options. Registered applicants can bid for properties suitable for their housing needs and in their chosen location. Choice helps to improve tenancy and community sustainment and encourage residents to have a stake in their community.

1.3 This Allocations Policy helps us to:

- Fulfil our obligations in S167 of the Housing Act 1996 to allocate in accordance with an Allocations Policy
- Use the additional qualifying criteria discretion provided by the Localism Act 2011 in deciding who will be allowed to register for social housing
- Meet the requirements of Part VI Housing Act 1996 (as amended); the Localism Act 2011; and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 by giving reasonable, but not always overriding, preference to applicants in greatest need
- Achieve the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard
- Deliver the ADC Tenancy Strategy, Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy
- Deliver our Domestic Abuse Policy and those of our Registered Provider partners
- Meet the requirements of the Government's Statutory Guidance for allocations, homelessness, and improving access for members of the Armed Forces

1.4 The Policy is based on key principles shared by the Council and our Registered Provider partners:

- Meeting our Corporate Plan objectives to create sustainable communities having regard for local circumstances
- Allocating housing fairly, consistently, and carefully and to ensure that our decisions are transparent
- Removing barriers to accessing social housing for homeless households
- Meeting the emergency and long-term housing needs of people fleeing domestic violence and abuse

- Meeting the housing needs of people leaving care
- Improving access to suitable homes for people with disabilities
- Allocating housing in a way which complements the ADC Tenancy and Lettings Policy and the tenancy policies of our Registered Provider partners
- Ensuring vulnerable households can navigate the allocations process by providing clear and easy to understand information
- Enabling applicants to express choice in selecting their accommodation wherever possible
- Ensuring the Housing Register better reflects housing need than housing demand through effective management of the register
- Improving the way the Council and our Registered Provider partners work together to ensure the effective allocation of social housing
- Providing appropriate advice to applicants ADC is unable to house, including accurate and timely referrals to other agencies
- Providing a high-quality service with clear standards
- Reducing the cost and use of emergency interim accommodation by providing advice and assistance to prevent homelessness and by making sure that homeless people and those threatened with homelessness are housed as soon as possible
- Making the best use of the affordable housing in the district ensuring that vacant homes are let quickly and efficiently
- Reviewing the policy regularly and when prompted by changes in the law, Government Guidance and Regulation and to ensure continuous improvement

1.5 The Allocations Policy applies to ADC as a provider of social housing and our Registered Provider partners which currently include:

- Worthing Homes
- Arun Housing
- Vivid
- Sage
- Sanctuary Housing
- Southern Housing
- Hyde
- Places for People
- Clarion
- Hastoe
- Stonewater
- Saxon Weald
- Guinness Homes

1.6 In framing the Allocation Policy, ADC has had regard to:

- Housing Act 1996 as amended
- Housing Act 1985
- Localism Act 2011
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England
- Homelessness Code of Guidance
- Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces statutory guidance
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Welfare Reform Act 2012

2.0 Choice

2.1 There is a very high demand for social housing in the area and we will balance providing choice and housing need to ensure that housing is offered in a way that helps to best manage the housing stock.

2.2 The properties are advertised online and will provide valuable information about the property, together with links to information about the local neighbourhood, helping applicants to make informed decisions about which accommodation they want to be considered for

2.3 Whilst the aim of the Council and our Registered Provider partners is to provide choice in the allocation of social housing in Arun, there will be a number of exceptional situations where this will not be possible. In such cases the home will be let as a direct offer and not advertised in the policy. See sections 93-101 of this policy for more information.

2.4 We will support people who do not qualify to join the register or may have a long time to wait for an offer with advice on other housing options including:

- Use of the private sector
- Home ownership
- Intermediate housing
- Build to rent
- First Homes

- Local Housing Companies
- Mutual exchange

3.0 Equality and diversity

3.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations.

3.2 Our Allocations Policy promotes equal opportunities in the services it provides. Our aim is to implement and maintain services which ensure that no potential or current applicant is treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, race, colour, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, family status, transgender or transsexuality, nor is disadvantaged by the application of a rule, condition, or requirement, which has a discriminatory effect which cannot be justified by law.

3.3 Access to the policy may be more difficult for people with a disability, sight, or hearing impairment and for those who do not speak English as a first language. We are committed to helping all those who need assistance to access the policy particularly by working closely with other agencies and our Registered Provider partners.

3.4 The letting of property will be subject to the individual Equality and Diversity policies of the Council and our Registered Provider partners.

3.5 A summary and a full copy of the Allocations Policy are available online. The Council will provide a full copy of the Allocations Policy on request.

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Exceptional Circumstances

4.1.1 The Allocation Policy may be overridden where the Housing Options Manager considers that an individual's exceptional circumstances warrant a departure from any part of this policy, has recorded reasons for that decision, and has the written or emailed agreement of the Housing Options Manager.

4.1.2 The Group Head of Housing Services can make minor amendments to the Allocations Policy to address changes in legislation, statutory guidance, and local need.

4.2 Housing Options Team

Role	Responsibility
Assistant Housing Options Officers	<p>Managing the Housing Register including eligibility, qualification, verification, assessment, registration, banding, allocation, and nomination</p> <p>Assisting vulnerable applicants with registration and bidding</p> <p>Housing options advice for people who are unable to join the Housing Register</p>
Housing Options Officers	<p>Managing homelessness cases including prevention and relief</p> <p>Assisting vulnerable applicants with registration and bidding</p> <p>Housing options advice for people who are unable to join the Housing Register</p>
Housing Options Team Leaders	Main duty and direct allocation decisions, appeals on decisions made by Assistant Housing Options Officers and Housing Options Officers
Housing Options Manager	Overall responsibility for the Housing Register; homelessness decisions; appeals; exceptional circumstances and direct allocations
Residential Services Manager	Minor changes to the Allocations Policy

4.3 Safeguarding

4.3.1 In any situation where there is evidence a child or adult may be at risk, the Council will act promptly and in accordance with our safeguarding policies and procedures and those of our Registered Provider partners.

4.4 Data Protection

4.4.1 The Council regards the lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important to its successful operations and to maintaining confidence between employees, residents and partners. More information about how we deal with personal information is in our Data Protection Policy.

4.4.2 Personal information will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and will be subject to appropriate confidentiality. Applicants have the right to see the information held about them and receive a copy of the information held on computer, or on paper file.

4.5 Data is retained whilst the client is on the Housing Register

4.5.1 If the client does not qualify to be included on the Housing Register:

- if there is no homeless application data is retained for six months from the date of removal.
- if there is a homeless application data is retained in accordance with the Homelessness data retention policy.

