

## **Allocations scheme**

This allocations scheme relates to the exercising of the Council's functions under Section 166A of the Housing Act 1996.

The allocation scheme reflects, where appropriate, relevant guidance issued by the secretary of state under Section 169 of the Housing Act 1996, together with all current and relevant orders and circulars.

This allocation scheme contains:

### **Contents**

1	Aims and objectives .....	2
2	Strategic Fit .....	2
3	Scope .....	2
4	Eligibility to join the Housing Register .....	3
5	Applicants who qualify for inclusion on the housing register .....	4
6	Applicants who are not qualifying persons and do not qualify for Inclusion on the Housing Register .....	6
7	Joint/Shared applications .....	7
8	Verification .....	7
9	Supporting vulnerable applicants to apply for housing .....	8
10	Households .....	8
11	Remaining on the Housing Register / Renewals .....	8
12	Prioritising Applications for Housing .....	9
13	Reduction of priority due to unacceptable behaviour .....	14
14	Determining Between Applications.....	16
15	Occupation/Property Eligibility Criteria .....	17
16	Accommodation for disabled people with access needs .....	19
17	Quotas.....	19
18	Local Lettings Schemes .....	20
19	Statement on Choice.....	20
20	Monitoring of the policy .....	20
21	The right to review .....	20
22	Applications for Extra Care Housing .....	21
	Glossary of Terms.....	23
	Appendix 1 .....	26

## **1 Aims and objectives**

1.1 The key objectives of this Allocations Scheme are to:

- Help applicants in housing need (as defined in Section 12) to find suitable housing.
- Make efficient and best use of social housing stock in the area.
- Afford priority to those applicants in urgent housing need.
- Create a simpler system to use.
- Respond to the housing needs of local people.
- Encourage and assist applicants to take an informed, measured and long term view on their housing options.

1.2 The Allocations Scheme details all aspects of the allocation process, including who has responsibility for decisions, the policy on offering choice to applicants, how applications will be assessed and how decisions will be made with regard to the allocation of housing in the borough of Basingstoke and Deane.

## **2 Strategic Fit**

2.1 The allocation policy accords fully with the aims and objectives of the Council's [Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023 – 2027](#) and the [Council Plan](#). It also accords with the Council's [Tenancy Strategy](#).

## **3 Scope**

3.1 The Council maintains the Housing Register for all applicants who qualify to apply for social housing tenancy within the borough of Basingstoke and Deane.

3.2 The Council also has a website called 'Basingstoke Homebid' which provides a framework for choice based lettings. This website enables housing applicants to view available properties and make bids on those vacancies for which they are eligible and interested in. The majority of the council's Registered Providers (Housing Associations) advertise their vacant properties on the website and the council supplies nominations of the top ten applicants in accordance with the council's allocations scheme to the Registered Providers for each property that is advertised.

3.3 Once a nomination has been made, the Registered Provider considers a letting in accordance with the Registered Provider's own lettings policy.

3.4 Applicants are shortlisted for nomination according to the priorities contained within this allocations scheme. Some Registered Providers may reject nominations made by the council, for reasons set out in their independent exclusion policies. These may also include reasons based upon the Registered Provider's own eligibility criteria relating to size / property types.

- 3.5 If the Registered Provider refuses a nomination made by the council, the Registered Provider will be required to provide written confirmation of the reasons for their rejection to both the council and the applicant, within 3 working days. Applicants will be able to request that the Registered Provider reviews its decision according to its own independent appeals procedure. Applicants who refuse 3 reasonable offers may be demoted on the housing register and details of this can be found on page 14 of this document.
- 3.6 Sovereign Housing Association and Vivid Housing Association advertise their vacant properties on the Homebid website. Some other Registered Providers offer a proportion of their vacancies to applicants from their independent waiting lists according to their own independent schemes of allocations. In addition, some Registered Providers operate their own transfer list for existing tenants wishing to transfer and details of this would need to be obtained from the individual Registered Provider.
- 3.7 Registered Providers may make some properties available for rent at “Affordable Rent” levels (typically these levels are set at up to 80% of market rent levels and tend to be higher than social rent). Registered Providers may refuse a letting to potential applicants where the Registered Provider can demonstrate that the nominee will be unable to afford the rent due to insufficient income. In such circumstances, the council will require the Registered Provider to provide written confirmation of the reasons for their rejection to both the council and the applicant, within 3 working days. Applicants will be able to request that the Registered Provider reviews its decision according to its own independent appeals procedure.
- 3.8 Some Registered Providers may offer fixed term and introductory tenancies. The term of these is determined by the Registered Provider and the type and duration of the tenancy will be clearly described on the specific property advert.

#### **4 Eligibility to join the Housing Register**

- 4.1 Certain people from abroad, including some subject to immigration control, are not eligible for an allocation of social housing. These are known as restricted persons. These regulations are set by Government and are updated regularly.
- 4.2 Allocations and nominations under the allocations scheme can only be made to eligible persons. The council cannot allocate social housing under the scheme to:
- A person from abroad who is subject to immigration control unless he/she is of a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State, or currently a tenant of a Registered Provider.
  - A person from abroad who is not subject to immigration control (including British citizens) but who is not habitually resident.
  - Two or more persons jointly if either of them falls under the categories mentioned above.

