

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 124

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Allocations Policy Review		
Date of Meeting:	22nd March 2011		
Report of:	Lead Commissioner for Housing		
Contact Officers:	Sylvia Peckham	Tel: 293318	
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The current Housing Register Allocations Policy was approved by committee on 6th January 2005 with an update in March 2009 agreed by Housing Cabinet. However, following Tenants dissatisfaction it was agreed that the area of Choice Based Lettings and systems for allocating accommodation be subject to a fundamental review. This review has now been undertaken resulting in recommendations for changes to the way the Housing Register is to be operated. The recommended changes to the Allocations Policy are attached as Appendix 1 for approval. If approved the changes would be implemented in May 2011.
- 1.2 A full 12 week consultation with the City has now been conducted. This further report brings back final recommendations for implementation.
- 1.3 The policy is based on the principle that it is:
 - easily understood by tenants;
 - fair and equitable;
 - effective;
 - efficient and
 - legal.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Cabinet Member Meeting approve the changes recommended in Appendix 1 (also attached at Appendix 6 is a full policy document with the changes highlighted).

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

The following areas of focus were identified by the tenant-led focus group

3.1 Choice Based Lettings platform

The platform for which permanent social housing in Brighton & Hove was discussed and was found not to be the cause of any outstanding issues from the tenant led group.

3.2 Allocations Policy

The tenant led group raised issues around certain areas of the Allocations Policy and who is being offered and allocated social housing in Brighton & Hove. Attached in Appendix 1 are the changes recommended which if agreed will be adopted and implemented.

3.3 Local Lettings Plans (LLPs)

LLPs were reviewed and pilot Local Lettings Plans were implemented in early 2010. It had been agreed that these were reviewed in Autumn 2010.

3.4 Communication

We have taken on board the feedback from our user group so that information given is clear, correct and timely. Tenant representatives will be more actively involved to promote such initiatives as under occupancy and assist with developing positive adverts of properties in their area and to provide information on the neighbourhood for prospective and new tenants, to enable them to settle into the community . This will also contribute towards developing sustainable communities as people are more likely to feel a part of the community.

3.5 Other areas examined

The tenant led group considered information around other areas of social housing and the allocation of it and whilst this information was useful to all there were no outstanding issues raised that would mean any changes. These areas included; Accessible Housing, Housing Options, Homelessness & information from another Local Authorities who are not using Choice Based Lettings.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The tenant-led focus groups identified the areas for improvement (Appendix 1 & Appendix 6 Policy document) and the 12 week consultation process with wider stakeholders in the City over proposed changes has now been completed. Stakeholders include our Communities of Interest, our partner agencies, Age Concern, support agencies, people on the Housing Register, and support providers (a full list is provided in Appendix 2).

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications.

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation made in this report. The recommended changes as highlighted in appendix 1 will be managed within existing budgets

5.2 Legal Implications

Under section 167 Housing Act 1996, the council as a local housing authority is required to have an allocations scheme for determining priorities and as to the procedure to be followed, in allocating housing accommodation. Local housing authorities must not allocate housing accommodation otherwise than in accordance with their allocation scheme. The amended Housing Register Allocations Policy, which the Cabinet Member for Housing is asked to approve, is the Council's allocations scheme for the purpose of section 167. Although there is no specific right to housing under the European Convention on Human Rights or Human Rights Act 1998, there is within the Court system an increasing focus on Human rights issues, however there appears to be no obvious issues in relation to this policy.

Equalities must also be considered in any service provided by a public body. This will be dealt with by the Equalities Impact assessment.

Legal officer Consulted: Simon Court – Senior Solicitor

11.02.11

5.3 Equalities Implications

Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out for the proposed changes to the Policy (Appendix 3).

5.4 Sustainability Implications

The proposals will ensure that better use is made of the housing stock and will contribute to sustainable housing solutions.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications

None.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

Failure to adopt the changes prescribed in the attached new Allocations Policy could render the Local Authority vulnerable to legal challenge.

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications

Limited social housing stock will be used in the best and most efficient way possible and that the city will benefit from clearer communication and updated Local Lettings Plans.

6. **EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 The alternative to the amendments would be for the policy to remain as per the current policy. This however would not make best use of the housing stock nor address the issues identified by Tenants.

7. **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The recommendations have been made so that through the Allocations Policy we can ensure that best use is made of the council and RSL housing stock in the City. The policy will be clear, transparent and easily understood.

APPENDIX 1

Recommended Changes:

1. Local Connection

- 1.1 Applicants are able to apply for social housing within Brighton & Hove from anywhere within the United Kingdom. Brighton and Hove is a high demand area where demand for social housing is in excess of supply. For this reason applicants, who live outside the area with no local connection to it, cannot expect the same priority for housing as those with a local connection. Therefore, in order to ensure that the Council meets the needs of the local community, reduced priority will be given to those people without a local connection.
- 1.2 Applicants without a local connection will have their priority reduced to Band C (below those with a local connection in this band) until they acquire a local connection with the Council.
- 1.3 The following factors as set down in s199 Housing Act 1996 will be taken into account in determining whether or not an applicant has a local connection with the Brighton & Hove City Council area. An application is awarded a local connection if:
- an applicant is currently residing in the City in either temporary or permanent accommodation and has been resident in the city **for a minimum of 24 months**
 - or is a serving member of the armed forces and is posted in the Brighton & Hove City Council Area. This provision will also be considered for those who are serving in the armed forces and returning to Brighton & Hove as a main place of residence after leaving service, the 24 month residency will apply at the point at which the city was left and service was started where the same (this will not include those who have been dishonourably discharged).
- 1.4 For the purposes of determining local connection, living in Brighton & Hove will not include the following:
- Occupation of a mobile home, caravan or motor caravan which is not placed on an official Council approved site **or other Council approval obtained (toleration on unauthorised sites is not included).**
 - Occupation of a holiday letting which includes a permanent building, hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation for the purposes of a holiday.
 - Resident of Bail Hostels or other such accommodation.
 - In-Patient of Hospitals/specialist centres.
- 1.5 Exceptions
There may be occasions not predicted by this Allocation Scheme where the application of the Local Connection Policy is deemed inappropriate by the Council and accordingly there is a Commissioning Director level Discretion available not to invoke the Policy in these Special Circumstances. One example might be someone who has been placed out of Brighton & Hove for a period of time, whilst being looked after by the Children & Young people's Trust, or the Community Mental Health Team – although each case would be considered on its merits.

Applicants who do not have a local connection with Brighton & Hove but to who the City Council have accepted a full Homelessness duty under section 193(2) will not be subject to any reduction in their priority (as the Council is under a statutory duty to provide long term settled housing).