4.5.2 If the client requests removal from the Housing Register:

- if there is no homeless application data is removed within one calendar month.
- if there is a homeless application data is retained in accordance with the Homelessness data retention policy.

4.5.3 If the client is given a tenancy in an Arun property data will be retained in accordance the Neighbourhood data retention policy.

5.0 The Housing Register

5.1 Joining the register

5.1.1 To join the Housing Register applicants must have a local connection within the Arun district and either be in one of the reasonable preference categories or have a housing need. Local connection, reasonable preference and housing need are described in more detail below and at Finding a home | Arun District Council

5.1.2 All applicants must complete an online application form to join the housing register. Help will be provided to complete an application form by request from the applicant, a partner agency supporting the applicant or where it is clear an applicant is being disadvantaged by the online process. Details can be found on the Council's website.

5.2 Applications from Under 18s

5.2.1 Anyone over the age of 16 can join the housing register, although acceptance for offer will not normally be an option until they are over 18.

5.3 Joint Applications

- 5.3.1 Applications from partners, including same sex couples, who are cohabiting can be registered as joint applications giving both parties joint and several rights and responsibilities for any future tenancy.
- 5.3.2 If one partner is ineligible due to their immigration status, the other partner will be registered as the sole applicant.
- 5.3.3 Other adults who are not partners of the applicant (such as residential carers) can only be made joint applicants based on evidence of need.
- 5.3.4 If joint applicants ask to change to sole applications (for example, due to relationship breakdown) but want to remain registered, each sole applicant will retain the original application date as long as they are still eligible to join the housing register in their own right. The applicant with residency and parenting responsibilities for children may include them on the application. The other applicant may not include the children, even if there is shared custody or access arrangements. Any change in banding will be applied from the date of the change in circumstances.

5.4 Transferring tenants

- 5.4.1 Tenants of the Council may apply to transfer to another property if they meet the criteria to join the housing register.
- 5.4.2 A reference will be provided by the Neighbourhood Housing Team to verify that there are no grounds for exclusion described below.
- 5.4.3 Our Registered Provider partners operate their own transfer Policies and their tenants can apply to join the Housing Register subject to the provisions below.

5.5 Assessment

- 5.5.1 Applications will be assessed based on the information provided on the application form. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the form has been completed accurately.
- 5.5.2 The Council may request additional information or evidence where the details provided are not clear or not relevant to the information requested.
- 5.5.3 Incorrect information could result in a change in priority at any stage of the process. False information could result in exclusion from the Housing Register.

- 5.5.4 Further evidence will be required at nomination and offer stage depending on the separate requirements of the Council and its Housing Provider partners as described in their Tenancy/Lettings Policies.
- 5.5.5 Applicants from abroad will be required to provide proof of their nationality and immigration status which will be verified.
- 5.5.6 Applicants with medical, mental health or care needs which may be improved or relieved by a move should include these details on the housing register application form.
- 5.5.7 The Council will require specialist evidence to assess current medical, mental health and care need and the effect of a move to alternative accommodation on their condition. Advice may be needed from a medical professional, social services or other individuals or agencies with a detailed knowledge of the condition. The assessment will determine the medical priority of the application.
- 5.5.8 Responsibility for obtaining the information and any cost is with the applicant. The Council may seek its own specialist advice to determine medical, mental health or care needs. A home visit may be carried out to inform the assessment.

5.6 Local Connection

- 5.6.1 Subject to the exemptions list below, joining the Housing Register requires a local connection. Local connection is defined as:
- 5.6.2 The applicant or their partner are currently living in the Arun district and have lived in the Arun district permanently for at least 3 years immediately prior to the application date; or are currently living in the Arun district and have lived permanently in the Arun District for 5 years out of the last 10 years.
- 5.6.3 The applicant or their partner has worked on a full or part time basis (16 hours per week) in the Arun District for the past 2 years and remains in employment in the Arun District.
- 5.6.4 The applicant or their partner needs to be in the Arun District to give or receive regular daily support from or for a close relative (parents, adult children, brother and/or sister). This support must be required on an ongoing long-term basis and cannot be provided by other family members or available support agencies. The family member must be permanently resident in Arun District and have lived here permanently for at least 10 years immediately prior to the application date.

- 5.6.5 An applicant has been accepted as being owed the main homeless duty. The Homelessness main duty is defined as the main duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- 5.6.6 A young person who is owed a 'leaving care' duty by West Sussex County Council (WSCC) under section 23C of the Children Act 1989.
- 5.6.7 The Council will not disqualify the following applicants on the grounds that they do not have a local connection with the local authority:
- 5.6.8 Members and former members of the Armed Forces where the application is made within five years of discharge
- 5.6.9 Bereaved (or divorced or separated) spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving services family accommodation following the death of (or divorce or separation from) their spouse or partner
- 5.6.10 Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained because of their service
- 5.6.11 People who have experienced domestic abuse as defined by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and have established accommodation in refuge or other temporary accommodation located in the local authority area and it is safe to remain in the Arun District.
- 5.6.12 People over 60 for sheltered accommodation only and where there is no housing need
- 6.0 Exclusions from the Housing Register**
- 6.1 Applicants will not qualify to join the Housing Register if one or more of the following criteria apply to their household:
- 6.2 People from abroad**
- 6.2.1 People from abroad cannot be allocated accommodation if they are ineligible under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. There are two categories in S160ZA; a person under immigration control and a person other than a person under immigration control. The regulations are subject to change and are all explained in detail in the Allocation of Accommodation statutory guidance. Council staff can advise people from abroad on the regulations and how they affect their application.
- 6.3 People guilty of unacceptable behaviour**
- 6.3.1 The Council will exclude an applicant from the register where the applicant, or a member of the household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour within the past 5 years in any type of tenure, which if the applicant was a

tenant of the Council would entitle the Council to a possession order (Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985).

6.3.2 Unacceptable behaviour can include:

- Serious proven breach of tenancy conditions including harassment, nuisance and violence including serious nuisance or annoyance to neighbours such as eviction, Demoted Tenancy, Civil Injunctions, Criminal Behaviour Orders, Community Protection Notices or Noise Abatement Notices
- Perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Conviction of using the accommodation or allowing its use for immoral or illegal purposes
- Allowing the property to be seriously damaged by the tenant or other residents or visitors which has resulted in an evidenced claim for the Council or another landlord
- Conviction of an arrestable offence committed in the locality relating to violence or threats of violence
- Conviction of an arrestable offence relating to violence or threats of violence against Council staff.