- Other classes of person from abroad specified by the Secretary of State. (No person excluded from entitlement to Housing Benefit shall be included in any class prescribed by the Secretary of State.)

## **5 Applicants who qualify for inclusion on the housing register**

5.1 The council will consider all applications to join the housing register in accordance with its allocations scheme. Applicants will be accepted onto the housing register provided they:

- are eligible to be considered for social housing and
- are 16 or over and
- have a local connection with the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council area and.
- are a qualifying person (see 5.3 below).

5.2 To have a local connection to the borough of Basingstoke and Deane you will need to meet one of the following criteria:

- The applicant has been continuously resident in the borough for two years up to and including the date of their application to the housing register.
- The applicant is employed in the borough and the work is of a permanent contractual nature amounting to a minimum of 16 hours per week and local employment has been held continuously for at least 2 years up to and including the date of application. (Where an applicant's sole local connection was by virtue of employment and that employment is lost, they will no longer qualify to be on the housing register.)
- The applicant has an urgent and critical need to move on medical grounds and meets the criteria as described in section 12 of this policy. In such cases the local connection criteria will be 12 months residence instead of 2 years.
- The applicant is a victim of domestic abuse. Applicants meeting this criterion are not subject to the two years continuous residence qualification.
- The applicant has a need to move to offer or receive care and/or support to/from close adult family members where no other support is available in the locality. A close family member would normally be recognised as parents, siblings, adult children and grandparents and they would also have to have been continuously resident in the borough for 2 years. Care and support in this context maybe defined as similar to that provided in an Adult Services commissioned care and support package as described in the Care Act.- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>
- This could be practical and/or emotional support and assistance with managing the home and undertaking any duties that the person cannot perform independently, on a regular basis.
- The applicant is a tenant of social housing in England and is employed or has been offered employment within the borough of Basingstoke and Deane AND a failure to move would cause hardship (as defined in Section 12 of this document onwards.) A copy of a signed contract of employment will be

required to verify this as well as documents confirming the hardship issues. Employment in this context will mean a contract of more than 12 months, working more than 16 hours per week and will not include voluntary work.

- The applicant is serving in the armed forces
- The applicant is a former member of, the armed forces, and is not currently residing in the district (but had previously resided in the borough for 2 years, immediately prior to being posted in the armed forces.)
- The applicant is a former member of the armed forces who is applying for social housing within 5 years of discharge.
- The applicant is a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the armed forces or a seriously injured reservist who is either currently employed or resident in the borough.
- The applicant is a care leaver placed outside the borough of Basingstoke and Deane, by Hampshire County Council.
- The applicants are accepted homeless and the main rehousing duty has been accepted by Basingstoke and Deane under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 and have been placed outside the borough by the council.

5.3 An applicant will normally be a qualifying person and therefore qualify to join the housing register and for an allocation under the council's allocations scheme, if they:

- Have a household (applicant and/or partner) income of less than £50,000 per annum (prior to any deductions, inclusive of benefits but excluding Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments) and/or capital and savings of less than £30,000, or
- Are a family with permanently resident children and have an income of less than £60,000 per annum (prior to any deductions, inclusive of benefits but excluding Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independent Payments) and/or capital and savings of less than £30,000
- Exceptions **may** be made for people with more than this amount of savings and assets and **will** be made in respect of any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces as compensation for an injury or disability
- Are in housing need (as defined in section 12.)

#### Local Connection to rural areas

5.4 For non-urban areas (outside of Basingstoke Town) qualifying applicants in housing need will be prioritised for a nomination if they have a relevant local connection with the area in which the vacancy occurs and then by their position in their band. An area in this context will be regarded as a parish and a full list of these can be found at appendix 1. If there is no suitable housing stock in the applicant's rural area of choice, they will be able to bid on suitable properties in adjacent parishes and within the urban Basingstoke area. The current local plan suggests that some rural developments of a significant size that are planned over the next few years, should meet the wider housing need of Basingstoke and Deane, not solely those households in the immediate locality of the new development. This means that the major new developments adjacent to

Chineham, Rooksdown, Oakley and Old Basing will be allocated to those people with a local connection to Basingstoke and Deane rather than just to those with a connection to the relevant parish. Some rural developments have legal agreements attached to them which specify the local connection criteria for the particular development. Details of any such agreements are always clearly stated on any relevant adverts on the Homebid website. Applicants must meet the local criteria in paragraph 5.2 before connection to rural parishes will be considered

5.5 Qualifying applicants will be awarded a connection to a non-urban parish if they meet any one of the following criteria:

- Current residence, where proof of residence as main or principle home has been given.
- Previous residence if no longer resident. Previous residence must be for a continuous period of 3 out of the last 10 years – consequently the award for priority for local connection on the basis of previous residence will be time limited.
- Employment, of a permanent contractual nature amounting to a minimum of 16 hours per week. Where employment is the only connection held with the borough or a village, the job must have been held for a continuous period of 2 years prior to the award being made. The priority will be removed in the event of employment being lost.
- Need to move to offer or receive support to/from close adult family members where no other support is available in the locality. A close family member would normally be regarded as parents, siblings, adult children and grandparents. Any other relatives would only be considered if no close relatives exist and the applicant can demonstrate a close and continuous relationship with that relative.

