



# Lichfield District Council - Allocation Scheme 2019

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In Partnership with: (Add logos)

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## 1. Introduction

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Every local housing authority in England is required by law to have an allocation scheme in place which determines who is eligible and qualifies to join the scheme, how priority is determined between applicants in housing need when applying for social housing<sup>1</sup> and the procedure to be followed when allocating homes.

Despite not owning any homes, the Council has a duty to provide housing advice and assistance and to prevent and relieve homelessness. In order to meet housing needs within the District and enable us to discharge our duties, we work in close partnership with Registered Providers (RPs) who own and manage social housing in the District.

RP's have a duty to cooperate with the Council in offering accommodation to people in housing need under the Council's allocation scheme. We do this by entering into a nomination agreement with the RP that outlines the percentage of properties that will be made available to the Council through the scheme. A nomination to the RP will then be made in accordance with this allocation scheme and RPs will consider the nomination against their own allocation criteria.

RP's who own and manage social homes within Lichfield District are:

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<sup>1</sup> Social housing/homes in this context refers to both social rented and affordable rented homes.

- |                 |                 |                        |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| • Advance       | • Metropolitan  | • Stonewater           |
| • Bromford      | • Midland Heart | • Trent & Dove         |
| • Clarion       | • Orbit         | • Waterloo             |
| • Family Optima | • Riverside     | • WHG                  |
| • Housing 21    | • Sanctuary     | • Wrekin Housing Trust |

This scheme has been developed in partnership with Bromford, the main provider of social housing in the District. The Council has contracted out the administration and management of the housing register to Bromford who are the managing agents. Bromford administer the allocation scheme and make decisions about eligibility, qualification and priority status in accordance with the scheme on behalf of the Council. The Council retain the statutory responsibility for the lawful administration of the housing register.

We acknowledge that there is a shortage of social homes to rent within the District, therefore our allocation scheme has been framed to give priority to those applicants in the greatest level of housing need and reflect our local priorities to make the best use of the social homes available. The Council and Bromford will work in close partnership to deliver the scheme and maximise the potential rehousing options available for applicants. For those customers with the highest level of need, a Housing Options Advisor from the Council will be allocated to give support and advice to the applicant on all available housing options.

## 2. Aims & Objectives

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The overall aim of the scheme is to ensure that social homes in the District are allocated in a fair and transparent way, objectively meeting the needs of people with a strong connection to the District that are in the greatest housing need to make the best use of the limited homes available.

The scheme has been developed with a view to meeting the following principles and key objectives:

- To have a clear, transparent and accountable system for assessing applicants and to allocate homes in a way that is easy to understand and administer.
- To award preference to those in greatest housing need to make the best use of limited number of social homes available.
- To take into account local priorities and support our homelessness and housing strategies.
- To maximise opportunities for applicants to make informed choice by providing good information on rehousing prospects including alternative housing options.
- To develop positive working relationships with other agencies to identify and meet housing need to create sustainable tenancies.
- To provide a programme of tenancy readiness and ongoing support for applicants requiring this to mitigate the risk of tenancy failures and prevent repeat homelessness.
- To support the development and sustainability of thriving communities.
- To meet the requirements set out in law, regulation and guidance and promote best practice.

### 3. Data Protection Statement

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We will only ask applicants to supply information that is required as part of the application process to determine eligibility, qualification and assess housing need. We will only record and store information that is necessary for the assessment and allocation of social housing.

As part of the assessment process, we will make enquiries into an applicant's housing history and to support their assessment of housing need; by applying to be entered onto the housing register an applicant is agreeing to us making these enquiries. If an applicant does not agree to us making these enquiries, we are unable to accept their application.

We will ensure that all information held on the housing register remains confidential. This will not be disclosed to a third party without prior consent from the applicant.

To enable us to share information and nominate applicants to our partner RPs with homes in the District, we have developed an information sharing protocol. This protocol establishes the procedural arrangements for the secure exchange of information for the purpose of nominations to the RP's. By applying to be entered onto the housing register, an applicant is agreeing to this information being shared with our partner RPs. We will make this clear at the point of application and review.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, applicants have the right to request a copy of all the information held about them. These requests should be made directly to Bromford.