6.3.3 Applicants excluded because of unacceptable behaviour will remain excluded for a period of 5 years from the date of the unacceptable behaviour incident or offence. Applicants may re-apply to the housing register after this period of exclusion.

6.3.4 Applicants who successfully bid for a property will be subject to a further review by the Council or the Registered Provider making an offer in accordance with their Tenancy/Lettings Policy.

6.4 Rent arrears and housing related debt

6.4.1 Applicants with rent arrears or housing related debts to the Council or other Registered Provider will not be accepted onto the register. Housing related debt includes:

- Current rent and service charges
- Rent bonds and deposits
- Any recoverable payments made on behalf of the applicant in respect of homelessness
- Debts in relation to previous tenancies with the Council or our Registered Provider partners
- Council Tax debt
- Housing benefit overpayment

- Storage and removal costs
- Rechargeable repairs
- Support charges
- Legal costs

6.4.2 An applicant who has maintained a regular repayment plan for a minimum of twelve months may be accepted onto the housing register and enabled to bid however, their housing related debts will be further reviewed by the Council or Registered Provider at the point of offer and in accordance with their Tenancy/Lettings Policy.

6.4.3 Applicants with housing related debts due solely to the social sector size Criteria (bedroom tax), will qualify to join the housing register where there is a housing need to downsize to a smaller property and where the debts will be cleared by qualification for the under-occupation incentive Policy.

6.4.4 Council staff will carry out verification of housing related debts and will exempt any debts which result from benefit delay and the applicant will remain excluded from the housing register until the debt is cleared in full.

6.5 Homeowners

6.5.1 Applicants and household members who own their own home in the UK or abroad will not qualify to be included on the housing register if that home is affordable to them and it meets their needs in terms of their health and/or disability. The following exceptions apply:

- People who are in financial difficulty because their home is being repossessed.
- People who meet the criteria for older persons housing
- People who require specialist housing because they have a disability or a medical condition where their current accommodation cannot be adapted
- People who are fleeing domestic abuse and where a homeless duty has been accepted

6.5.2 Applicants with sufficient income and/or savings to secure alternative housing

6.5.3 Main and joint applicants (including partners of the main and joint applicants) with a combined gross annual income in excess of £50,000 per year (not including means tested benefits) will not qualify to be included on the Housing Register.

6.5.4 Main and joint applicants (including partners of the main and joint applicants) with combined savings in excess of £16,000, or £50,000 for applicants eligible for sheltered housing will not qualify to be included on the Housing Register. Savings are also taken to mean accessible equity within a property.

6.5.5 The income and savings criteria do not apply to current tenants of the Council wanting to downsize.

6.5.6 Armed Forces compensation payments will not be considered in calculations of financial resources.

7.0 Registration

7.1 Once an application is verified and needs are assessed, the Council will register the application and apply a registration date. The registration date is the date the application is fully verified, or in the case of homeless applicants to whom a full duty is accepted, it is the date that the Council accepts a duty to accommodate, if this is earlier.

7.2 Verification will include the following, however, the Council may request further information as required:

- Personal ID for all members of the household (e.g. birth certificate, passport, driving license or similar)
- Proof of the right to reside in the UK

7.3 Arun District Council will aim to:

- Register applications within 14 working days of the receipt of all verification documents
- Process changes in circumstances within 14 working days
- Reply to letters within 10 working days
- Answer phone calls within 30 seconds
- Provide advice to applicants to help them with bidding choices by phone, email and in person

7.4 An applicant is required to:

- Provide information to verify any application within 14 days of the application being made
- Keep the Council informed of any changes of circumstances
- Ensure that the Council have an up to date address
- Reply to requests for information as quickly as possible
- Treat Arun District Council staff with courtesy

- Give accurate information regarding personal circumstances

7.5 The applicant will receive written confirmation of their registration date, their priority status and reason for it and the property size for which they can bid.

7.6 If an applicant disagrees with their registration date, their priority band, or the assessment of their needs, they can appeal as described in the Review and Appeal section below.

8.0 Change of circumstances

8.1 All applicants are required to inform the Council immediately when their housing circumstances change. A change in circumstances may mean an application is moved up or down a band, or local connection or local priority is altered. If any change results in a band change the Council will write to inform the applicant of the new band, their new priority date if applicable and their right to appeal.

8.2 If an applicant is moved into a higher band, then their priority date will be the date they were accepted into the higher band. If an applicant is moved to a lower band then their priority date will be their original acceptance date.

8.3 Additional adults will not be added to an application where this results in the need for larger accommodation than the applicant's household was originally eligible without evidence of an overriding medical, mental health, mobility, or care need as agreed by a Housing Options Team Leader.

8.4 Applicants who require an additional bedroom to enable full time (24 hour) care, or couples who need to have separate bedrooms, may include this on their application subject to evidence of need.

8.5 An applicant or member of their registered household expecting a child or children will be able to include the child or children on their application from 6 months into the pregnancy and have their housing need and housing requirements reassessed accordingly.

8.6 Intentionally altering circumstances and false information

8.6.1 Applicants have a responsibility not to intentionally worsen their circumstances to join the housing register or to progress to a higher band including:

- If an applicant has voluntarily given up accommodation which is suitable for their needs

- Where a deliberate act results in the worsening of overcrowding or other housing circumstances without good reason; or the applicant has failed to take the Council's advice regarding their housing need

8.7 The Council may assess the application based on previous circumstances and applicant's housing need at their previous accommodation prior to the intentional act. This may result in the application being excluded or removed from the housing register.

8.8 It is an offence under section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 to intentionally provide false information or intentionally withhold information that should have been given to the Council. If an applicant intentionally provides false information or withholds information when applying to the Council for housing, the Council will exclude the application from the housing register for a period of 5 years. the Council may also take legal action against the applicant. This could include a fine of up to £5000.

8.9 If the applicant has already been granted a tenancy, and false information was used to obtain it, the Council may take action using the powers of the Housing Act 1996 and the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013.

8.10 Allocations of accommodation made to employees of Arun District Council or to Arun District Councillors, or to members of their family where these family links are known to the Council, will be checked and authorised by the Group Head of Residential Services to ensure these allocations comply fully with the Allocations Policy.

9.0 Renewing Applications

9.1 The Council will write to an applicant on or after the anniversary of their application to establish whether an applicant wants to remain on the housing register. If no application will be cancelled in one week if they fail to make contact. The Council will make additional contact with vulnerable applicants. No further contact will result in the application being removed from the Housing Register.