## **6 Applicants who are not qualifying persons and do not qualify for Inclusion on the Housing Register**

6.1 Applicants will not normally be qualifying persons if they:

- Cannot demonstrate that they can meet the council's local connection criteria
- Are a household without children and have a combined household income of more than £50,000 (prior to any deductions, inclusive of benefits but excluding DLA and PIP) or combined savings or capital of more than £30,000.
- Are a household with permanently resident children and have a combined household income of more than £60,000 (prior to any deductions, inclusive of benefits but excluding DLA and PIP) or combined savings or capital of more than £30,000.

- Are home owners. This may include any applicant who has rights to their home under the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973. This includes those who own a home abroad.
- 6.2 The Council recognises that some exceptional circumstances may exist where access to the Housing Register should be granted to homeowners who do not have the financial resources to secure suitable or adapted accommodation. These exceptional circumstances might include:
- Households who attract reasonable preference and need to sell their home but who have insufficient equity in the property, so that once sold, they will not be able to resolve their own housing situation in the private sector
  - An older person who needs specialised housing for older people and does not have sufficient resources to secure this in the open market and where suitable care and/or adaptations cannot be provided elsewhere.
  - A disabled person whose home is deemed unsuitable for adaptations.
  - Emergency medical reasons that meet the criteria as in Band 1.
- 6.3 The applicant will be required to provide appropriate documentation, e.g. proof of shared ownership, property valuation, proof of income, reports from social care team, hospital, GP, occupational therapist regarding the suitability and viability of adaptations in their current property and any risk to health or life in order for an assessment and decision to be made by a housing officer.

## **7 Joint/Shared applications**

- 7.1 Joint or shared applications will be considered from any applicants who intend to cohabit or live together as a family /household unit and that they are in a relationship as defined in Section 10. This includes applications from same sex households. Applications from existing tenants of Registered Providers will be placed in the name(s) of whoever is on the tenancy only. (Joint applications from siblings and friends will not normally be considered as Registered Providers would not be willing to offer joint tenancies in these circumstances.)
- 7.2 In the event of a relationship breakdown, both parties of a joint application will be required to complete a new application form. If both the applicants are in housing need as set out in this allocations scheme, they will both be awarded the original effective date of the application (this won't apply if the application is for a transfer and the applicant will not be giving vacant possession of their property.)

## **8 Verification**

- 8.1 The council will verify all information provided by the applicant that is relevant to their eligibility and qualification for an allocation of accommodation. Further verification, which may include inviting the applicant for an interview or completing a home visit, will be required just prior to the applicant being allocated a property and the council may check information with other sources as allowed by law. Gypsies and Travellers that apply for housing in the borough will

also have their circumstances verified but a more flexible approach to understanding their qualification, on the basis of residence, will be used.

- 8.2 Applicants may be required to provide documentary evidence that all persons included on the application are resident at the address supplied at the point of application. Applicants will also be required to provide any additional proof considered appropriate to confirm their circumstances at any point during their application.

## **9 Supporting vulnerable applicants to apply for housing**

- 9.1 Any person, who needs support in applying for housing, whether that is assistance with the on-line application form or with bidding on properties each week, can be assisted by the housing team. The council will also be able to provide detailed housing advice for all applicants including those people who may not qualify to join the housing register. The council offers a wide variety of customer access which includes the Basingstoke and Deane web-site, web messages, e-mail, telephone and face to face contact.

## **10 Households**

- 10.1 Any person wishing to be included as part of an applicant's household must satisfy the Council that they are a permanent member of the applicant's household and show that it is reasonable to expect them to reside with the applicant on a continuing basis. 10.2 In the case of a separated household or where residence of children is shared between parents, it would not normally be considered reasonable for a child who has a suitable home with one parent to be taken into account when considering the housing needs of the other parent.
- 10.3 In all such cases, an assessment will be carried out to decide who should be considered to be part of the household and the following factors will be taken into consideration along with any other relevant facts:
- Access of people included on the application to other suitable accommodation
  - Previous living arrangements
  - Actual living arrangements
  - Preferred living arrangements
  - Evidence of longstanding residence and commitment to being part of a household.
  - Likely longer term living arrangements
  - Information from Children's or Adult services.

## **11 Remaining on the Housing Register / Renewals**

- 11.1 Applicants will be required to renew their housing application on an annual basis, on the anniversary of their relevant application date – known as the “renewal” date.



- 11.2 If applicants fail to voluntarily renew their application, they will be sent a written reminder to do so within 28 days of the renewal date and a failure to respond to this reminder will lead to the cancelation of the application.
- 11.3 In order to remain on the Housing Register, applicants will need to retain a continuous local connection
- 11.4 If an applicant secures accommodation via the council's housing register, their application will be marked as housed and will be closed. If an applicant wishes to reapply to the register at a later date, they will need to make a new application which will be assessed on their circumstances at the time.
- 11.5 If an applicant secures alternative accommodation through other means or there is any other substantive change in their circumstances, they must notify the Council immediately of that change and a re-assessment of their application will be required. The Council may suspend any application where a substantive change in circumstances occurs and may remove the application from the register if the applicant cannot subsequently demonstrate they remain eligible and qualify. Failure to inform the council of any changes may therefore result in any bids placed following the change not being considered.

## **12 Prioritising Applications for Housing**

- 12.1 Allocations for nominations to housing are made according to a banding scheme, consisting of 3 bands. An applicant's banding will be determined by an assessment of whether they attract reasonable preference and are therefore in housing need.