### 4. Equal Opportunities Statement

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We are committed to promoting equal opportunities, embracing diversity and preventing and eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

We recognise that our customers are individuals; we will focus on their particular circumstances to assess their specific housing needs in line with the allocation scheme framework. We commit that the scheme will be accessible, responsive and sensitive to the diverse needs of our customers, ensuring that equality and diversity is at the heart of everything we do.

We will ensure that all potential applicants will have accessible information on how to access the scheme and how to express an interest in the homes available. We acknowledge that some people may require assistance in accessing the housing register and participating in the allocations scheme. For those people that do not have a trusted person, such as a family member or advocate upon whom they can rely; we will ensure that these individuals receive the help and assistance they require.

The impact of the changes to the scheme has been monitored throughout the process and an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is published alongside the document to ensure we continue to be clear, transparent and accountable for our actions.

In order for us to continue to monitor the impact of the scheme, all applicants will be asked to provide demographic information when they apply to join the housing register. This information will be regularly

reviewed to ensure we meet our legal obligations in regards to the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

## 5. Statement on Choice

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We seek to give every eligible and qualifying applicant choice in relation to the location of their accommodation by advertising vacancies and inviting expressions of interest (bids) on these vacancies. Restrictions will apply in terms of the bedroom size and type of property allocated in accordance with the allocation scheme to ensure we make the best use of the homes available.

For those placed into the Emergency Band, which reflects their critical need to be rehoused, we need to balance the level of choice with the urgent need to rehouse the applicant. Applicants within this Band will be given dedicated advice and support from a Housing Options Officer at the Council who will ensure they are bidding on suitable properties when they become available. The Council will review applicants placed in the Emergency Band after 4 weeks to decide whether they can remain within the band. This review will include whether the applicant has been bidding on properties that were suitable and available during this time. A direct offer of accommodation may be made outside of the allocation scheme.

We acknowledge that due to high demand for certain types of properties in Lichfield it is not possible to re-house every potential applicant through the scheme. We therefore believe that it is important to give our applicants key information to allow them to make informed choices about their housing options. Regular updates will be published in relation to previous allocations, the length of time waiting in bands for different types of accommodation and in different areas.

## 6. Registration

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Applicants wishing to join the scheme will need to complete an online application form at xxx (web address to be added). Should an applicant require assistance with registration, this will be provided by Bromford on request.

Once an application has been submitted, an applicant will be prompted to supply proof of eligibility, qualification and any other relevant documents to support the information given in the application. This will need to be provided within 28 calendar days of registration; should this not be received the application will be automatically cancelled.

Information required will be:

- Identification for the main and any joint applicant (Passport, driving licence, birth certificate).
- Identification for any household member aged 18 or over (Passport, driving licence, birth certificate).
- Proof of immigration status if classed as a person from abroad.
- Proof of current address for the main and any joint applicant (utility bill, bank statement).
- 5 year address history including, if relevant, any landlord contact details.
- Proof of residency of any children who require rehousing with the main or joint applicant (Birth certificate and child benefit award, child tax credit, court order, residency order).
- Landlord reference from current or last settled address, where applicable.
- Proof of income, savings and equity.

- Proof of 6 month repayment plans for any housing related debt, where applicable.
- Proof of any pre-tenancy training qualifications where successfully completed.
- Any evidence requested to support the application and assessment of housing need.

(List not exhaustive).

Following the receipt of all supporting documentation, Bromford will assess an applicant's eligibility and qualification to join the housing register and which priority status they have been awarded. The applicant will be notified in writing of this decision within 28 calendar days from receipt of all proofs and supporting evidence being submitted.

Should Bromford feel the applicant may qualify for the Emergency Band, they will make a direct referral to the Council to contact them to complete further investigations to enable appropriate advice and support be provided to the applicant.

Should the applicant have applied directly to the Council, and be working with them to prevent or relieve their homelessness, the Council will ensure they are given the correct advice to enable them to apply to the scheme and will update their application with the evidence they have so as not to duplicate or delay the assessment process.

Once registered and verified, an applicant will then be allowed to express interest (bid) for homes available through the scheme. Applicants will only be able to bid for properties that meet their needs in accordance with the criteria set out within this allocation scheme, e.g. a single person will only be allowed to bid on studio or one bedroomed apartments. Should an applicant require assistance with understanding the system and how to place bids on properties, they should request assistance from Bromford.