9.2 Applicants who do not bid during a twelve-month period will be subject to the same review process, however account will be taken of the supply of any suitable properties becoming available for bidding.

10.0 Removals from the housing register

10.1 An application may be removed from the Housing Register in the following circumstances:

- An applicant does not respond to correspondence within 28 days
- An applicant asks the Council to cancel their application
- An applicant accepts the tenancy of a property provided by the Council or another social housing landlord
- An applicant accepts the offer of a home purchase by shared ownership
- An applicant no longer qualifies for the Register
- An applicant successfully moves under the mutual exchange Policy
- An applicant is no longer eligible to be on the housing register

11.0 Housing Need Bandings

11.1 Reasonable Preference

11.1.1 The Council is required to give reasonable preference to the following categories of person:

11.1.2 Those who are threatened with homelessness (to whom the Council owes a 'Prevention' duty); or homeless (to whom the Council owes a 'Relief' duty); or to whom a main homelessness duty has been accepted. These definitions are set out within the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. These applicants are placed in Band A as defined by Priority A10, Band B, as defined by Priorities B2 & B3; and Band C, as defined by C2.

11.1.3 Those in unsanitary or overcrowded housing or living in unsatisfactory conditions. (These applicants are placed in Band A, as defined by Priority A7; and Band C, as defined by C8).

11.1.4 Those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including a disability. (These applicants are placed in C1)

11.1.5 Those who need to live in a particular locality in the district, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or others. This includes social housing tenants who need to move for work-related reasons. (These applicants are placed in Band C, as defined by Priority C6).

11.1.6 Applicants may fall into more than one of these categories. In such cases, the highest Priority Band will apply.

11.2 Once an application is fully assessed it will be placed in a one of the subcategories defined within each priority reflecting the housing need of the application, including reasonable preference.

11.3 There are four priority bands:

- Band A: Emergency and high priority

- Band B: High priority including reasonable preference
- Band C: Medium priority
- Band D: Low or deferred priority

11.4 Band A

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
A1	Medical A	<p>The applicant or a member of the household has an emergency or life-threatening medical or mental health condition which makes the current accommodation unsuitable to continue to occupy and is essential to rectify urgently.</p> <p>The condition, why the current accommodation is unsuitable, an explanation of how this can only be improved in alternative suitable accommodation and the type of accommodation required must all be confirmed by a specialist medical professional</p>	<p>We may override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation. If no successful bid has been made within 6 months the banding will be reviewed.</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down-banded or removed from the housing register.</p>
A2	Under-occupying 1+ bedroom	Applicants living in Council or Registered Provider accommodation within the Arun District who are under-occupying one or more bedrooms.	No required timescale for bidding.
A3	Disabled adaptations	Applicants releasing an adapted property or to make best use of adapted stock where the tenant does not require adaptations.	No required timescale for bidding.
A4	Successors	Statutory and discretionary successors living in Council properties, where the Neighbourhood Housing Manager has agreed to rehouse an applicant to more suitable accommodation than that	Applicants required to bid within 12 weeks of being placed in Band A. However, the Council may override the choice based lettings process to

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
		currently occupied by the applicant	make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.
A5	Overcrowding Notice or Prohibition Order	An Overcrowding Notice or Prohibition Order has been served by the Council's Private Sector Housing Section as a result of statutory overcrowding; or disrepair; and where there is an imminent risk to the household; or it would be impossible to remain in the property whilst remedial works are carried out.	The Council will override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation. This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the main unintentional duty.
A6	Emergency priority	Severe housing need for exceptional circumstances, in crisis situations which warrant emergency priority as agreed by the Housing Options Manager. This excludes homeless applicants to whom the Council has a duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).	The Council may override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.
A7	Additional priority for ex Armed Forces personnel, where the assessed need falls within Band B	The following categories will be awarded one Band higher priority than their assessed need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • former members of the Regular Forces. • serving members of the Regular Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service. • bereaved spouses and civil 	No required timescale for bidding.

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
		<p>partners of members of the Regular Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service 	
A8	Homeless (owed the main duty)	<p>The priority will be awarded to applicants who are owed a full homelessness duty by Arun District Council under Section 193(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), except those who are owed this duty because of the inclusion of a 'restricted person' in their household.</p> <p>Priority A8 includes homeless applicants owed the main (unintentional) duty by Arun District Council, who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and to whom the local connection criteria of the allocations Policy do not apply.</p>	<p>For homeless applicants placed in emergency or temporary accommodation: the Council will make one reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>An applicant owed a duty under Section 193(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), and who subsequently refuses a suitable final offer of accommodation made under Section 193(7) or a private sector offer made under Section 193(7AA) of this Act, will no longer be owed a homelessness duty, and will be from the housing register for 6 months. The decision</p>

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
			<p>to end a homelessness duty will be made by a Housing Options Officer.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.</p>
A9	Homeless (making own arrangements)	<p>Homeless households owed the main (unintentional) duty by the Council and making their own temporary arrangements. Main unintentional duty is defined as in Section 193 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017).</p> <p>Arrangements will be subject to home visit and safeguarding checks by the Council's staff</p> <p>Priority A9 includes homeless applicants owed the main (unintentional) duty by the Council, who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and to whom the local connection criteria of the allocations Policy do not apply.</p>	<p>Homeless applicants making their own housing arrangements while bidding for permanent accommodation, Band A will apply for a maximum period of 6 months. Applicants will only be permitted to remain in Band A if no suitable properties have been advertised</p> <p>The Council may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the</p>

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
			Council's main unintentional duty.
A10	Homeless (Relief stage) and owed the s188 interim accommodation duty	Applicants who have been placed in emergency accommodation and are owed the s.188 interim accommodation duty and the relief duty. The household must be actively engaging with the Local Authority to relieve their homelessness and be working to achieve the agreed actions within their personal housing plan.	<p>Band A will apply until a main duty decision is made on the application.</p> <p>The Council may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.</p>

11.5 Band B

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
B1	Medical B	<p>The applicant's or a member of the applicant's household's medical condition, mental health, learning disability or care needs will only be able to substantially improve or be met by suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>Evidence is required from a specialist medical professional of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The medical or mental health condition, learning difficulty, 	Where an applicant fails to bid successfully within 6 months, the priority of the case will be reviewed, which may result in down-banding or the removal of the application. This will not apply where no suitable properties

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
		<p>or unmet care need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effect of the current accommodation • How suitable alternative accommodation will support an improvement 	<p>have been advertised for bidding.</p> <p>However, the Council may override the choice based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p>
B2	Homeless (Relief stage) and not owed the s188 interim accommodation duty	Applicants who are defined as homeless under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017), prior to the main (unintentional) homelessness duty being determined.	<p>Band B will apply until a main duty decision is made on the application, the application will then be reviewed and re-banded accordingly</p> <p>The Council may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.</p>
B3	Returning homeless after being accommodated in the private rented sector	Previously homeless households accommodated in the private rented sector (which discharged the Council's main unintentional duty) who have become unintentionally homeless again within 2 years. Main unintentional duty is defined as in Section 193 Part 7	For homeless applicants making their own housing arrangements while bidding for permanent accommodation: no required timescale for bidding.