2. Leaving Supported Accommodation

Accepted Homeless s193 households where supported housing is required

In some cases where a household has been accepted as homeless under s193 of the Housing Act 1996 Part VII, an assessment of the housing need will take place. If the outcome of the assessment is that the household is not ready for independent accommodation but need supported accommodation, then they will not be able to access general needs housing.

The Integrated Support Pathway comprises high support accommodation, leading to lower supported accommodation, until ultimately households are ready to move into the general needs housing with floating support.

Households are worked with throughout this process and their skills and abilities are thoroughly assessed to ensure that they are ready to make each step to greater independence.

Band 1 is primary contact organisations, e.g. Rough Sleepers Street Services Team

Band 2 is high support accommodation with 24 hour staffing and intensive support

Band 3 is step down accommodation, independent flats and shared houses with several support hours a week.

Band 4 is floating support provided to clients who are living in the general needs sector.

Band 5 is peer to peer support for clients who are stable but need some community support.

When these households are ready to move on from the Council's Integrated Support Pathway reasonable preference will be awarded when a household is assessed as ready to move to independent settled housing on the recommendation of the Support or Key worker.

If ongoing support needs have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan will be put in place. This will mean that only those households who are ready to manage a tenancy will be able to access social housing.

3 Refusals of suitable accommodation

Applicants who have refused 3 reasonable first offers of accommodation within 12 months of the date of the first offer will have their priority for re-housing reduced to Band D for a 12 month period, please note that if applicants who are second or third become first for an offer and refuse will be deemed 'first' under this part of the policy. After this 12 months period the applicant will have their case returned to their original band with their original date as long as a change of circumstances has not occurred.

It should be noted that if a tenancy is accepted and then refused without the tenancy being moved into this will be seen as a refusal and dealt with as the

above and may result in a Band D priority for 12 months if the reason is not accepted.

All cases will be dealt with based on information supplied and submitted. There is no right to request a further review of the decision unless the applicant's circumstances change and they can provide evidence of this.

It should also be noted that this does not include Accepted Homeless cases where if households in this category are successful in obtaining an offer of accommodation within six months, this will be considered a final offer. The Council may exercise discretion to retain the current bandings in certain instances, for example where a Council or Housing Association tenant is releasing a property they are under occupying or one that has been adapted that could meet the needs of households who are waiting in a high banding.

4. Leaving Care

4.1 Move on from Care.

This is picked up under the Joint Protocol for Care Leavers and so CYPT requested it is removed from the policy.

5. Priority for Working Households and those making a Positive Contribution to the City

There is an increased recognition of the importance of Allocations Schemes at a National level to ensure that Authorities make best use of housing stock, but also to improving access to affordable housing for those who are on low incomes and the ease of mobility for positively contributing to the community.

The Government has published "Fair and Flexible - Statutory Guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities In England". This is enabling Local Authorities to be open to change within the Allocations Scheme so that is it responsive to local needs.

To ensure that Brighton & Hove City Council promotes a positive contribution to the **community up to 50% of all permanent** social housing stock will be advertised with a priority being given to those who can show that the ingoing primary tenant(s) is/are working or is making a positive contribution to Brighton & Hove City.

To ensure that the policy helps those on low incomes and taking into account feedback from Consultation we propose **income caps** as follows:

For those needing a 2 or more bedroom property an income cap of £35,000 pa gross income to include all forms of the households income,

For households needing studio or 1 bedroom property an income cap of £17,000 pa gross income to include all forms of the households income.

Exceptions for Special Circumstances

There may be occasions where someone is serving a 'Community order with an unpaid work requirement', 'community service order(s)' or 'compulsory manual labour' and therefore would not be considered to be 'working' or 'volunteering' under this scheme and therefore would be excluded from the definition of the priorities above.

Sheltered accommodation will be excluded from offering 50% as Priority for working households or those making a positive contribution but mobility standard flats and houses will be included

The Council reserves the right to refuse that employment is relevant for the Policy where it is in variance with Council policy and procedure.

5.1 Working Households
Economic Contribution

This part of the policy aims to support the economic growth of our city. We aim to encourage people who can, to work and want to raise levels of aspiration and ambition. We will offer priority on property adverts to the prime applicant(s) who is/are working (see definition below) and who are therefore making a contribution to Brighton & Hove's economy. The priority for Working Households will apply to rehousing across the city and is not linked with a specified area or property type.

Definition of Working Households

For the purposes of this Allocations Scheme employment is described as having a **permanent contract, working as a temporary member of staff or being self-employed**. Applicants will only qualify if the worker has been employed for **9 out of the last 12 months, is currently in employment and is working for a minimum of 16 hours per week**. Verification will be sought at point of application as well as point of offer under the same terms. Applicants must provide payslips, P60, bank statements or a verifying letter on headed paper in order to qualify (we may also contact employers directly for confirmation of employment). If employment status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes. Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

5.2 Positive Contribution
Community Contribution

Brighton & Hove City Council wishes to recognise residents who make a positive contribution to the City and play a part in making their neighbourhood a strong, stable and healthy place to be. We believe those who help make it a good place to live, work and play are valuable people and they need to be recognised for the good they do. We will offer priority on property adverts to the prime applicant(s) who is/are positively contributing to their community (see definition below) and who are therefore making a contribution to Brighton & Hove's wellbeing. The priority for positive contribution Households will apply to rehousing across the city and is not linked with a specified area or property type.

Positive Contribution – definition

This covers households who are undertaking voluntary work or who are full-time carers and so unable to undertake paid work.

- **Volunteers**
Volunteers must have been volunteering for a **continuous period of at least 6 months** up to the point of application and the same at point of offer. Volunteering must be for a not-for profit organisation or a charity and must be for a **minimum of 32 hours per month**.

Evidence required for voluntary work.

Letter from Manager responsible for Volunteers confirming applicant's involvement in a minimum of 32 hours per month of voluntary work in the requested area for over 6 months. This person must not be related to the applicant in any way and we may also contact manager directly for confirmation of work done. If volunteer status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

The Council reserves the right to refuse that volunteering is relevant for the Policy where it is in variance with Council policy and procedure

- Full Time Carers

If the prime applicant(s) provide care in an area of the City, the priority may be applied for in the area in which they provide care. Carers must have been providing for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer.

Evidence required for voluntary work.