#### **6.1. Applications from Employees, Elected Members or Board Members**

Applications can be made by employees, elected members or board members. Applicants must declare this at the time of application. Applications will be assessed in accordance with this scheme for eligibility, qualification and housing need. Any priority awarded and any subsequent offer of accommodation will be authorised by a manager.

### **7. Deliberately Providing False or Misleading Information or Withholding Information**

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Fraudulent behaviour is taken very seriously and all appropriate action will be taken to address this.

It is a criminal offence for an applicant or person on the applicant's behalf to knowingly or recklessly give false or deliberately misleading information or withhold information which is reasonably required. A person found guilty of such an offence will be removed from the scheme for a period of at least 6 months.

Offences under these provisions are prosecuted in the magistrates' court and carry a maximum fine of level 5 on the standard scale. Failure to inform of changes to an application, or deliberately withholding information relevant to, or misrepresenting housing circumstances, may result in criminal prosecution. An RP may seek possession of a tenancy that was granted as a result of a false statement and may also attempt to recover any costs incurred.

### **8. Eligibility**

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We are only able to allocate social homes to applicants who are eligible in accordance with the Housing Act 1996, section 160ZA.

### 8.1. Immigration Status

Those who are not eligible for social housing or homelessness assistance are applicants from abroad prescribed by legislation to be ineligible, or applicants subject to immigration control, unless exempted from these rules by the Secretary of State<sup>2</sup>. Please note we will apply the most up to date legislation at the time of application when making our assessments.

If there is any uncertainty over an applicant's immigration status, advice will be sought from the Home Office.

An applicant who is already in a secure or introductory tenancy or an assured tenancy allocated by the local housing authority is not subject to these eligibility requirements.

### 8.2. Age

Any person aged 18 or over can apply to join the housing register, applicants under the age of 18 will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where:

- Lichfield District Council has accepted a statutory homeless duty to the applicant and the applicant has successfully completed a pre-tenancy course and is ready for independent living OR
- A young person who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated and has a duty of care accepted under the Children's Act 1989, has successfully completed a pre-tenancy course and is ready for independent living.

Any applicant under 18 cannot by law be granted a tenancy, however this can be held in trust until they reach the age of 18 by a trustee. A trustee will be required to sign a tenancy on the applicant's behalf, be deemed as an appropriate person and have the financial resources to afford the costs of the home.

It is at the discretion of the individual RP to accept applicants under the age of 18 for a tenancy, regardless of having a trustee.

## 9. Qualifying & Non Qualifying Persons

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### 9.1. Local Connection and Residency

In order to qualify for the housing register, an applicant or joint applicant must satisfy at least **one** of the following criteria:

- Has lived in the District for at least the last 2 years at the point of application.
- Has lived in the District for 3 out of the last 5 years.
- Is homeless or threatened with homelessness and engaging with Lichfield District Council to resolve their homelessness and owed a prevention, relief or full statutory homeless duty and meet the local connection criteria of having lived in the District for the last 6 out of 12 months.

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<sup>2</sup> The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006



- A young person owed a leaving care duty under section 23C of the Children Act 1989 by Staffordshire County Council will have a local connection to the District.
- A care leaver under the age of 21 and normally lives in a different area to that of a local authority that owes them the leaving care duties, and has done for at least 2 years, including some time before they turned 16.
- Has close adult relatives (mother, father, adult children, brothers or sisters) where a meaningful relationship exists and those relatives currently live in the District and can evidence they have done so for the last 5 years. Consideration will be given to other relatives where a meaningful relationship can be evidenced by the applicant.
- Is currently employed in the District, either on a permanent or temporary contract running for a minimum of 6 months, usually those working less than 16 hours per week will be treated as non-qualifying.
- Any other special circumstances (these will be exceptional).

Those applicants without a local connection will be treated as non-qualifying and will be unable to join the housing register, unless the following exemptions apply:

- Applicants fleeing domestic abuse or harassment, or placed in the District as a result of witness protection where this can be evidenced by a relevant professional will have the right to a local connection.
- Applications from armed forces personnel currently or having previously served in the regular or reserve forces within the last 5 years will have the right to a local connection.
- Applicants that are existing social tenants that wish to move into the District as they are in paid employment or wish to take up an offer of paid employment within the District, and failure to do so would cause them hardship will have the right to a local connection. The distance travelled, the availability and affordability of transport, the nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available locally, as well as the length of employment will be taken into consideration when assessing whether an applicant qualifies to join the housing register.