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
		<p>of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017).</p> <p>In these cases, the local connection criteria of the allocations Policy does not apply.</p>	<p>For homeless applicants placed in emergency or temporary accommodation: the Council may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the Council's main unintentional duty.</p>
B4	Lacking rooms	<p>Applicants with dependent children lacking 1 bedroom <u>and</u> lacking kitchen or bathroom; or sharing kitchen or bathroom with non-family members (as defined by S.113 Housing Act 1985); or lacking 2 bedrooms. This excludes households in interim or temporary accommodation provided by the Council</p>	No required timescale for bidding
B5	Fostering or adoption	<p>To enable fostering or adoption where an assessed need and an agreement has been reached between Social Services and the Housing Options Manager to provide</p>	No required timescale for bidding

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
		permanent accommodation prior to any placement taking place	
B6	Threatened with homelessness or homeless (Prevention)	Applicants who are defined as threatened with homelessness under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017), prior to either the relief duty or the main (unintentional) homelessness duty being determined.	<p>Where an applicant fails to bid successfully within 6 months, the priority of the case will be reviewed, which may result in down-banding or the removal of the application. This will not apply where no suitable properties have been advertised for bidding.</p> <p>The Council may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation which may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector</p>
B7	From supported housing	Applicants moving on from care or supported housing, as authorised by the Housing Options Manager	Where an applicant fails to bid successfully within 6 months, the priority of the case will be reviewed, which may result in down-banding or the removal of the application. This will not apply where no suitable properties have been advertised for bidding.

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
B8	Additional priority for ex Armed Forces personnel, where the assessed need falls within Band C	<p>The following categories will be awarded one Band higher priority than their assessed need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • former members of the Regular Forces. • serving members of the Regular Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained because of their service. • bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Regular Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner. • serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained because of their service 	No required timescale for bidding.
B9	Additional preference for people fleeing domestic abuse	Applicants, including out of District applicants, who are being accommodated in a refuge or temporary accommodation	<p>No required timescale for bidding</p> <p>The Council may override the choice based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation</p>
B10	Additional preference for young people	West Sussex County Council has a corporate parenting responsibility where a young	Where an applicant fails to bid successfully within 6

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
	leaving local authority care	<p>person who has been looked after, fostered, or accommodated and has had a duty of care accepted under the Children Act in West Sussex, and is ready for independent living. To enable a planned move on to independent suitable accommodation providing a support plan is in place the following criteria will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are ready and prepared to move to independent settled accommodation • they have the life skills to manage a tenancy • they have a support package and appropriate Pathway Plan • they have not, or have not previously, been a tenant of a registered provider as a result of being granted this priority In exceptional circumstances priority may be given to former relevant children (up to the age of 25) who have completed higher education funded by WSCC 	months, the priority of the case will be reviewed, which may result in down-banding or the removal of the application. This will not apply where no suitable properties have been advertised for bidding.

11.6 Band C

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
C1	Medical C	The applicant's or a member of the applicant's household's medical condition, mental health, learning disability or care	No timescales for bidding

		<p>needs will only be prevented from worsening or achieve a gradual improvement or be met by suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>Evidence is required from a medical professional of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The medical or mental health condition, learning difficulty, or unmet care need. • The effect of the current accommodation • How suitable alternative accommodation will prevent worsening or promote an improvement <p>Priority C1 includes applicants who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' on medical or welfare grounds, as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and to whom the local connection criteria of the allocation Policy do not apply.</p>	
C2	Lacking 1 bedroom	Households lacking one bedroom.	No required timescale for bidding.
C3	Sharing kitchen/bathroom with family members	Applicants with dependent children living with, and sharing a kitchen or bathroom with, family members (as defined by S.113 Housing	No required timescale for bidding.

		<p>Act 1985) who are not part of the immediate household and not part of the housing application .This excludes households in interim or temporary accommodation provided by the Council .</p>	
C4	<p>Give or receive support; or to take up employment</p>	<p>Applicants who need to move to a particular area within Arun to give support, which cannot be met by others; or to receive support or specialised medical treatment, which is not available in the current location; and where failure to meet that need would cause hardship; and where the distance from the applicant's current location is significantly impacting on the ability to deliver or receive that support. The housing need within Arun to be confirmed by a healthcare professional or other statutory agency.</p> <p>Existing social housing tenants who need to move into Arun, or to a particular area within Arun, for permanent employment and who cannot fulfil their contract of employment in their current accommodation after making reasonable adjustments.</p>	<p>No required timescale for bidding.</p>

		<p>Before applying to the Arun housing register, applicants must make reasonable adjustments to remain in their current accommodation when taking up new employment. These may include arranging transport to work or organising the care of dependents. Band C4 will only apply when the employment cannot be fulfilled, even after making such adjustments.</p> <p>Applicants will need to provide proof of their current social tenancy; their employment start date and work location and to demonstrate why reasonable adjustments are not possible.</p> <p>Priority C4 includes applicants who: i) qualify for a 'reasonable preference', as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017;</p> <p>or</p> <p>ii) need to move for employment reasons, as per the Qualification Criteria for Right to Move Regulations 2015; and</p> <p>iii) to whom the local connection criteria of the</p>	
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		<p>allocation Policy do not apply.</p> <p>People who are homeless including those who have not made an application (within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017). This includes people who are intentionally homeless and those who are not in priority need.</p> <p>People who are owed a (homeless) duty by ANY local authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985). The letter detailing the outcome of a homeless application will specify whether one of these sections applies.</p>	
C5	Housing for Older People	Applicants for housing for older people over 60 where there is no higher housing need.	No required timescale for bidding
C6	Insanitary or overcrowded housing	<p>Applicants living in insanitary or overcrowded housing.</p> <p>For C6 priority, 'insanitary housing' will contain Category 1 hazards as assessed under the Housing Health & Safety</p>	No required timescale for bidding.