**i) Band 1 – applicants who have been assessed as qualifying for reasonable preference and have been granted additional preference in recognition of their urgent need to move.**

- 1) Any applicants assessed as meeting the categories below will remain in Band 1 for a period of 3 months. If suitable properties have been advertised during this period and the applicant has refused, or failed to bid on such properties, the application may be removed from Band 1. An applicant will not be suspended or removed from Band 1 without written notification (including reasons) from the Council. Assessments for placement into Band 1 will be carried out by senior housing officers in conjunction with supporting evidence provided by relevant expert professionals. Applicants who are placed in Band 1 may be made one suitable offer of accommodation via direct matching.
- 2) A summary of Band 1 categories and criteria is set out below:
  - Management transfers
  - Critical cases

- Armed Forces personnel in urgent housing need
- Director's discretion

### 3) Management transfers

- (a) These will be **exceptional** transfer cases where the tenant needs to be moved immediately because of serious violence or harassment, that has been substantiated and where no other management action can be taken to resolve the situation.
- (b) The decision to recommend exceptional priority of this type to the designated Council Officer will be made by the tenant's Registered Provider and priority will only be awarded in such circumstances if the Registered Provider agrees to accept a nomination to the pending vacancy from the Council's Housing Register. Applicants in this category will be made one suitable offer of accommodation, usually of the same size and type as the property they need to move from and which is considered safe for them to live in. It may also be necessary for the housing officer dealing with the case to support the applicant to bid or in some cases the applicant will be direct matched to a property. The Registered Provider will be required to submit a detailed report in support of the application for this priority.

### 4) Critical rehousing cases

- (a) Those cases where an inability to secure their own accommodation will inevitably lead to fatal harm, and that the risks posed by the applicant's current housing conditions are such that death or critical injury to the applicant and/or a member of their household is imminent, and that the situation can only be resolved by a move to alternative accommodation.
- (b) This might include cases where an applicant requires an urgent medical hospital discharge, but the existing accommodation open to them is totally unsuitable or un-adaptable. Applicants who are assessed as having a life-threatening condition that is directly linked to their unsuitable housing will also be considered under this category. This will require support and verification from a GP or other health professional in conjunction with an Occupational Therapist and determined by a Senior Housing Officer
- (c) Those existing tenants of Registered Providers, living in Basingstoke and Deane, who live in houses or bungalows and have two or more spare bedrooms according to Housing Benefit criteria, will also be placed in this category. When an applicant requires smaller accommodation, the normal eligibility criteria will not apply and such applicants will only be offered accommodation that exactly meets their bed-space requirements.

5) Armed Services personnel with a critical housing need (as above)

(a) This category will include:

- Serving members of the armed forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability as a result of their service.
- Applicants who were formerly serving members of the armed forces.
- Serving members or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move as a result of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.
- Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the armed forces, who are having to leave services family accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.

6) Director's Discretion

Any exceptional cases whose circumstances are not set out/defined in the above categories.

**ii) Band 2 – applicants who have been assessed as qualifying for reasonable preference.**

1) Assessments for placements into Band 2 will be carried out by a housing officer in conjunction with supporting evidence provided by relevant expert professionals. A summary of Band 2 categories and criteria is set out below.

- No fixed abode
- Homeless within 56 days
- Accepted Homeless
- Overcrowding
- Sharing Facilities
- Armed Forces Personnel not in urgent need and who are eligible for inclusion on the housing register
- Welfare/Social Grounds
- Medical/Disability Grounds
- Mental Health/Disability Grounds
- Unsuitable Accommodation

2) No legal right to occupy/homeless

People who are owed a housing duty by the council under section 190(2), 193(2.) Or 195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 including homeless households in priority need who are intentionally or unintentionally homeless. This will include households who the council has placed into short term accommodation in line with the council's prevention and relief duties under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. The short term accommodation will be provided by Sovereign or Vivid Housing Associations but not exclusively.

- 3) Will become homeless within 56 days and valid notice given

An applicant threatened with homelessness whose right to occupy accommodation is being brought to an end

- 4) Overcrowding

Applicants in accommodation where they are lacking one or more bedrooms according to the local housing allowance bedroom standard as defined here [Local Housing Allowance](#). There may be exceptional instances where separate bedrooms for household members may be warranted on medical or social grounds. In making an overcrowding assessment, it will be assumed that best use is made of all rooms within the accommodation which could appropriately be used as a bedroom. This will also include pregnant applicants who will require an additional bedroom once their baby is born and who are at least 28 weeks pregnant.

- 5) Sharing Facilities

Applicants with private sector accommodation, sharing cooking, washing or toilet facilities with other people who are not part of their application.

- 6) Armed Services Personnel

Applicants who are current or ex-service personnel and who do not meet the critical rehousing definition.

- 7) Welfare/social grounds

Where the accommodation has a significantly detrimental impact on the welfare and social needs of an applicant and/or a member of their family who resides (and will continue to reside) with them as part of their household **and** that this will be resolved by a move to alternative accommodation. Welfare and social grounds might include people with Learning Disabilities or Autism whose needs are not being met by other statutory services. Applicants will only be placed in this category if other remedies are not available to address the issues they are experiencing.