Please note, some homes in the District have restrictions placed on who qualifies to live there by planning regulations. In these instances the planning related restrictions will always take priority over any qualifying criteria in this allocation scheme.<sup>3</sup>

## 9.2. Unacceptable Behaviour

Applicants, or members of their household, that engage in or have been found responsible for unacceptable behaviour within the last 12 months will not qualify to join the housing register for a minimum of six months from the date of application.

Unacceptable behaviour is defined as behaviour which, should they have been a tenant of a RP at the time, would have resulted in a breach of tenancy conditions. This includes:

- anti-social behaviour or noise nuisance
- perpetrators of domestic abuse
- harassment or intimidation

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<sup>3</sup> S106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990

- violent or aggressive behaviour, including physical, verbal or intimidating behaviour resulting in a referral to the police
- offending behaviour that would impact on the community, such as drug dealing, racially motivated attacks or hate crime

(This list is not exhaustive)

After six months the applicant may reapply where they can evidence a demonstrable change in this behaviour.

### **9.3. Housing Related Debt**

Applicants who have a housing related debt over £100 and cannot evidence regular payments being made over the last 6 months to remedy the debt will be unable to join the housing register. Housing related debt is defined as:

- rent arrears
- service charges
- housing related court costs
- rechargeable repairs
- loans made by a local authority to a landlord in respect of a local authority rent deposit scheme

Each case will be considered on its own merits, any exceptional circumstances will be considered where evidence exists to support the case and should be submitted with the request for supporting information to join the register.

Acceptance onto the housing register is on the condition that regular repayments are maintained, which will be checked prior to any offer being made.

Applicants should note that RP's will apply their own lettings criteria when deciding whether to offer a home; some will expect the arrears to be paid in full at this time.

### **9.4. Sustainability**

Applicants who are deemed not to be able to sustain a tenancy without support, and this support has been refused by the applicant will be unable to join the housing register.

### **9.5. Financial Resources**

Where the applicant has the financial means to resolve their own housing circumstances will not be able to join the housing register, for clarity this means either:

- Households with a gross income (excluding non-dependants income) of over £60,000.
- Savings and/or assets totalling over £16,000.

Monies that can be evidenced as received as a compensation payment as a result of serving in the regular or reserve armed forces will be disregarded.

We acknowledge that the majority of specialist homes for the over 50's are in the social housing sector, therefore discretion will be applied to this ruling for those applicants over the age of 50 that have expressed a desire for this type of housing to allow them to access these schemes only.

## 9.6. Home Owners

Applicants that own or part own a freehold or leasehold property in the UK or abroad will be unable to join the housing register.

Discretion to this ruling will be applied where exceptional circumstances apply, these may include:

- Evidence supplied that the property is having a significant detrimental impact on the health of the applicant, it has been verified by a professional that the property cannot be adapted to meet their needs and they have limited financial resources to meet their own housing needs elsewhere.
- The current property is unaffordable and the applicant does not have the financial resources to meet their rehousing needs.
- Cases where the applicant or a member of their household is suffering from domestic abuse or harassment, and there is evidence to suggest emergency rehousing is required.

If home owners are accepted onto the housing register, they will need to evidence they are in the process of selling their home prior to any offer being made.

## 10. Priority

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Applicants will be prioritised according to the assessment of their housing need based on the priority banding criteria set out in this allocation scheme. Where applicants have the same priority award, the length of time they have been waiting within the band will be taken in to account.

### 10.1. Emergency Band

Applicants will be placed into the Emergency Band if their need for housing is assessed as being so exceptional that they take priority over all other applicants in the scheme.