		<p>Rating System (HHSRS), as confirmed by the Council's Private Sector Housing team or the Neighbourhood Housing team; and where there is no planned remedial or improvement works or enforcement action.</p> <p>'Overcrowded housing' is defined by the statutory standard set out in the Housing Act 1985, sections 324 to 326, as confirmed by the Council's Private Sector Housing team or the Neighbourhood Housing team; and where there is no planned remedy or enforcement action to resolve the overcrowding.</p> <p>Priority C6 includes applicants who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' on the grounds of insanitary or overcrowded housing, as per the Housing Act 1996, Part 6 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and to whom the local connection criteria of the allocation Policy do not apply.</p>	
C7	Management transfer	Applicants living in Arun District Council accommodation requiring a transfer to properties of the same size & type for significant reasons, as	No required timescale for bidding. However, the Council may override the choice based lettings bidding process to make a

		agreed by the Neighbourhood Services Manager	reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation. Where such direct allocations are refused, the Council will review the priority of the case and consider removal of the priority and removal from the housing register.
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11.7 Band D

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
D1	Older People's Housing with no Local Connection and no housing need	Households qualifying for housing for older people who are deemed to have no local connection may be considered for hard to let sheltered accommodation.	Households in this band will be able to bid for properties but their bids will only be considered after all bids from households who do meet the local connection requirements have been dealt with. Any bids placed for properties other than housing for older persons will be considered as ineligible bids and not considered for nomination
D2	Community Land Trust Allocations	Community Land Trust properties are subject to a separate allocations Policy which provides affordable housing for	Applicants accepted onto the housing register for the specific reason of applying for CLT properties will be

		<p>residents of a specific parish.</p> <p>Band D2 will awarded to applicants who would not ordinarily be eligible to join the housing register but would meet the qualification criteria of the CLT allocation policy</p>	<p>restricted to bid on said properties only. They will be excluded from bidding on any other general needs properties.</p>
D3	Reduced priority – no bids in six months	<p>The decision to reduce priority for applicants who are not bidding in any band will be made on the basis that they will be demoted to Band D for a period of 6 months unless there is a significant change in circumstances. Exceptions may be considered depending on the availability of suitable accommodation and personal circumstances of the applicant. At the end of the 6-month period applicants can request their application is reassessed. An application will only be re-instated if in accordance with the assessment process above. Applicants can appeal a decision to reassess.</p>	<p>Applicants in Bands A and B have 6 months from the date of assessment to place a bid. If they do not place a bid on properties which will meet their needs during that time, they will be reassessed to Band D for six months unless they continue to qualify in Band C. This will not apply to applicants owed a homelessness duty.</p>

11.8 Priority within bands

- 11.8.1 The subcategories in each band do not reflect priority within the band. Priority between applicants within bands is determined by:

11.9 Local Lettings Plans

11.9.1 A local lettings plan is an agreement between the Council or Registered Provider and local tenants and residents which restricts lettings in the area to certain households. This is done to tackle a specific issue or problem that has been identified locally at block, street, estate or neighbourhood level, or to achieve a sustainable community on a new development.

11.9.2 Local lettings plans allows the Council or Registered Providers to deliver better outcomes and improve life chances for current tenants and future residents.

11.9.3 Recommendations for local lettings plans may include but are not limited to:

- Establishing and sustaining a mixed, stable, and sustainable community on a new the development to foster a sense of ownership and community.
- Ensuring new tenants can sustain their tenancies.
- Setting a maximum or minimum age limit for certain properties;
- Giving preference to tenants/applicants with a local connection or who already live or work in that area or ward;
- Preference to tenants /applicants who are giving or receiving support to or from family/extended family, voluntary work, day care, playgroups or other support from locally-based organisations;
- Preference to people who are employed;
- Preference to other household types who would not normally be eligible under the Allocations Policy – e.g. this could be couples without children, where there is a high density already in the area of families with children;
- Preference to people who are under occupying or who are overcrowded in their current home in the local vicinity;
- Sensitivity around the letting of homes to vulnerable people;
- Once adopted, a local lettings plan will override the Allocations Policy;
- Any properties subject to a plan will be clearly labelled when advertised for lettings.
- Community Land Trust Developments
- Rural Housing
- Right to Manage Policy's

11.9.4 All Local Lettings Plans will be published for transparency; Local Lettings Plans will be agreed by Senior Officer(s) at the Council in conjunction with Senior Officer(s) at the relevant Registered Provider. This will be agreed in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010.

12.0 Bidding and selection

12.1 Direct Allocations

12.1.1 Where the Housing Options Manager has agreed that an applicant's housing needs are immediate as well as exceptional, the Manager may agree to offer an applicant accommodation ahead of other people on the Housing Register.

12.1.2 Examples include but are not limited to:

- Neighbourhood Housing Services needs to make an urgent management move or to decant a tenant from a property requiring major works
- The requirement to make a direct offer to deal with an emergency case
- The requirement to make a direct offer to meet the needs of a disabled applicant
- To discharge any of the Council's homelessness duties

12.2 Applicants accepted as being owed a prevention, relief or main housing duty will be expected to bid on each suitable property that becomes available otherwise the Council may take action that includes making a direct offer of accommodation or reducing prioritisation by lowering the applicant's band.

12.3 If a homeless applicant who is subject to Section 193(2) Housing Act 1996 refuses an offer of suitable accommodation, the Council duty is discharged.

12.4 In cases where the Council need to make decisions outside the policy there will be delegated authority to a Housing Options Team Leader to make a decision with a final appeal to the Housing Options Manager. These cases include but are not limited to the refusal of an offer of suitable accommodation.

12.5 Advertising vacant properties

12.5.1 Vacant properties will be advertised on the Choice Based Lettings website. Eligibility criteria will be included in the advertisement such as:

- Size of household
- Whether the property is suitable for children
- Age limitations
- The mobility group, if applicable
- The level of care and support available
- Whether pets are allowed

- Whether it is available for cross boundary bids (the Council may advertise properties outside the Arun district where there is little or no demand for a particular property)
- Whether it is sheltered accommodation
- Who owns the property i.e. council or Registered Provider?
- The weekly rent including any other charges
- An estimate of the date the property will be ready for occupation
- Whether a local lettings policy applies
- Whether it is a rural property and a local connection criterion applies

12.5.2 The property advert will state the rent charge, which will vary according to the landlord and whether an 'affordable' or a 'social' rent is being applied. Applicants may exercise choice regarding the properties for which they bid. However, if the applicant is subject to bidding time limits, they will be expected to bid for both social and affordable rented homes as both will be considered suitable.