8) Medical/disability grounds

Where an applicant has a medical condition or disability that impacts on their mobility and the property by type or design is not appropriate for their needs/exacerbates their condition/ is difficult for them to manage and there is a prognosis that the situation will not improve if they remain in their current home and will demonstrably be alleviated by a move to alternative accommodation. This applies to applicant and/or member of household who resides with them as part of their family.

9) Mental Health/Disability Grounds

Where an applicant has a diagnosis of a mental health illness or disorder (which disrupts thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning) and which cannot be managed by medication or other specialist medical intervention and is caused or exacerbated by their housing circumstances or the property by type or design is not appropriate for their needs/exacerbates their condition and there is a prognosis that the situation will not improve unless a move to alternative accommodation is facilitated.

10) Accommodation is unsuitable/unsatisfactory

(a) Where the accommodation is not suited to an applicant's needs, or is unsatisfactory, and has not been accounted for elsewhere within the allocations scheme. The following factors will be considered under this category:

- Split households (where household members have previously occupied accommodation as one household),
- Hardship (where a failure to move to a locality would cause hardship.) This may include social housing tenants from elsewhere in England who are currently employed or have been offered a contract of employment in the borough of Basingstoke and Deane and are experiencing hardship.
- Where an applicant's home is assessed as being in serious disrepair and is considered to be unsafe by the council but cannot be remedied by the applicant or the landlord within a reasonable timescale and can be resolved by rehousing. Assessments will be carried out by Environmental Health Officers, having regard to Category 1 hazards under the Housing Health Safety Rating System.

- Situations where a risk of domestic abuse is likely to occur if a move cannot be effected,
- Applicants living in self-contained private rented accommodation who are in financial hardship
- Applicants in tied accommodation.
- Children in flats that are part of a 'child –free' scheme or where the accommodation is deemed by the landlord to be unsuitable for children.
- Foster carers where their current accommodation is not suitable to accommodate a foster child placement and alternative social housing is the only solution.

11) Transfer applicants who are under-occupying by one bedroom

- (a) Where an applicant is currently a tenant of a Registered Provider in the Basingstoke and Deane area and they have one spare bedroom, as defined by the Housing Benefit regulations. When an applicant requires smaller accommodation, the normal eligibility criteria will not apply and such applicants will only be offered accommodation that exactly meets their bed-space requirements.

**iii) Band 3 – applicants who have been assessed as qualifying for reasonable preference but with reduced priority.**

- 1) Assessments for placement into Band 3 will be carried out by a housing officer, who will obtain relevant evidence from partner organisations.
- 2) The council has the ability to reduce an applicant's priority under its allocations scheme. This means that if an applicant falls into any of the categories below, the applicant's priority will be reduced by placing them in Band 3 for 12 months or until the situation is resolved. After 12 months in Band 3 the applicant will be reassessed and if they are still in a reasonable preference category and their reason for demotion has been resolved, they will be placed back into Band 2 and awarded the effective date of their re-entry into that band. Applicants assessed as having one or more reasonable preferences will be subject to reduced priority for rehousing if they fall into any of the categories listed below.

### **13 Reduction of priority due to unacceptable behaviour**

13.1 Behaviour that could lead to a Registered Provider or other landlord obtaining possession of an applicant's current property. The following are the categories of unacceptable behaviour that could lead to a reduction of priority.

- 1) Owing housing related debts

- (a) A debt in this context is defined as a significant amount of housing related debt and maybe accrued by the following:
- current or former tenant's arrears (exceptions may be made for those people who have accrued arrears due to Welfare Reform changes)
  - costs resulting from damage to a former tenancy
  - service charge arrears
  - care and support charge arrears
  - legal costs arising from court action with a current or former tenancy with a Registered Provider.
  - failure to repay loans from the council (claims on the rent bond, rent in advance, rent deposits and bed and breakfast recharges)
  - debts unreasonably incurred in relation to the Council's Rent Deposit and Rent in advance schemes or provision of Bed and Breakfast.
- (b) The above relate to debts accrued in the previous 6 years prior to the application being made. Applicants will remain in Band 3 until the debt has been paid in full or a payment plan has been agreed and adhered to for at least 6 months. Exceptions to this may include those applicants who require immediate housing (Band 1) and those in need of emergency decant due to fire or flood etc. The onus will be on the applicant to contact the Council when the debt is cleared or a payment plan established and abided by. All cases of applicants having housing related debt will be considered individually and an appeals procedure will be in place.
- 2) Other types of unacceptable behaviour resulting in a 12 month demotion:
- (a) Before an applicant is placed in this category a detailed evidence gathering process will be undertaken. Applicants will be informed in writing of the reasons for their demotion, given details of how to appeal and also given information about how to rectify their position in terms of the housing register. Types of unacceptable behaviour in this context could be physical or verbal abuse to staff, anti-social behaviour in the community, being a perpetrator of domestic abuse or not being truthful when applying for social housing. Each case will be judged individually and an appeal procedure will be in place.
- 3) Reduction of priority due to worsening of housing circumstances
- (a) This will apply when an applicant has done or failed to do something which has led to a worsening of their housing circumstances. This might include:
- An applicant colluding with a landlord or family member to issue them with a notice to quit.
  - An applicant deliberately overcrowding their property by moving in friends or family, who have never lived with them before.