Proof that full time care is required (this will be in the form of a care assessment from Adult Social Care or Children and Young Persons Trust in Brighton & Hove City Council) or a copy of the carers allowance that is being paid and proof of receipt of this. We will also require a letter from the person/people requiring care confirming applicant's full time involvement. We may also contact Adult Social Care, Children and Young Persons Trust, the person/people receiving the care or any other point of contact directly for confirmation of care given. If care status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Work & positive contribution and disability

The complexity and breadth of the needs of disabled people can not easily be tested by the means above and this is partly due to the fact that each individual will have varying degrees of ability which present unique barriers. We feel that it is important to recognise that many disabled people are and wish to remain active in their communities regardless of level of employment status or volunteer work and it has been found that they will likely benefit from being able to bid on all accommodation irrespective of level of work, paid or otherwise that they do. We therefore believe that anyone with a proven chronic long term disability* who works or volunteers (irrespective of hours carried out) should be able to be awarded this priority. Proof will still be required. If work or volunteer status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Exceptions for Special Circumstances

There may be occasions where someone is serving a 'Community order with an unpaid work requirement', 'community service order(s)' or 'compulsory manual labour' and therefore would not be considered to be 'working' or 'volunteering' under this scheme and therefore would be excluded from the definition of the priorities above.

6. Minor wording changes regarding Private sector housing repairs banding to bring the allocations scheme into line with the H&S hazard rating system

Band A

- Private Sector Housing nomination issued under a quota arrangements as agreed by the Private Sector Housing Team.

Band B

- Other unsatisfactory housing conditions (category 1 hazard(s) that cannot be rectified within 6 months as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004)).

Band C

- Unsanitary conditions that cannot be addressed by the Private Sector Housing Team action including lacking one or more of the following; a kitchen (eg sink and space for a cooker), an inside WC or a bathroom (e.g. basin and bath or shower).
- Other unsatisfactory housing conditions (higher category 2 hazard(s) where formal remedial action is being pursued, as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004))

***This will be evidence by the receipt of high rate benefit i.e. DLA (both care & mobility rates), or Incapacity Benefit. If someone has autism, sensory loss, physical disabilities or serious mental health issues they will have been assessed by DWP. We do sometimes ask for proof of blue badge as a good indication of long term disability. We will also ask if they have a social worker and/or support worker.**

Appendix A Overcrowding

Where the property is deemed to be 'statutorily overcrowded' by the Private Sector Housing Team under section X of the 1985 Housing Act and there are no practicable means to make the property suitable for the number of occupants within a reasonable time period the applicant will be placed in band A. Applicants will be placed in band B if they lack two or more bedrooms and band C if they lack one bedroom below these minimum provisions

7. Directors Discretion (for other exceptional circumstances not covered by this scheme)

To replace Severe need – exceptional circumstances and/or multiple needs, which warrant emergency priority – to be agreed by Head of TA and Allocations.

From time to time a situation may arise that is not adequately reflected in this Allocations Scheme but the needs or circumstances are exceptional and significant. Where a case is considered exceptional but the applicant does not meet any of the Banding criteria or it is felt that a higher Banding than the one awarded is more appropriate then the **Lead Commissioner for Housing** reserves the right to override this scheme and allow an applicant to have a higher priority than they would be entitled to under the Scheme. These cases will be few in number and will be closely monitored and regularly reported on to ensure that the duty to achieve Reasonable Preference overall is not compromised. The Lead Commissioner Discretion can also be used to block an allocation or to make a direct allocation of a property in circumstances not predicted by this scheme but where the Council is satisfied someone has unfairly taken advantage of the scheme to the detriment of those in housing need. Again, these cases will be monitored and are will be few in number.

All of the above cases will be taken to Housing Consultative Committee on a yearly basis to review the numbers submitted, the outcome of the cases and brief reason for the case being submitted via this route

8. Homeless priority changes

In order for the Council to maximise and make the best use of social housing stock as well as local private sector housing all Accepted Homeless households who are owed a full part 7 main duty with the following priority reason will be placed into Band C. The council will retain the main duty owed until such time as suitable accommodation can be sought to warrant the discharge of this duty.

The following bands will now be placed into Band C and will be helped via the Temporary Accommodation Allocations Team.

- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by Brighton & Hove City Council placed in B&B or short term temporary accommodation where the only prospect of meeting the household's needs is in permanent accommodation (eg the applicant has obtained employment and is experiencing severe financial hardship or the household has severe medical or disability reasons).
- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC making their own temporary arrangements or suffering family split due to a genuine lack of accommodation.

These band reasons will now be aligned with the following that is currently Band C under the allocations scheme:

- Accepted Homeless households occupying temporary accommodation on an assured short hold or non-secure tenancy until such time as the landlord requires the property back or the household's needs are no longer met unless offered permanent accommodation.

At the end of all private sector leases further leased accommodation will be considered. If at this time no accommodation can be sought or if for financial reasons or accessibility reasons the leased accommodation is no longer suitable (as decided by the temporary Accommodation Allocations Manager) the case will be recommended to the Homemove Team to be placed into Band A for social housing. At this time the following band reason will be given:

- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC, placed in temporary accommodation where the landlord requires the property back or the property is unsuitable to meet the applicant's needs or a member of the household's needs, and where the household have been assessed as ready to manage independent accommodation.

9. Closing of Homemove applications

Once a household has been moved via the Homemove Scheme it will be deemed that housing need has been met and therefore all housing applications for the entire household will be closed and sent to the landlord for the information to form the start of the tenancy file.

10. Change in wording for adapted property releases in Band A

Previous

- Releasing an adapted property or to make best use of adapted stock – at the council's discretion, where the tenant does not require adaptations or where the existing property cannot be adapted to meet the applicant's needs
Remove the clause following feedback as it is covered by TIS or the medical priority.

11. Medical priority wording changes

Band A

Overriding (severe and immediate) medical priority awarded by the Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a severe and immediate adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant emergency priority.

Band B

High (major) medical priority awarded by the Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant extra priority.

Band C

Low (minor) medical priority awarded by the Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a minor adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant reasonable priority.

12. Transfer Incentive Scheme

The TIS scheme has proved very popular and successful, currently there 120 tenants on the waiting list to downsize to smaller flats from larger family homes they no-longer need (usually when adult children have left home).

However feedback we have had from households is that they would be happy to move with reduced payments as what is more important is having support in the form of a person to help them with organising and arranging the move. This combined with the need to continue to ensure we make best use of the existing social housing stock and meet the needs of the city has prompted a value for money review of the Scheme without affecting its success.

Recommendations:

- 1) Reduce the amount of incentive payment so around 20- 30 additional tenants can be helped to move, releasing large family homes, within the same budget.