12.5.3 The Council needs to ensure that all properties are used as effectively as possible and will advertise and allocate social housing vacancies properties with a bedroom entitlement for each of the following:

- Every adult, married or cohabiting couple or single parent
- Every person aged 16 years or more
- Two children aged 10-16 years of the same sex (sharing a room)
- Two children aged under 10 years regardless of sex (sharing a room)

12.5.4 Bedroom entitlement is further clarified by:

- The Council may allocate properties outside these size criteria to larger households, or where a bedroom is too small for more than one occupant.
- A single parent household is entitled to the same size accommodation as a two parent household with the same number of children.
- Households that include a pregnant woman are normally assessed as if the baby has already been born (i.e. the baby is counted as a child), where the expected date of delivery is within 3 months.
- Where there is evidence of a need for a member of the household to have a separate bedroom (for example, for medical reasons, or because of behavioural issues), then an additional bedroom need can be allowed.
- A child must live at the address as their main home for them to be classed as a permanent resident. Usually the care giver at this address will be the person in receipt of child benefit or tax credits. Exceptions will be considered, for example in circumstances where the child resides away from the Applicant on a temporary basis but their permanent home is with the Applicant.

- Where an applicant has care or support needs that require overnight assistance on a permanent or casual basis, then the need for an additional bedroom can be awarded to permit this. This can include prospective foster carers, on evidence that Children’s services will approve the Applicant as a foster carer subject to availability of suitable size accommodation.
- Applicants awarded priority on the basis of having a bedroom shortage may be by-passed if they bid successfully on a like-for-like property. For example, if an applicant lives in a 3 bedroom house but only requires a 2 bed house and bids successfully on another 3 bedroom house, they will be bypassed on the shortlist for that property.
- Large families (i.e. those with five or more children) may be given additional priority over smaller households for properties with four or more bedrooms.

	Single Person	Single Person with access to children (1)	Couple	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 1 Other	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 2 others	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 3 Others	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 4 or More Others
Studio	✓	✓					
1 Bedroom Flat	✓	✓	✓				
1 Bedroom House	✓	✓	✓				
1 Bedroom Bungalow	✓	✓	✓				
2 Bedroom Flat			✓	✓	✓		
2 Bedroom House				✓	✓		
2 Bedroom Bungalow	✓ (2)		✓	✓	✓ (2)		
3 Bedroom House					✓	✓	✓
3 Bedroom Flat or Maisonette					✓	✓	✓
3 Bedroom Parlour House					✓	✓	✓

	Single Person	Single Person with access to children (1)	Couple	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 1 Other	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 2 others	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 3 Others	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 4 or More Others
4 Bedroom House						✓	✓
5 Bedroom or More House							✓

(1) Single person with children who do not live with them on a permanent basis

(2) Depending on medical, mental health, mobility, or care needs

12.6 Non-Resident Children

12.6.1 Anyone with access to children will need to demonstrate their involvement and the care and supervision of the child.

12.6.2 A Senior Officer within the Local Authority will give consideration to factors including regularity of contact, who claims the relevant benefits for the child and any residency orders as well as legislation, codes of guidance and case law in determining which parent has primary responsibility for the children.

12.6.3 Therefore, unless there is an exceptional circumstance, it is unlikely that a family home will be provided where the applicant not the primary carer for the child, even if they have 50% access rights to their child.

12.7 Applicants will be allowed to bid for the size and type of property as shown in the table below. In some circumstances the opportunity may be given to bid for larger properties where they are in low demand.

12.8 The Council may allocate properties outside these size criteria for households who are threatened with homelessness (to whom the Council owes a 'Prevention' duty); or homeless (to whom the Council owes a 'Relief duty); or those to whom the Council owes the main duty; and where it has been assessed that the property is reasonable for the household's needs. This offer of accommodation will discharge the Council's duty under Part VII Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

- 12.9 The Council may allocate up to one additional bedroom above the size criteria where there is an overriding, proven medical need to support the request. The need will need to be evidenced in accordance with the procedures described above.
- 12.10 Our Registered Provider partners have their own size criteria for their properties, which may vary from the criteria stated above. This will be made clear in their advertisements.
- 13.0** Adapted properties will be advertised with a mobility classification as below, with additional information if there is the potential for further adaptation:
- 13.1 **Suitable for wheelchair- user indoors and outdoors**
- 13.2 Suitable for people who cannot manage steps or stairs and may use a wheelchair some of the time.
- Suitable for people who are independent but can only manage one or two steps.
- 13.3 Transfer applicants may be entitled to the Under-Occupation Incentive Policy if they move to a smaller property.
- 13.4 Where an age restriction applies and there are no eligible bidders, applicants without children may be considered.
- 13.5 Details of recent allocations, the number of bidders for each property and the band and priority date of the successful applicant are published on the Council's website.
- 14.0 Bidding**
- 14.1 The Council will advertise empty properties. Eligible applicants can make bids for properties by bidding online via the choice-based lettings website. Full details of how to bid are set out on the website.
- 14.2 The Council is aware that some vulnerable applicants may need assistance to complete the bidding process. The Council seeks to address this issue in the following ways:
- By providing regular training and awareness events for agencies who support vulnerable people to help them guide their clients through the process of registration and bidding.
 - By giving direct advice and assistance to applicants, support staff and agencies during office hours either in person or by phone and by providing information on the Council's website.

- By providing information in a variety of formats and languages on request.

- 14.3 Where necessary bids can be made by the Council staff on behalf of applicants, proxy bidding by support staff, friends or family of a vulnerable person is also possible on request.
- 14.4 All bids for property will be checked against the eligibility criteria. Ineligible bids are excluded from consideration. The Council will contact and advise applicants who regularly bid for properties for which they are not eligible.
- 14.5 The applicant has the choice to refuse an offer of accommodation if it has been allocated via the choice-based lettings system. The applicant may bid for other properties in subsequent choice-based lettings adverts.
- 14.6 Refusals of properties offered by a direct allocation may lead to a discharge of homelessness duty, or to a review of the priority banding, with the possibility of down-banding or removal from the housing register. Details of the bidding and direct allocation requirements are listed against each Priority Band criteria.
- 15.0 Selection**
- 15.1 Qualifying bids for each property are placed in priority order. Priority is decided by specific qualification criteria where one applies, then by band then by date within the band.
- 15.2 If there are no eligible bidders for a property the Council may decide to make a direct allocation or to re-advertise the property.
- 15.3 Offers will normally be made to the applicant at the top of the shortlist subject to verification checks and acceptance of a nomination.
- 15.4 The Council and our Registered Provider partners will require applicants to provide further verification of their housing circumstances and/or carry out a property inspection of the applicant's current home prior to making the offer. Registered Providers may reject an applicant for a particular property if accepting the applicant would conflict with their own policies and procedures.
- 15.5 The Council's Tenancy and Lettings Policy requires that before offering a tenancy within the Council's housing stock will undertake:

- Vulnerability risk assessment – we will risk assess all applicants to identify any support needs. Where we identify a need, we will need to be satisfied that adequate support is in place.
- Affordability assessment – applicants will be asked to complete an affordability assessment including proof of income and expenditure and full details of any debts. We will also seek permission to carry out credit checks. Where applicants have housing-related debts, they will need to demonstrate that they have arrangements in place to repay them. If it is evident that the applicant cannot afford the tenancy, an offer of a tenancy may be withdrawn.
- References – we will seek references for all applicants to ensure they are able to maintain a tenancy, including condition of property, acceptable behaviour and rent payments. If there is evidence of previous significant tenancy breaches, we will withdraw an offer.

15.6 The Council will not normally make an offer of a tenancy where the applicant:

- Has breached the terms of a previous tenancy where if action had been taken possession would have been mandatory. This includes rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and tenancy fraud.
- Has behaved unacceptably toward Council staff or partner agencies. This includes verbal abuse, harassment, and intimidation, threatening behaviour or abusive language.
- Was evicted from a previous tenancy or failed a probationary tenancy.
- Has knowingly given false or misleading information or has refused to provide information requested in Has housing-related debts and cannot evidence that they have either repaid or significantly reduced the debt over a sustained period.
- Has recently been subject to an anti-social behaviour injunction, an anti-social behaviour order, an injunction, a demotion order, a closure order, or a community protection warning/notice.
- Has been identified as unable to sustain the tenancy without additional support and there is no evidence that a support or care package is in place.
- Has been identified as needing adaptations that cannot be provided and that would put them at risk if not in place.

15.7 The Council wants to promote responsible pet ownership and will not disadvantage owners of assistance dogs; emotional assistance dogs and lifetime pets owned by people living alone at the point of offer for its own accommodation where pets would not normally be allowed. The decision will depend on the type and number of pets and the likelihood for nuisance and annoyance to neighbours. Our Registered Provider partners will make

decisions regarding pets in accordance with their policies and tenancy conditions.

- 15.8 The Council will arrange accompanied viewings, advise on any non-essential repairs to be completed after the tenancy start date and give a target date for the completion of these repairs.
- 15.9 The Council will offer the successful applicant the option to accept the offer of a property and arrange for them to sign for the tenancy agreement. If an applicant refuses the offer the the Council will re-shortlist the existing bidders to allow an offer to be made to the next highest priority applicant.
- 15.10 Should an applicant refuse two reasonable offers of accommodation, their application can be reviewed and may be removed from the housing register. Applicants will be able to submit supporting evidence as to why they are refusing a property, it will be for the Housing Options Manager to determine whether or not the refusal is reasonable. Applicants will have the right to request a review of any decision to remove their application from the register.

16.0 Review and Appeal

- 16.1 In certain circumstances an applicant may request a review of the Council decision concerning their housing application. A first appeal will be to a Housing Options Team Leader. A final appeal will be to the Housing Options Manager.
- 16.2 Homelessness decisions are subject to the right of review under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017). The allocated property will not remain available to the applicant pending the outcome of the review process.
- 16.3 Applicants may request a review in the following circumstances:
- Applicant disagrees with the decision to change their joint application to a sole application
 - Applicant disagrees with the decision to exclude, suspend, or remove their application
 - Applicant disagrees with the assessment of their housing need, local priority, and local connection
 - Applicant disagrees with the assessment of need following a change in their housing circumstances

- Applicant disagrees with the Council direct allocation to them
- Applicant disagrees with a decision to reassess to a lower Band

- 16.4 A request for a review must be made within 21 days from the day on which the applicant received notification of the decision. The Council has the discretion to extend the time limit if it considered that this would be reasonable.
- 16.5 Requests for a review must be made in writing by email or letter. Applicants will be asked to explain why they consider the Council decision to be unreasonable, and to provide any additional evidence as required.
- 16.6 At the first stage of the review a Housing Options Team Leader will reassess the Council's decision by checking the actions. The Team Leader will respond to the applicant within 2 weeks of the review request. Applicants will be advised if the decision is going to be delayed for any reason.
- 16.7 If the applicant disagrees with the Team Leader's reassessment, they can request a final review by the Housing Options Manager who will carry out the second stage review and respond to the applicant within 8 weeks of the review request being received. Applicants will be advised if the decision is going to be delayed for any reason.
- 16.8 Any request for an appeal must be on the basis that the Allocation Policy has not been applied correctly to the household's circumstances. If the applicant wishes to challenge the Allocations Policy itself, they are advised to seek independent legal advice.
- 16.9 If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision, they will be advised that they have the right to refer their case to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman details of which can be found at Home - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

17.0 Performance and monitoring

17.1 Review

- 17.1.1 The Allocation Policy will be subject to review a minimum of five years from its implementation and on publication of any significant change in legislation, Codes of guidance or the Regulatory Standards.

17.2 Service Standards

- 17.2.1 The Council has service standards for the allocations Policy. These are included in the housing service standards agreed for and with the Council's tenants. The Council will review and publicise its performance against these standards annually.
- 17.3 The Council will aim to:
- Register applications within 14 working days from the date that all verification documents are received.
 - Process change in circumstances within 14 working days
 - Reply to letters within 10 working days
 - Answer phone calls within 30 seconds
 - Provide advice to applicants to help them with bidding choices by phone, e-mail and in person
 - Wear ID at all times including when visiting
 - Deal with all enquiries in a fair and sensitive manner
 - Advertise vacant properties for a minimum of 5 days
 - Provide reliable information on when a property will be available to let
 - Advise you of your right to request a review of a decision in accordance with the details contained within Appendix 3
- 17.4 An applicant is required to:
- Keep the Council informed of any changes of circumstances
 - Ensure the Council have an up to date address
 - Reply to requests for information as quickly as possible
 - Treat Council staff with courtesy
 - Give accurate information regarding personal circumstances
- 17.5 Monitoring
- 17.5.1 The Council will publish waiting list numbers and lettings outcomes on its website at (to be confirmed when our new system is in place)