- An applicant who gives up an affordable and suitable accommodation to move in with relatives, resulting in them sharing facilities and being overcrowded. This will be subject to an assessment of financial circumstances at the time.
  - An applicant who unreasonably gives up suitable accommodation to move into less settled or unsuitable housing.
- (b) Any applicants who have worsened their own circumstances as described above will be placed in Band 3 for 12 months. Any applicants who have had their priority reduced in this way will be placed back into Band 2 with a new effective date of their re-entry into the band after the 12 month demotion period has expired.
- 4) Reduction of priority due to the refusal of 3 reasonable offers of accommodation

Applicants that have refused 3 reasonable offers of accommodation will have their priority reduced and be placed in Band 3 for 12 months. A refusal in this context could arise from a written offer or a failure to appear at an arranged viewing. A 'reasonable' offer will be determined by the Registered Provider making the offer. After the 12 month demotion, the applicant will return to Band 2 with their original effective date, unless their circumstances have changed. Applicants demoted for this reason will be able to continue to bid whilst in Band 3.

5) Reduction of priority due to placement in supported housing

An applicant who is placed into supported housing will be placed into Band 3 until they are nominated and accepted as suitable for move on by the supported housing provider. They will then be placed back into Band 2 with their original date of application at this time. An applicant who is evicted from supported housing will not be awarded their original date.

6) Notification of reduced priority and appeals

An applicant whose priority has been reduced will be notified in writing and the notification will contain details of why their priority has been reduced and how they can rectify this. The letter will also contain details of the appeals procedure.

## **14 Determining Between Applications**

14.1 When determining an allocation or nomination for a vacancy, the Council will consider allocating from those applicants who have bid, direct matches and those applicants who have been assisted to bid according to the following rank orders:



- Suitable applicants within Band 1 the “Critical / Urgent” rehousing band (by date order of approval as an agreed critical / urgent case)
- Suitable applicants within Band 2 (by date order of entry into the band) and then by date of application from then on.
- Suitable applicants within Band 3 (by date order of entry into the band.)

14.2 Assessing what households are eligible for designated property “types” (NB these are not listed in priority order unless otherwise stated).

## 15 Occupation/Property Eligibility Criteria

15.1 As a general approach, vacancies will be allocated in order to make best use of housing stock whilst addressing housing need. This assessment will also achieve an appropriate balance between the following range of factors:

- Whether the vacancy is designated as older persons accommodation (formerly known as sheltered housing).
- Management issues (e.g. child density, “child” or “car free” schemes, etc.).
- Balancing competing levels of demand between different household types.
- The particular design, layout and room sizes of the property
- In non-urban areas outside of Basingstoke town, any alternative stock availability within the locality.
- Whether the vacancy is deemed accessible to meet the needs of a disabled person (see section 17 below.)
- The current status of relevant allocations quota (see section 14 below)
- Housing Associations’ individual allocations policies □ An applicant’s ability to maintain a tenancy (particularly when moving on from supported housing or in relation to Affordable Rents.)

15.2 Notwithstanding the provisions of 15.1 above, the following general rules will also be applied based on the size and/or type of property under the council’s allocations scheme.

Size/type of accommodation	Eligible households
Bedsit	Single person
1 bed flat (above ground floor)	Couples or single person
1 bed house	Couples or single person

1 bed flat (ground floor)	<p>Couples or single person</p> <p><i>Priority will be given to applicants who are disabled or require ground floor accommodation on medical/mental health grounds.</i></p>
1 bed bungalow	<p>Couples or single person</p> <p><i>Priority will be given to applicants who are disabled or require ground floor accommodation on medical grounds.</i></p>
2 bed flat (above ground floor)	<p>Single person (with a need for an additional to accommodate contact arrangements with children or a carer)</p> <p>Households with 1 or 2 children where the design of the property renders it suitable for family accommodation. Single persons who are existing tenants of a registered provider within the borough and wish to release larger houses or bungalows.</p> <p>Pregnant women (28 weeks pregnant or more)</p> <p>Couples will be considered if there are no other applicants with a 2 bed need.</p>
2 bed flat (ground floor)	<p>Single Person (with a need for an additional bedroom to accommodate contact arrangements with children, or who have a carer)</p> <p>Households with 1 or 2 children where the design of the property renders it suitable for family or accommodation.</p> <p>Disabled people in need of ground floor accommodation. Single persons who are existing tenants of a registered provider within the borough and wish to release larger houses or bungalows.</p> <p>Pregnant women (28 weeks pregnant or more)</p> <p>Couples will be considered if there are no other applicants with a 2 bed need.</p> <p><i>Where property is suitable priority will be given to applicants who are disabled or require ground floor accommodation on medical grounds</i></p>
2 bed bungalow	<p>Single People and couples (with a need for an additional room to accommodate contact arrangements with children, or who have a carer)</p> <p>Households with 1 or 2 children where the design of the property renders it suitable for family or accommodation</p> <p>Pregnant women (28 weeks pregnant or more)</p> <p>Couples will be considered if there are no other applicants with a 2 bed need.</p> <p><i>Where property is suitable priority will be given to applicants who are disabled or require ground floor accommodation on medical grounds</i></p>

2 bed house	Households with 1 child Households with 2 children Pregnant women (28 weeks pregnant or more) Couples will be considered if there are no other applicants with a 2 bed need.
3 bed bungalow	Households with 2 – 4 children  <i>Where property is suitable priority will usually be given to applicants who are disabled or require ground floor accommodation on medical grounds</i>
3 bed ground floor flat	Households with 2 - 4 children  <i>Where property is suitable priority will be given to applicants who are disabled or require ground floor accommodation on medical grounds</i>
3 bed upper floor flat	Households with 2 – 4 children (all aged 10+)
3 bed house	Households with 2 – 4 children
3 bed lower level maisonette	Households with 2 -4 children
3 bed upper level maisonette	Households with 2 – 4 children (all aged 10+)
4 bed house	Households with 3+ children
5 bed house	Households with 4 + children

## **16 Accommodation for disabled people with access needs**

16.1 Properties which are deemed as accessible (i.e. housing that has been designed or adapted to meet the needs of disabled people) will be prioritised for people who have access needs (or families with a disabled member who has access needs.) These applicants may be 'direct matched' to suitable adapted properties.