	Current payment	Proposed new payment
Downsizing by one bedroom	2,000	1,000
Downsizing by two bedrooms	2,500	1,500
Downsizing by three bedrooms	3,000	2,000
Downsizing by four bedrooms	3,500	2,500
moving from a wheelchair-adapted property, even if the same size	2,000	1,000

- 2) Amend the scheme to also include tenants moving from not just fully wheelchair adapted properties, but also partially adapted properties they no-longer need (graded Mobility 2), to non-adapted, non-Mobility rated properties. This is because there are very few fully wheelchair adapted properties in our council stock, but many that have been partially adapted (eg with level access showers, ramps) These properties are in great demand and there are currently 162 disabled residents waiting for this type of property.
- 3) The scheme currently pays an incentive payment if tenants move to the private sector, releasing a family home. However there is currently a 3 month waiting period. This is acting as a disincentive for tenants to move, and so it is recommended that the waiting period be removed.

APPENDIX 2

Who we Consulted with.

Total number contacted directly 1228.

This was made up of some of the following (please note this is not a definitive list):
789 Homeseekers from within and outside of Brighton & Hove who are registered on the Housing Register (8% of total on register).

292 Transfer tenants on the Housing Register who are currently a tenant of the Council or one of the partner Housing Associations (10% of total on register).

All of the partner Housing Associations

All of the partnership board from the Pan Sussex Homemove Partnership.

RISE

Survivors Network

BHT

Local Police

Local NHS

GP Surgeries

DWF/LGBT/BME council forums

Race panel

MAPPA

All Housing Staff

CYPT

CMHT

Age UK

Shelter

Sussex Interpreting service

BHCC Tenant Area Panels

Occupational Therapy

OPCAT

Housing Income Management

Relate

CAB

Terrance Higgins Trust

LGBT Switchboard

Albert Kennedy Trust

All Councillors

All Local MPs

Probation service

National Witness Protection Service

YMCA Groups

Supported housing Projects

Outreach Service

Women's Refuge

APPENDIX 3

LLP – Working families

Void/Letting Data showing the impact of the working households LLP. November 2009 – November 2010

Total adverts for Working family priority = 90.

The maximum number bypassed in one shortlist is 13 households. (see below for the case study)

We have moved: 44 Homeseekers & 33 Transfers

Who was rehoused under LLP

2 beds	3 beds	4 beds
A – 13	A – 9	A – 0
B – 22	B – 15	B – 1
C – 16	C – 1	C – 0
D – 0	D – 0	D – 0

Who would have been rehoused if no LLP

2 beds	3 beds	4 beds
A – 35	A – 20	A – 1
B – 15	B – 5	B – 0
C – 1	C – 0	C – 0
D – 0	D – 0	D – 0

Case studies:

25% of the lets done since the start of the LLP:

2 bed flat – let to Band A Homeseeker

Bypassed = 0

1st Household on the list who accepted tenancy was Accepted Homeless from 06/09 and was working.

2 bed flat – let to Band A Homeseeker

Bypassed = 0

1st Household on the list who accepted tenancy was accepted homeless from 04/10 and was working.

2 bed flat – Let to Band B Homeseeker

Bypassed = 2 as not working

1 – Band B Very High Medical – 11/08 – Since rehoused.

2 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 12/08 – Since rehoused.

2 bed flat – Let to Band B Transfer

Bypassed – 1 as not working

1 – Band A Homeless – 02/10 – Since rehoused.

2 bed flat – Let to Band C Transfer

Bypassed = 4 as not working

1 – Band B Very High Medical – 10/07 – Since rehoused.

2 – Band B Very High Medical – 03/09 – Since rehoused.

3 – Band C sharing facilities – 08/05 – Still waiting

4 – Band C medium medical need – 03/07 – Still waiting.

5 households refused this property for personal reasons and 1 was bypassed due to housing debt.

2 bed flat – Let to Band C Homeseeker

Bypassed = 3 as not working

1 - Band B Very High Medical – 03/09 – Since rehoused.

2 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 10/09 – Since rehoused.

3 – Band C lacking 1 bedroom – 12/05 – Still waiting.

1 was bypassed due to housing debt.

2 bed flat – Let to Band C Homeseeker

Bypassed = 1 as not working

1 – Band B Management Transfer – 02/10 – Household evicted.

1 household refused this property for personal reasons and 1 was bypassed due to housing debt.

2 bed flat – Let to Band C Homeseeker

Bypassed = 5 as not working

1 – Band A Homeless – 08/10 - Since rehoused.

2 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 04/09 – Since rehoused.

3 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 05/09 – Still waiting.

4 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 08/09 – Still waiting.

5 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 05/10 – Still waiting.

2 households refused this property for personal reasons and 1 was bypassed due to housing debt.

2 bed house – let to Band A Homeseeker

Bypassed = 2 as not working

1 – Band A Homeless – 05/10 – Since rehoused.

2 – Band Social Services nomination – 06/10 – Still waiting.

2 bed house – Let to Band A Transfer

Bypassed = 0 working

1st Household on the list who accepted tenancy was under occupation case from Mar 2008 and was working.

2 bed house – Let to Band B transfer

Bypassed = 0 working

1st Household on the list who accepted tenancy was Band B High Medical need from March 2010 and was working.

1 was bypassed due to housing debt.

2 bed house – let to Band B Homeseeker

Bypassed = 4 as not working

1 – Band A Homeless – 08/10 – Since rehoused.

2 – Band A Homeless – 09/10 – Since rehoused.

3 – Band B Very High Medical – 10/08 – Still waiting.

4 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 06/10 – Still waiting.

1 was bypassed due to housing debt.

2 bed maisonette – Let to band B Homeseeker

Bypassed = 1 as not working

1 – Band B Very High Medical – 04/08 – Still waiting.

1 was bypassed due to housing debt.

3 bed flat – Let to Band B Transfer

Bypassed = 0

1st Household on the list who accepted tenancy was Band B High Medical Need from November 2008 and was working.

3 bed house – Let to band Band A Transfer

Bypassed = 4 as not working

1 – Band A Social Service nomination – 09/09 – Since rehoused.

2 – Band A Homeless – 03/10 – Since rehoused.

3 – Band A Transfer Priority – 03/10 – Since rehoused.

4 – Band B lacking 2 bedrooms – July 2000 – still waiting.

1 households refused this property for personal reasons

3 bed house – Let to Band A Homeseeker

Bypassed 1 as not working

1 – Band A Transfer Priority – 03/10 – Still Waiting.

1 household refused this property for personal reasons

3 bed house – Let to Band B Homeseeker

Bypassed = 4

1 – Band B High medical need – 04/06 – Still waiting.

2 – Band B High medical need – 07/06 – Still waiting.

