



Allocations Policy

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Introduction

- **Why do we have an Allocation Policy**
- **Key Differences between ‘new and old’**
- **What the new policy will mean for customers**
- **Choice Based Lettings**

Why do we have an Allocations Policy ?

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) states that all Local Authorities are required to have a policy which gives clear guidelines and publicise on how they will prioritise allocations of social rented housing stock.

The policy covers either allocations within its own stock or through a nomination to a Housing Association.

Why do we have an Allocations Policy...

All Local Authorities must by law give 'reasonable preference' to the following category of applicants:

- People who are homeless
- People owed a duty under the homelessness legislation
- People living in unsanitary, overcrowded or unsatisfactory housing
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship.
- A Local Authority may be allowed to give additional priority to an applicant who are considered to have more urgent housing needs: e.g. financial and local connection.

Key Proposed Changes ‘between old and new’

- The main difference between the two policies is the move away from the points system.
- Currently, people who apply for housing with the Council are assessed and given a point score of between 0 and 35.
- 0 being an applicant who is not threatened with homelessness, no medical, adequately housed and no local connection with 35 being statutorily homelessness.
- There are occasions where households may be scored as a minus. This is solely for current or former rent arrears either with a Housing Association or a Private Landlord.

Key Proposed Changes ‘between old and new’

Current Policy

Housing Circumstances	Maximum Number of Points
Statutory Homeless	35
Non-statutory homeless	12
Threatened with homeless / Living in Temporary	12
Insecure Tenancy	8
Housing Amenities	17
Overcrowding	4
Under occupancy	2
Housing Standards	30
Timepoints	5
Medical	10
Enhanced medical/social	5
Discretionary social points	5
Parish Connection	5
Borough Resident Connection	5
Age Points	1

Key Proposed Changes ‘between old and new’

- The proposed scheme will move away from the points system and replace with a transparent banding system.
- There will be four bands that replace the 35 points and the proposed policy accurately reflects to Housing Act and is believed to be easier to understand for customers.
- The four bands will consist of:
 - Band 1 - Urgent Need due to additional preference or cumulative need
 - Band 2 – Need to move – Reasonable preference
 - Band 3 – Recognisable Need
 - Band 4 – None of the above but would like to move

Key Proposed Changes ‘between old and new’

Housing Circumstances	Band
Emergency Medical (life threatening condition) Management Transfer (anti social, domestic abuse, racial) Release Adapted property Applicants who fall into 2 or more criteria in Band 2	1
Households who have been classed as statutory homeless Private Sector statutory duty (Closing order – Unfit) Households living in temporary accommodation Applicants leaving care Households who are overcrowded Households who are under occupying Households at risk of homeless who have accepted a prevention option Medical	2
Households who have not been classed as statutory homeless Employment Opportunity Applicant who has been awarded reasonable preference but has been downgraded due to rent, anti social behaviour or no local connection.	3
Households who do not qualify for Bands 1,2 or 3 and would like to move	4

What would the proposed policy mean to our customers?

- All customers who are the Council's Housing Register would be transferred to the new banding system.
- Letters would be sent advising of their new status on the list.
- A review is currently being undertaken to assess numbers of those losing priority as a result of the new policy.

What would the proposed policy mean for our customers?

- The Councils nomination rights to Housing Association properties would remain the same.

Increase of control from the Council to ensure that an appropriate mix of households who are in housing need are offered accommodation.

The policy is reflective of a potential Choice Based Lettings policy.

Choice Based Lettings

Choice Based Lettings is a fundamental change to the way rented accommodation is allocated.

Traditionally, an officer would 'offer' available accommodation and the client would not be involved in the process.

Properties in low demand areas would primarily be offered to homeless households and nationally it is believed that this type of working has contributed towards areas of high unemployment, high teenage pregnancy rates and high anti social behaviour.

Choice Based Lettings

Choice Based Lettings empowers applicants by allowing them to 'bid' or 'express interest' only in properties they wish to be considered for

It can work like an Estate Agent, where all available properties are advertised and applicants can view them.

Within the Corporate Strategy there is a task to establish a Choice Based Lettings scheme.

During the last 12 months, the Strategic Housing team have been liaising with our Housing Association partners to gauge interest in participating in such a scheme.

A Commissioning Group was established and consisted of the Council and 3 Housing Association partners which account for over 97% of social rented stock in the borough.

Choice Based Lettings

The group considered the options available to establish the project.

Following interviews with sub regional partners, Selectmove 'Preston and South Ribble CBL scheme' was chosen as a preferred partner.

Under Choice Based Lettings, Local Authorities still have nomination rights to Housing Association properties.

Each Local Authority partner is responsible for monitoring performance in their own area.

To ensure that households who are in housing need are allocated property, there would be a single allocation policy, agreed by all partners and the LA would monitor performance.

Since establishing Choice Based Lettings in Preston and South Ribble, they have reported a decrease in temporary accommodation use and also a decrease in waiting time for households who are in housing need.

Any questions ?

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