16.2 Applications for designated older person's accommodation (formerly known as sheltered housing) will be considered where one or both applicants are aged over 55.

## **17 Quotas**

17.1 The Council may choose to make a percentage of annual lets available to certain groups of applicants, via quota schemes and these will be set out in an annual lettings plan. Some properties will be allocated specifically for transfer applicants. The council will consider annually whether a proportion of properties will be used to house applicants meeting the 'Right to Move' criteria.

## **18 Local Lettings Schemes**

- 18.1 Allocations outside of the agreed rules may be made where local lettings policies have been approved for particular developments or estates. This will facilitate particular types of housing in certain areas to be allocated or prioritised for particular groups of people (such as car free schemes and reducing child density in certain areas). (s.167 (2E) *Housing Act 1996*).
- 18.2 The operation of any new local lettings schemes will be approved by the relevant Head of Service and Portfolio Holder and published alongside the Council's main Allocations Policy.

## **19 Statement on Choice**

- 19.1 The council and its partner Registered Providers are fully committed to enabling applicants to play an active role in choosing where, and in what property type and tenure, they wish to live, while continuing to house those applicants in the greatest housing need and complying with all relevant legislation. Applicants who are threatened with homelessness or accepted as homeless may have bids placed for them by the housing team or be direct matched to suitable properties, if appropriate.

## **20 Monitoring of the policy**

- 20.1 The council is subject to the general public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010. The council and its partner Registered Providers are committed to providing equality of opportunity to all individuals who apply for re-housing. Monitoring of applications and lettings within the context of this policy will take place on at least an annual basis to ensure that everyone is being treated fairly.

## **21 The right to review**

- 21.1 Applicants have the right to request a review of any aspect of their housing application assessment made by the council, under the Housing Act 1996, Part 6. The Housing Act suggests that the following types of decision are subject to the right of review:
- Non award of reasonable preference, to which she or he would otherwise be entitled, on the grounds of unreasonable behaviour.
  - Facts of the applicant's case, which are likely to be, or have been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate accommodation.
  - Eligibility for accommodation.
  - Decision regarding the type of property for which an applicant will be considered.
  - Decision regarding the extent of the applicants' household to be considered for housing with him or her.

- Decision regarding the applicant's medical condition or other welfare needs.
- Determination of the applicant's entitlement to reasonable preference.
- Determination of whether the applicant should receive additional preference on the grounds of urgent housing needs or otherwise.

#### 1) The process of review

- (a) Requests for a review can be made in writing (including electronically), by telephone or verbally to a housing officer within 21 days of the original notification of the decision. Ideally, requests for review should be addressed to a housing officer.
- (b) The review will be carried out by an officer who was not involved in the original decision. The reviewing officer will consider the assessment of the application as a whole and ensure that the circumstances of the applicant at the time of review, not just at the time of the original decision, are taken into account. The reviewing officer may consider it appropriate to arrange for a home visit or other investigations to be made before a final decision can be reached.
- (c) If the original decision is overturned by the reviewing officer, an applicant's housing needs assessment will be affected. This means that an applicant's priority could increase or decrease if the reviewing officer finds that the original assessment was flawed or disproportionate.
- (d) A review will be completed and the outcome notified in writing within 56 days of the request being received (unless agreed otherwise with the applicant).

21.2 You are also free to contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman on 0300 061 0614 if you are dissatisfied with any decision reached in regard to your application for social housing.

## 22 Applications for Extra Care Housing

22.1 In order to ensure Extra Care Housing schemes are viable communities operating effectively, an overall balance between residents who have either low, medium or high care needs must be achieved. The optimum ratio for high/low/medium/care within schemes will be one third of each across all residents of the scheme at any one time. Nominations for Extra Care tenancies will be made according to a combined housing, care and support needs assessment to ensure this balance is maintained.

22.2 Housing needs for these purposes will be assessed in accordance with the council's allocations scheme. Care and support needs assessments will be undertaken following an initial desk top housing needs assessment and will be undertaken by the relevant care / support provider and Hampshire County

Council Adult Services. All assessments will be co-ordinated and overseen by the relevant housing officer. Applicants who currently live out of area or who are unknown to Adult Services may be required to have an assessment in the short stay suite at an Extra Care scheme in Basingstoke and Deane.

22.3 The balance of care needs and hours of care and support is set out in the table below:

Care level	Hours delivered / week	Proportion of service users
Low need	up to 5 hours	33%
Medium need	6 – 10 hours	33%
High	11 + hours	33%

22.4 Consideration will be given to refusing applications to extra care schemes where assessed care / support needs are considered too great to be manageable.