- 3 – Band B High medical need – 09/06 – Since rehoused.
- 4 – Band B High medical need – 11/06 – Since rehoused.

3 bed house – Let to Band B Transfer

Bypassed = 1 as not working

- 1 – Band A Homeless – 12/09 – Since rehoused

3 bed house – Let to Band B Transfer

Bypassed = 12 as not working

- 1 – Band A Statutory over crowded – 03/10 – Since rehoused.
 - 2 – Band A Statutory over crowded – 03/10 – Since rehoused.
 - 3 – Band A Transfer Priority – 03/10 – Since rehoused.
 - 4 – Band A Transfer Priority – 05/10 – Since rehoused.
 - 5 – Band A Homeless – 05/10 – Since rehoused.
 - 6 – Band A Overriding medical need – 02/10 – Still Waiting.
 - 7 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 07/00 – Still waiting.
 - 8 – Band B High medical need – 09/01 – Still waiting.
 - 9 – Band B High medical need – 10/03 – Still waiting.
 - 10 – Band B High Medical need – 05/07 – Since rehoused.
 - 11 – Band B High Medical need – 01/08 – Still waiting.
 - 12 – Band B High Medical need – 03/08 – Still waiting.
- 1 household refused this property for personal reasons and 1 was bypassed due to housing debt.

3 bed house – Let to Band B Transfer

Bypassed = 9 as not working

- 1 – Band A Overriding medical need – 01/10 – Still waiting.
 - 2 – Band A transfer priority – 05/10 – Still waiting.
 - 3 – Band A Homeless – 09/10 – Still waiting.
 - 4 – Band A Overriding medical need – 02/10 – Still waiting.
 - 5 – Band B lacking 2 bedrooms – 08/07 – still waiting.
 - 6 – Band B High medical need – 07/08 – Since rehoused.
 - 7 – Band B High medical need – 02/09 – Still waiting.
 - 8 – Band B High medical need – 05/09 – Still waiting.
 - 9 – Band B lacking 2 bedrooms – 07/09 – still waiting.
- 1 was bypassed due to housing debt.

4 bed house – Let to Band B Transfer

Bypassed:

- 1 - Band A – Overriding medical – 05/08 – since rehoused.

Special case:

3 bed house – let to Band B Homeseeker

Bypassed = 13

- 1 – Band A Transfer Priority – 05/10 – Since rehoused.
- 2 – Band B High Medical need – 03/06 – Still waiting.
- 3 – Band B High Medical need – 03/07 – Still waiting.
- 4 – Band B High Medical need – 04/07 – Still waiting.
- 5 – Band B High Medical need – 08/07 – Still waiting.
- 6 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 11/07 – Still waiting.
- 7 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 06/08 – Still waiting.
- 8 – Band B High Medical need – 08/08 – Still waiting.
- 9 – Band B High Medical need – 01/09 – Still waiting.
- 10 – Band B High Medical need – 02/09 – Still waiting.
- 11 – Band B High Medical need – 05/09 – Still waiting.
- 12 – Band B High Medical need – 06/09 – Still waiting.
- 13 – Band B Lacking 2 beds – 06/09 – Since rehoused.

Thoughts:

The majority of emergency cases in Band A who have been bypassed due to not working and meeting the criteria for the LLP have since been rehoused. It therefore appears that we are able to meet this LLP as well as meet the needs of the most vulnerable in the city.

APPENDIX 4 – Implications for RTB and loss of stock.

Some of the feedback we received was that people who were working might exercise their Right To Buy and there would be a reduction in stock.

The following information has been provided from the Council's Right to Buy Department.

Mortgage Lenders are requiring sizeable deposits now so savings are required. This can be 25%.

On the basis that there is no deposit, an average 2-bed council house valued at £165,000 would have a selling price of £127,000. Using 3.25% of earnings for a prudent mortgage this would mean household income of £39,000. However, any amount of deposit would reduce this figure.

On the same basis an average 3-bed council house valued at £180,000 and selling for £142,000 with a 100% mortgage would mean an income of £44,000. If there was 25% deposit - this would mean an upfront payment of £35,000 and income of around £33,000 to make mortgage repayments anywhere near affordable.

Having said that the Right to Buy is unquestionably beyond the means of most council tenants at the moment – as you can see from sales figures over the past 2+ years – basically since the Northern Rock crash.

Year	Houses	Flats	Total RTB sales
2008/09	2	5	7
2009/10	3	7	10
2010/11*	3	11	14

* to 15 Feb 2011

Appendix 5

Equalities Impact Assessment

Aim of Policy / Scope of Service:

Equality Impact Assessment for Allocation Policy update – March 2011

The allocations policy ensures that social rented housing within the City is allocated fairly in accordance with legislation, recognising housing needs and making best use of the limited stock available. The policy establishes the priorities in which applicants may be allocated to properties from the Council's Housing Register.

Different Groups included in scope

Ethnicity

including (Asylum seekers, Refugees, Gypsies and Travellers)

Gender

(men, women, trans / Gender Variant people)

Disability

(physical or mental health issue, long term illness, learning disability, physical/sensory impairment)

Age

(included – older & younger people)

Religion/Belief, including

(faith communities including no belief)

Sexual Orientation

(lesbian, gay, bisexual, and other)

Homeless

Other

Impact	Potential Impact on this group	Potential actions to minimise negative impact and maximise positive impacts
1- Local connection	(-) Gypsies/Travellers we have no official long term site in the city at this time and therefore they would be unable to qualify for the 24 month residency.	ACTION: we have taken on board that many members of this community would be unlikely to have fixed and permanent residency in the city (save where they have stopped their nomadic way of life, for various reasons) and that as of Spring 2011 the Local Authority does not have permanent pitches in order for qualification for the 24 months residency and therefore under Local Connection – Exclusions there is the ability for the Lead

	<p>(-) People (elderly, disability) who are living out of the area who needs support from the family.</p>	<p>Commissioner of Housing not to invoke the Policy in these Special Circumstances and that these cases can be considered on their own merits at the time of application, for instance where somebody has to stop their nomadic lifestyle due to health issues; education needs or any of the other legitimate issues recognised in statute and case law.</p> <p>ACTION:</p>
<p>2- Leaving Supported Accommodation</p>	<p>(+) Homeless will be ready to sustain a tenancy (+) They will have a support plan in place if it is needed.</p>	<p>ACTION: make sure they are ready to move on and they have a support plan in place and that this is with the landlord prior to the tenancy starting</p>