Statutory homeless	Assessed by the Council as statutorily homeless and are owed a full housing duty under part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
Statutory overcrowded	Assessed by the Council as statutorily overcrowded under the Part I of the Housing Act 2004 or resulted in the Council serving a Prohibition Order or Suspended Prohibition Order. This assessment will include rooms that could reasonably be expected to be used as bedroom, such as a dining room. Priority will only be awarded where it can be evidenced that the applicant themselves hasn't deliberately caused the overcrowding.
Housing that poses a serious risk to health, safety or welfare.	Assessed by the Council as having serious health and safety hazards, which have resulted in the Council serving a Prohibition Order or Suspended Prohibition Order. or a Suspended Improvement Notice, the conditions of which cannot be remedied by the owner and it can be established that the hazards are not an act of wilful damage or neglect by the occupant.
Care leavers	A young person who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated and has a duty of care accepted under the Children's Act 1989 who has successfully completed

	a pre-tenancy course and is ready for independent living, and is engaging with appropriate support if identified as required.
Supported accommodation move on	A person living in supported accommodation and the Council has a formal move on agreement with the housing provider, has successfully completed a pre-tenancy course and is ready for independent living and is engaging with appropriate support if identified as required.
Emergency medical	Applicants where their current accommodation is having a significant negative impact on physical or mental health and rehousing is required immediately to resolve or alleviate the issue. Where a medical priority is awarded for a specific property type, for example for ground floor accommodation, the applicant will only be eligible for that specified type of accommodation with the medical priority award.
Domestic abuse, harassment	Applicants where there is evidence of significant serious violence, domestic abuse and/or harassment and an ongoing risk to the applicant or a member of their household exists and they cannot return to their home.
Armed forces	The spouse or partner of armed or reserve forces personnel that are required to leave their current armed forces accommodation following the death of a spouse or partner, and their death is as a result of their service.
Under occupying	Transfer applicants residing in social housing who are under occupying their home and subject to the under occupancy charge which is having a significant financial impact and are accruing rent arrears as a result.
Regeneration	Applicants who are living in social housing which has been identified for redevelopment or regeneration and need to move to allow the redevelopment programme to proceed.

All applicants within the Emergency Band will be offered advice and support with their rehousing from a Housing Options Advisor from the Council.

## 10.2. Band 1

Applicants will be placed into Band 1 where there is an urgent rehousing need identified, or there is an identified need for the property they are releasing to make the best use of housing stock.

Releasing an adapted property	Transfer applicants residing in social housing that are releasing a property with major adaptations where the adaptations are no longer required and there is an identified housing need for the property. This excludes adaptations that do not alter the physical fabric of the building, e.g. stair lifts, temporary ramping, ceiling track hoists etc.
Under occupation	Transfer applicants residing in social housing that have more bedrooms than their household requires, and there is an evidenced demand for their property.
Non-priority homeless	Assessed by the Council under part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as no priority need homeless applicants and not owed a full homeless duty.
Homeless relief duty	Assessed by the Council under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as having a homeless relief duty.
Overcrowded	Applicants who are living in overcrowded accommodation and are short of one or more bedrooms. This assessment will include rooms that could reasonably be expected to be used as bedroom, such as a dining room. Priority will only be awarded where it can be evidenced that the applicant themselves hasn't

	deliberately caused the overcrowding.
Medical	Applicants whose current accommodation is having a negative impact on their physical or mental health and rehousing is required to resolve or alleviate the issue. Where a medical priority is awarded for a specific property type, for example for ground floor accommodation, the applicant will only be eligible for that specified type of accommodation with the medical priority award.

### 10.3. Band 2

Band 2 will be awarded where there is a housing need identified.

Hardship	Applicants that need to move into the District to access specialist facilities or employment located in the District, or give or receive care that cannot be provided in the area where they currently live or would cause hardship to the applicant.
Homeless prevention	Applicants that have been assessed by the Council under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as having a homeless prevention duty owed.
Relationship breakdown	Relationship breakdown (where still resident together in the family home and no alternative accommodation available). Satisfactory evidence will need to be supplied that the relationship existed, with proof of residence at the address for the last 12 months. This band will only be awarded where it allows the best use of stock, i.e. allows the family to remain in the family home.
Intentionally homeless	Assessed by the Council under part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as intentionally homeless applicants and not owed a full homeless duty and meet the eligibility and qualification criteria.

### 10.4. Band 3

Band 3 accounts for applicants that have no identified housing need, however qualify on the grounds of applying for specialist accommodation or have expressed an interest in 2 bed upper floor flats.