22.5 Applicants for extra-care who are currently home owners with substantial equity in their homes will be directed towards the Shared Equity units at Newman Court.

22.6 No applicant will be refused for a letting by a Registered Provider without full written notification to the applicant, Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

## Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Adult Services	A department of Hampshire County Council that provides and enables care and support services for vulnerable adults who are assessed as meeting their eligibility criteria.
Choice Based Lettings	A method of letting Registered Provider properties by advertising them and allowing applicants for housing to bid on the properties that they are eligible for.
Critical Rehousing	A type of priority given to applicants on the housing register when an inability to secure their own housing will lead to fatal harm.
Direct Match	A process of matching an applicant to a particular property without going through the CBL process but in accordance with the scheme of allocations.
Director's discretion	This is priority awarded in exceptional cases, whose circumstances are not addressed elsewhere within the scheme of allocations. Officers make a written recommendation for priority, which is then put before a corporate director for a decision.
Extra Care Housing	A type of housing generally designated for older people with care and support needs. In Basingstoke and Deane, the allocation of social housing units within an Extra Care setting is made in conjunction with the Adult Services assessment of a person's care and support needs. Some Extra Care properties are available to purchase directly from the Registered Provider.

Fixed Term and Introductory Tenancies	Fixed terms tenancies are offered for 5-6 years by some Registered Providers. They are reviewed before the fixed term expires and a decision is made whether to extend the tenancy or bring it to an end. Introductory tenancies are offered by some Registered Providers and this means that a tenant is offered an assured short-hold tenancy for 12 months or so and this is reviewed and converted to an assured tenancy if the tenancy is conducted satisfactorily.
Homebid	A website that advertises available Registered Provider properties in Basingstoke and Deane on a weekly basis. Eligible applicants are able to bid on the advertised properties by logging on to the Homebid site and are then considered for a property in priority order, as set out in the allocations scheme.
Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	A housing benefit that helps pay the rent if you rent from a private landlord. It is administered by the council. The amount of LHA that you are eligible for depends on the area in which you live.
Local Lettings Policy	A policy which allows certain flexibilities to be made within the normal allocation scheme in response to a specific set of circumstances. A local lettings policy could facilitate certain types of housing being allocated to or prioritised for particular groups of people. An example of this could be a child free scheme.
Local Plan	A plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.
Management Transfer	A type of priority given to exceptional transfer cases on the housing register when an immediate move is required and no other option is appropriate.
Older Persons Accommodation	A type of housing designated for older people. Applications where one or both applicants are over 55 will be considered for this type of accommodation.
Qualifying Person	In the context of the housing allocations policy, this means a person who meets the qualification criteria to join the housing register.



Reasonable Offer of Accommodation	An offer of accommodation that is within the applicant's area of choice and eligibility criteria.
Reasonable Preference.	The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) requires Local Authorities to provide 'reasonable preference' in their scheme of allocations to people with high levels of assessed housing need. This includes homeless people, those who need to move due to welfare or medical grounds, people living in unsatisfactory housing and those who would face hardship unless they move to a particular locality within the Local Authority's area.
Registered Providers	Formerly known as housing associations, Registered Providers are the owners and providers of affordable housing in Basingstoke and Deane.
Right to Move	An initiative launched by government via Statutory Guidance issued in March 2015. It is intended to ensure that existing social tenants, who are seeking to move between local authority areas in England, in order to be closer to work or to take up an offer of work, will not be disadvantaged.
Supported Housing	Housing with on-site support provided. Supported Housing is normally offered for a period of 6 months to 2 years and it is expected that applicants will move on when they no longer require the support provided.
Strategic Fit	This section of the policy describes how the housing allocations policy fits in with the council's main aims, objectives and other corporate strategies.
Twelve months demotion	An applicant is placed in Band 3 for a period of 12 months due to unacceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour in this context is generally defined as behaviour that would lead to a landlord obtaining possession of a property.

**Document revised July 2024**

**Next due for review April 2025**

## Appendix 1

Rural parishes which attract a local parish connection as set out in paragraph 5.4

Ashford Hill	Ibworth	Ramsdell
Ashmansworth	Inhurst	Sherborne St John
Axford	Kingsclere	Sherfield on Loddon
Baughurst	Laverstoke	Silchester
Binley	Litchfield	St Mary Bourne
Bishops Green	Little London	Steventon
Bradley	Malshanger	Stoke
Bramley	Mapledurwell	Stratfield Saye
Brown Candover	Monk Sherborne	Stratfield Turgis
Burghclere	Mortimer West End	Sydmonton
Charter Alley	Nateley Scures	Tadley
Chilton Candover	Newnham	Tunworth
Cliddesden	Newtown	Turgis Green
Deane	North End	Up Nately
Dummer	North Oakley	Upton Grey
East Woodhay	North Waltham	West Heath
Ecchinswell	Nutley	Weston Corbett
Ellisfield	Old Burghclere	Weston Patrick
Farleigh Wallop	Overton	Whitchurch
Freefolk	Pamber End	Winslade
Hannington	Pamber Green	Wolverton
Hartley Wespall	Pamber Heath	Woodcott
Headley	Penwood	Woodmancott
Herriard	Popham	Woolton Hill
Highclere	Preston Candover	Wootton St. Lawrence
Hurstbourne Priors		