<p>3- Refusals</p>	<p>(-) English not first language could have issues around understanding how to advise of a refusal</p> <p>(-) For households with mental health issues there could be issues with reasons for refusing certain properties and explaining this to the landlord at the viewing</p> <p>(-) People with disability or high medical needs refusing properties as the properties are not suitable for their needs.</p> <p>(+) This does not apply to homeless households as if they are successful in obtaining an offer of accommodation within six months, this will be considered a final offer.</p>	<p>ACTION: Landlord would explain it in person and interpreter on viewing if necessary.</p> <p>ACTION: we would ask for key or support worker to be at viewing and would take their advice into account when making decision.</p> <p>ACTION: consideration of suitability of the property for their needs</p> <p>ACTION: consideration of suitability of the property if homeless household refuse a final offer.</p>
<p>4 Leaving Care</p>	<p>(-) all references to Leaving Care will be removed from the Allocations Policy.</p>	<p>ACTION: There is now a joint protocol that enables CYPT and Housing to manage all relevant children to be dealt with with regards to their housing. This looks at all forms of housing in the city and helps to choose the most appropriate on a case by case</p>

		basis and enables the Council to help and accommodate those that it has a duty to.
<p>4- Priority for Working Household and those making a Positive Contribution to the City.</p>	<p>(-) If English is not the first language there could be issues around being ABLE to work or volunteer and therefore not being able to qualify for this priority</p> <p>(-) People with high levels of disabilities (e.g. mental health, long term illnesses, sensory impairments) may have more difficult in being able to work or volunteer and therefore may not qualify for this priority</p> <p>(-)(+) exclusion of sheltered properties from this priority.</p> <p>(+) it is less likely that elderly people are working or volunteering.</p> <p>(-) some elderly remain active in their communities and should be able to have this priority.</p> <p>(-)(+) exclusion of mobility properties from this priority</p> <p>(+) More households contributing to the economic growth of the city and more sustainable communities</p> <p>(+) Less working households leaving the city</p>	<p>ACTION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor the implications in homeless households - Monitor how many people is bypassed in the shortlists and what housing need they had - Monitor if the number of bids increase dramatically for the properties with not priority to working households or if they maintain similar than before the scheme. -undertake to investigate number of sheltered tenants working, volunteering or careering and who would have this priority. - is the city more economically active? <p>We would like to monitor this over the first year of this scheme and report back to ensure that no groups who are in high housing need are missing out because of the working and positive contribution priority.</p>

<p>5- Minor wording changes regarding Private sector housing repairs banding to bring the allocations scheme into line with the H&S hazard rating system</p>	<p>(=) None identified</p>	
<p>6- Directors Discretion (for other exceptional circumstances not covered by this scheme)</p>	<p>(-)(+) To all the Groups in the same measure</p>	<p>ACTION: All of the above cases will be taken to Housing Management Consultative Committee on a yearly basis to review the numbers submitted, the outcome of the cases and brief reason for the case being submitted via this route to ensure that it is working in a fair and transparent way</p>
<p>7- Homeless priority changes</p>	<p>(+) Dynamic housing list (+) More homeless households in leased accommodation were they will get support if it is needed that will help them to manage independent accommodation before obtain a secure tenancy. (-) Possible increase on the numbers of TA (-) need for more leased properties (+) Less homeless households refusing properties waiting a secure tenancy</p>	<p>ACTION: monitor and verify data with the homeless team reports</p>

8- Closing of Homemove applications	(=) None identified	
9- Change in wording for adapted property releases in Band A	(+) increase the number of adapted and partially adapted properties which should benefit those applicants in need for these properties	ACTION: Identify adapted properties. Training and work closely with other teams (e.g. adaptations team, lettings, housing officers)
10- Medical priority wording changes	(=) None identified	
11- Transfer Incentive Scheme	(=) None identified	

What consultation has been used or undertaken?	Methods Used	Findings	Agreed Actions
<p>A 12 week consultation process with wider stakeholders in the City over proposed changes has now been completed. Stakeholders include our Communities of Interest, our partner agencies, Age Concern, support agencies, people on the Housing Register, and support providers</p>	<p>Consultation was offered via email, in writing, face to face meeting, over the telephone, group meetings, offered in large print and translators were offered if necessary.</p> <p>It was also made available on Brighton & Hove City Councils website consultation portal.</p>	<p>Those households from BME heritage number 1876 on the Housing Register. We also have 442 where ethnicity has not been stated. Total this could be 2318 (19% of the Housing Register) households on the Housing Register who could have issues around language and cultural barriers to be considered for the working or positive contribution priority. However, the priority is not on all accommodation and these households will be considered for all other accommodation that is advertised.</p>	<p>That we will ensure as much support for understanding these changes is given to households on the Housing Register and that that we will review the Allocations policy amendments again in 12 months.</p>

Lead Equality Impact Assessment Officer:	Elena Castells	Date	11.2.11
Homemove Manager	Verity Walker	Date	15.2.11
Head of Service	Sylvia Peckham	Date	Please date when you have seen and agreed
Chairman of Housing:	Maria Caulfield	Date	Please date when you have seen and agreed



<u>EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY</u>	31
<u>HOW TO APPLY</u>	32
<u>WHO CAN APPLY?</u>	32
<u>PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO:</u>	33
<u>EXCLUSIONS FROM THE REGISTER</u>	33
<u>LOCAL CONNECTION</u>	35
<u>UNDER 18S</u>	36
<u>OWNER OCCUPIERS AND PEOPLE WITH SAVINGS/CAPITAL</u>	36
<u>FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION</u>	37
<u>HOMELESS PRIORITY</u>	37
<u>DATA PROTECTION</u>	37
<u>THE REGISTRATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS</u>	37
<u>RE-REGISTRATIONS</u>	38
<u>CLOSING OF HOMEMOVE APPLICATIONS</u>	39
<u>THE BANDING STRUCTURE</u>	39
<u>BAND A</u>	39
<u>BAND B</u>	40
<u>BAND C</u>	40
<u>BAND D</u>	41
<u>LEAD COMMISSIONER FOR HOUSING DISCRETION FOR OTHER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES NOT COVERED BY THIS SCHEME</u>	41
<u>PRIORITY FOR WORKING HOUSEHOLD AND THOSE MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CITY</u>	42
<u>WORKING HOUSEHOLDS</u>	42
<u>POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</u>	43
<u>VOLUNTEERS</u>	43
<u>FULL TIME CARERS</u>	44
<u>WORK & POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION AND DISABILITY</u>	44
<u>LEAVING SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION</u>	45
<u>RE-ASSESSING NEED AND PRIORITY DATES:</u>	46
<u>MOVING UP A BAND:</u>	46
<u>MOVING DOWN A BAND:</u>	46
<u>MULTIPLE NEEDS:</u>	46
<u>HOW DOES THE COUNCIL ADVERTISE EMPTY PROPERTIES?</u>	47
<u>THE HOMEMOVE MAGAZINE AND WEBSITE</u>	47
<u>THE SIZE OF PROPERTY YOU CAN BID FOR</u>	47
<u>MOBILITY GROUP 1</u>	48
<u>MOBILITY GROUP 2</u>	48
<u>MOBILITY GROUP 3</u>	48
<u>HOMELESS APPLICANTS AND PROPERTY SIZE</u>	48
<u>SHELTERED HOUSING</u>	48
<u>THE BIDDING PROCESS</u>	49