## 11. Additional Preference

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Additional preference will be given to the following groups of people by awarding an additional priority within the band awarded to recognise or reward positive behaviour.

### 11.1. Tenancy Sustainment

Those applicants that have been identified as requiring pre-tenancy training and successfully completed this will be awarded additional preference within the band awarded.

### 11.2. Armed Forces Personnel

Applicants that have served in the regular or reserve forces within the last 5 years from the date of application will be awarded additional preference within the band awarded.

## 12. Bedroom Eligibility

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Applicants will be assessed to determine the size of property that their household requires. A household is defined as any other person who normally resides with the applicant as a member of his/her family or any other person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant.

Only children permanently residing with the main applicant will be included on the application for rehousing and be awarded a bedroom entitlement. Proof of residency includes, child benefit, child tax credit, a court order or residency order.

Bedroom entitlement will be assessed as followed:

- One bedroom for each person or couple aged 16 or over.
- One bedroom for two children of the same gender aged 15 or under.
- One bedroom for two children aged 9 or under, regardless of gender.

### 12.1 Exceptions

Due to a shortage of larger properties, there will be occasions where larger families are offered properties that are smaller than their bedroom eligibility.

Exceptions may apply and additional bedrooms may be granted where:

- An applicant is pregnant and reached 24 weeks into this pregnancy, as long as they can evidence they can afford the rent up until the birth of the child.
- A couple who cannot share because of a disability, evidence of qualifying benefits and supporting documentation will be required to support this entitlement.
- A person who requires an overnight carer who regularly sleeps at the property, evidence of qualifying benefits and supporting documentation will be required to support this entitlement.
- Two children who cannot share because of a disability, evidence of qualifying benefits and supporting documentation will be required to support this entitlement.
- A foster parent(s) or a parent(s) approved to adopt and awaiting placement of a child, evidence of supporting documentation will be required to support this entitlement.
- An applicant who has access to or shared custody of a child, evidence of this arrangement and proof of affordability for the additional room will be required. Restrictions will be placed on the application to allow for bidding on flatted accommodation only.

A RP may refuse a nomination if the nominated household is too large or too small for the vacant property according to their own lettings policies.

## 13. Offers of Accommodation

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Applicants will be able to express interest (bid) on up to three eligible properties per advertising cycle. In the event that the applicant is in bid position one for more than one property, the applicant must choose the home they want to be nominated for. Applicants cannot be considered for more than one home at a time.

Applicants will be ordered in terms of band order, including any additional priority awarded, followed by the date they were placed into the band. Exceptions to this will occur when a local letting plan exists or the property has specific adaptations and it will meet the needs of someone else on the waiting list.

Where planning law restricts who qualifies for a nomination to a home this will be made clear in the advertisement as will any other restrictions arising from a local lettings plan or a RP policy decision to restrict access to certain categories or band of applicants.

The Council may make directly matched nominations without advertising properties. Such nominations will not make up more than 10% of all nominations and will be monitored quarterly.

Applicants placed into the Emergency Band will be entitled to one offer of accommodation only, should the applicant not respond to requests to contact staff or refuse this offer their qualification and their priority on the housing register will be reviewed which may result in their banding being lowered or their application being cancelled.

Applicants placed in the Emergency Band as a result of the Council owing them a full homeless duty who fail to respond to requests to contact RP or Council colleagues in response to a bid placed or a direct match or who refuse an offer of suitable accommodation will be notified that their homeless duty has been discharged and will be given notice to vacate any temporary accommodation offered.

Applicants in all other bands will be entitled to three offers of accommodation before the same rules as outlined above apply.

### **13.1. Registered Provider Statement**

The RP will be supplied with all relevant information on the household being nominated to the vacancy. The RP may complete their own assessment checks in line with their own lettings policies.

**The final decision on whether to offer a tenancy sits with the RP.**

## **14. Adapted or Specialist Properties**

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Due to the scarcity of specialist and adapted properties; preference for such vacancies will sit outside of the normal nomination process. The Council will make the best use of the resource by carefully matching the adaptations to the applicant who would make best use of the adaptations. Expert opinions may be sought from medical professions such as consultants and Occupational Therapists to assist in the decision making. Should there be more than one household this would benefit, we will then take into account priority banding and the length of time waiting.