<u>THE SELECTION PROCESS</u>	50
<u>HOW SHORTLISTING TAKES PLACE</u>	50
<u>TO ENSURE THAT COMMUNITIES ARE AS BALANCED AS POSSIBLE</u>	51
<u>TO ENSURE THAT ALLOCATIONS ARE SENSITIVELY MADE</u>	51
<u>TO MAKE BEST USE OF THE COUNCIL’S STOCK AND TO REDUCE UNDER OCCUPATION</u>	51
<u>TO ENSURE PROPERTIES ARE LET QUICKLY</u>	51
<u>TIME LIMITS FOR BIDDING FOR PROPERTIES</u>	51
<u>DIRECT BIDDING</u>	52
<u>REFUSALS FOLLOWING DIRECT BIDDING</u>	54
<u>FEEDBACK ON LET PROPERTIES</u>	55
<u>ENDING A JOINT TENANCY WHEN ONE PARTY TO THE TENANCY LEAVES</u>	55
<u>LOCAL LETTINGS PLANS</u>	55
<u>HOUSING OPTIONS</u>	57
<u>APPEALS AND REVIEWS</u>	58
<u>APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENTS AND BANDING DECISIONS</u>	58
<u>MEDICAL NEEDS</u>	59
<u>MOBILITY NEEDS</u>	60
<u>UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING CONDITIONS AND STATUTORY DUTY</u>	60
<u>ACCEPTED HOMELESS APPLICANTS</u>	61
<u>SOCIAL WELFARE CONSIDERATIONS</u>	62
<u>OTHER HIGH PRIORITY CATEGORIES (APPLICABLE TO TRANSFER APPLICANTS ONLY)</u>	62
<u>TRANSFER INCENTIVE SCHEME (TIS)</u>	63
<u>OTHER CATEGORIES</u>	64

Introduction

It is Brighton & Hove City Council's policy to operate a Choice Based Lettings scheme. This is the council's scheme as required under section 167 of the Housing Act 1996. It sets out the priorities and procedures for the letting of permanent council housing, and our nominations to housing association (HA) housing. The scheme applies to existing council and housing association tenants in Brighton & Hove on the Transfer Register and to homeseekers applying to the Joint Housing Register.

It meets the requirements set out in Part VI Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), giving reasonable preference to those applicants in greatest need. It incorporates the council's key aims and objectives outlined in its Housing Strategy for Sustainability in Housing and the recommendations detailed in the Best Value Review of Allocations December 2003.

The council is committed to a lettings scheme that offers greater choice to all those seeking housing and enables people to make well-informed decisions about their housing options.

Choice Based Lettings will help improve the sustainability of our housing stock to maximise its effectiveness and encourage residents to have a stake in their community. This scheme applies across the city but also complements regeneration work being undertaken in East Brighton and the Neighbourhood Renewal programmes in Hollingdean and Tarner.

Under the Choice Based Lettings scheme, called Homemove, tenants and homeseekers are placed in one of four broad Bands of housing need according to their circumstances. All applicants become members of Homemove and actively search for a home. Vacant properties are advertised in a regular freesheet magazine and on the Internet and members are able to bid for properties. Adapted properties will be classified and advertised as suitable for applicants with a matching mobility need.

The council's lettings scheme incorporates targets set for transfers and homeseekers. Targets will be set taking into account the council's statutory obligations, financial considerations and the housing situation across the city. Targets will be set and agreed in advance and will be reviewed annually based upon projected supply and demand for the coming year.

Equalities & Diversity

The council's Choice Based Lettings policy aims to ensure that our services are fair and equitable for all our customers. We want our services to be accessible and useful to everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, race, colour, national origin, sexual orientation or any other factor that may cause disadvantage. This policy has been drafted with reference to the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Disability

Discrimination Act 1995 (2005) and all other applicable equality and diversity legislation. In addition Brighton & Hove City Council has adopted the Commission for Racial Equality's Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing 2006.

Brighton & Hove City Council is committed to help all people who need assistance to access social housing in the city. We will work closely with agencies and supported housing providers to try and assist customers to access the scheme, and have ensured that information meets the requirements of people with a disability, or sight or hearing impairment and is in other languages. For more information, see the council's strategy for meeting the needs of vulnerable people, available at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/homemove.

An equalities impact assessment is carried out on all existing and new services including the Homemove Scheme and annual equalities monitoring is carried out on the service, which is scrutinised by Housing Committee.

Joint Housing Register Partners

The following Registered Social Landlords are partners on the Joint Housing Register (JHR):

- HydeMartlet Housing
- Downland Housing Association Ltd
- Home Group
- Kelsey Housing Association Ltd
- MOAT Homes Ltd
- Orbit South Housing Association
- Places for People
- Sanctuary Hereward
- Servite Houses
- Southern Horizon
- Southern Housing Group
- The Guinness Trust

How to apply

All Homeseekers requesting re-housing and tenants requesting transfers must complete an application form to be put on the housing register. These are available from the Homemove team, from local housing offices (Manor Place, Lavender Street, Oxford Street, Selsfield Drive & Victoria Road) and from www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/homemove. If you need help completing the form, need information in another language or in large print, or on CD, you can contact the Homemove Team on 01273 293130 who will be happy to help.

Who can apply?

The Housing Register is open to anyone who is 16 years of age or over (subject to the statutory exclusion provisions) although applicants under the age of 18 will only be offered accommodation in certain circumstances (see

below).

Priority will be given to:

- People with a local connection found to be unintentionally homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
- Households with a need to move for welfare or medical reasons that make their current home unsuitable.
- **Young people leaving care who are referred by Social Services under quota arrangements.**
- People moving on from supported housing.
- Households who occupy accommodation that is unsanitary, overcrowded or does not provide adequate facilities.
- Households who occupy accommodation where there is substantial disrepair.
- Households needing sheltered accommodation where the applicant is aged 60 years of age or over.
- Households with a local connection (see Local Connection criteria).