## **15. Local Lettings Policy**

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On occasion, Local Lettings Plans (LLP) will be agreed between the Council and the RP to set out criteria for the allocation of properties in certain areas in addition to the rules set in this allocation scheme. These could be as a result of a planning condition on a site to ensure the homes developed are allocated to local people within the village or parish, or an area is prone to anti-social behaviour with a view to creating a balanced and sustainable community. We will clearly note the additional criteria when the properties are advertised.

All LLP's will be published alongside this scheme on our website, and will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are still in line with relevant legislation and local policies.

## **16. Change of Circumstances**

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It is the applicant's responsibility to inform us of any change of circumstance that would mean a review to their eligibility, qualification or priority on the housing register. Failure to do so in a timely manner may mean any offer of accommodation is withdrawn and the application is cancelled. Applicants should not wait until the annual review to advise of any change in circumstances.

## 17. Annual Reviews

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A review of an applicant's circumstances will be undertaken every year on the anniversary date of their application by email. Applicants are required to log into their accounts and confirm circumstances have not changed and that they wish to remain on the housing register. It is important that the applicant informs us whether they wish to remain on the housing register and whether there has been any change in circumstance that could affect their eligibility or qualification to be included on the register, or their housing priority. If no response is received within 28 calendar days of this request, the application will be closed.

If an applicant is known to be vulnerable, every effort will be made to contact them, either by telephone or by contacting their relevant support agency.

## 18. Cancelling Applications

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If a customer no longer wishes to remain on the housing register, they can cancel their application at any time by logging on to their account or writing to Bromford.

We will only cancel the application when:

- the applicant has been rehoused,
- we have received notification from an executor or next of kin that the customer is deceased and they were the sole applicant,
- it is discovered that the applicant or a person on the applicant's behalf has given false or deliberately misleading information or withheld information that is relevant to their housing application,
- evidence is obtained that the applicant is no longer eligible or qualifies for rehousing or has not updated us with a change in their circumstances,
- does not respond to a request for information or evidence in 28 calendar days from the date of request, including responding to reviews,
- where an applicant does not respond to an offer of accommodation, refuses an offer of accommodation or fails to attend a viewing of accommodation

## 19. Reviews

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An applicant has the right to request a review of any adverse decision made about their housing application within 28 calendar days of the date of being notified of the decision if it is felt that we have not taken into account all of the relevant information or if we have made a decision unfairly.

Reviews may be requested for decisions on:

- Eligibility
- Qualification
- The housing needs assessment (priority)



- Cancellation or closure of the application

**Where a RP makes a decision not to offer a particular home to an applicant the applicant should follow the RP's appeals or complaints procedure if unhappy with the decision made by the RP.**

### 19.1. Stage 1

Applicants should submit their request for review in writing or via a third party (with the applicant's express consent), stating the reasons why they feel the decision is incorrect or has been judged unfairly, and should supply any supplementary evidence to support their case along with this request. Applicants may not attend review hearings in person.

Reviews will be considered by an officer who had no involvement in the original decision and is in a position senior to the original decision maker. The applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review within 28 calendar days, we may agree a longer timescale if required.

### 19.2. Stage 2

If, following this review, an applicant still feels that the decision is incorrect or has been judged unfairly, they can put their complaint in writing, stating the reasons why they feel this is incorrect or has been judged unfairly, and supply and supplementary evidence to support their case along with this request. Applicants may not attend review hearings in person.

This review will be undertaken by a Senior Manager who has had no involvement in the original or Stage 1 appeal process. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their appeal within 28 calendar days, we may agree a longer timescale if required.

### 19.3. Stage 3

If an applicant is still not satisfied after considering the response of the review process, they may take their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

**RPs will not hold any vacant properties pending the outcome of a review. If a decision is overturned on review appropriate action will be taken to reinstate or re-assess the application.**

## 20. Review & Monitoring

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Review and Monitoring of the allocations scheme will take place 12 months after the allocation scheme start date to ensure that it is working effectively and to review its impact.

A full review will take place after 3 years, or sooner should a change in legislation dictate a review is required.

Any minor changes to the scheme within this timeframe will be approved by the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services, Housing and Health.