Tenants

Any secure council tenant or any assured tenant of any of the council's partners in the Joint Housing Register living in the city.

The council will not normally make an offer of accommodation to a transfer applicant where the tenant is guilty of a breach of tenancy resulting in:

- A valid Notice of Seeking Possession or Suspended Possession Order for rent arrears.
- Housing Act Injunction, Anti-Social Behaviour Order, Notice of Seeking Possession, Suspended Possession Order or demoted tenancy (if adopted) granted as a result of the breach of other aspects of the tenancy agreement.

The council will regard a failure to pay rent or other housing-related charges or debts as behaviour affecting the suitability of applicants to be tenants. Other than in exceptional circumstances (to be agreed by Housing Management and the Housing Income Management Team), an applicant with outstanding rent arrears or other housing-related debts owed to the council or to other social landlords in Sussex will not be allocated housing if there are other applicants eligible for housing under this policy.

Exclusions from the register

The following persons are not eligible for entry on the Housing Register for the allocation of social housing.

By virtue of the Housing Act 1996 (section 160a) the council cannot allocate housing accommodation to the following:

- A person who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 unless that person falls within an exemption specified by the Secretary of State.

Any applicant where the council is satisfied that:

The applicant, or a member of the household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour, which if the applicant was a secure tenant of the council would entitle the council to a possession order (part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985). These can include:

- Serious breach of tenancy conditions: involvement in serious nuisance or annoyance to neighbours;
- Conviction of using the accommodation or allowing its use for immoral or illegal purposes.
- Allowing the property to be seriously damaged by the tenant or other residents.
- Conviction of an arrestable offence committed in the locality relating to violence or threats of violence.
- Eviction from social housing for nuisance or harassment (racial or otherwise) where this behaviour is apparent at the time of application.

The unacceptable behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant.

AND

The applicant is unsuitable at the time the application is considered. Consideration will be given to the length of time that has elapsed and whether there has been any change in circumstances.

OR

- All exclusions will be considered on an individual basis for any applicant who has demonstrated 'unacceptable behaviour'.
- Where the applicant knowingly gave false or misleading information or withheld information that was reasonably requested.

Eligibility for the JHR will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account exceptional circumstances or special needs.

There is a right under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 to ask the council to review a decision not to accept an application to join the JHR. A senior officer from the council not involved in the decision to exclude, will carry out the review.

We will write to anyone who is being excluded from the Register giving our reasons, the length of time for the exclusion and their right to request a review of the decision. After the review we will provide our decision, the reasons for it and the facts that we have taken into account.

A fresh application will be considered if:

- The applicants immigration status has changed, or
- The applicant can demonstrate that the behaviour has improved.
- The applicants financial circumstances have changed.

Who can be included on the application?

- Anyone who is part of the household at the date of registration and is still in occupation.
- A partner, husband or wife of the main applicant living at the same address. This includes couples in same sex relationships.
- Dependent children under 18 years who live with the applicant where the applicant is the parent or guardian in receipt of Child Benefit or has a court order agreeing custody for 50% of the time.
- Someone not currently living with the applicant but for whom it would be reasonable to do so, for example: a relative needing care but unable to live with the applicant at present due to a genuine lack of or the unsuitability of present accommodation.
- A carer where the applicant can prove that a live-in carer is essential, one has been identified and has moved in with the household or is ready to do so when accommodation available.
- Any other non-dependant adult who is normally permanently resident with the applicant.

Local Connection

Applicants are able to apply for social housing within Brighton & Hove from anywhere within the United Kingdom. Brighton and Hove is a high demand area where demand for social housing is in excess of supply. For this reason applicants, who live outside the area with no local connection to it, cannot expect the same priority for housing as those with a local connection therefore, in order to ensure that the Council meets the needs of the local community, reduced priority will be given to those people without a local connection.

Applicants without a local connection will have their priority reduced to Band C (below those with a local connection in this band) until they acquire a local connection with the Council.

The following factors will be taken into account in determining whether or not an applicant has a local connection with the Brighton & Hove City Council area. An application is awarded a local connection if:

- an applicant is currently residing in the City in either temporary or permanent accommodation and has been resident in the city for a minimum of 24 months.
- or is a serving member of the armed forces and is posted in the Brighton & Hove City Council Area. This provision will also be considered for those who are serving in the armed forces and returning to Brighton & Hove as a main place of residence after leaving service, the 24 month residency will apply at the point at which the city was left and service was started where the same (this will not include those who have been dishonourably discharged).

For the purposes of determining local connection, living in Brighton & Hove will not include the following:

- Occupation of a mobile home, caravan or motor caravan which is not placed on an **official Council approved site or other Council approval obtained (toleration on unauthorised sites is not included)**.
- Occupation of a holiday letting which includes a permanent building, hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation for the purposes of a holiday.
- Resident of Bail Hostels or other such accommodation.
- In-Patient of Hospitals/specialist centres.
- Rough Sleeping / Squatting

Exceptions

There may be occasions not predicted by this Allocation Scheme where the application of the Local Connection Policy is deemed inappropriate by the Council and accordingly there is a Strategic Lead Commissioner of Housing level Discretion available not to invoke the Policy in these Special Circumstances. One example might be someone who has been placed out of Brighton & Hove for a period of time, whilst being looked after by the Children & Young people's Trust, or the Community Mental Health Team – although each case would be considered on its merits.

Applicants who do not have a local connection with Brighton & Hove or anywhere else but to who the City Council have accepted a full Homelessness duty under section 193(2) will not be subject to any reduction in their priority (as the Council is under a statutory duty to provide long term settled housing).

Under 18s

Anyone over 16 can join our housing register, although we will not usually offer them a property until they are over 18. In the event that there is an urgent housing need, a further assessment will be carried out and we will work with the individual to find the most suitable accommodation to meet their need. An offer of permanent accommodation will only be made if the council is satisfied that: the young person is able to live independently; able to sustain a tenancy; and has an identified package of support available to them.

Owner occupiers and people with savings/capital

Section 167(2A) of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the 2002 Homelessness Act) allows allocation schemes to give less priority to an applicant who was financially able to secure alternative accommodation at market rent or to buy a home. Therefore, owner-occupiers or those with a substantial amount of savings or substantial equity in a property that would enable them to obtain accommodation suitable to meet their needs will generally be placed in band D. These applicants will be provided with advice and guidance on other housing options. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and medical, disability, community care and other relevant needs will be taken into account.

Where there are medical problems, applications will be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where it is not possible to adapt the current accommodation to meet the needs of the owner occupier's medical condition.
- Where it is too expensive to adapt the existing accommodation to meet the needs of the owner occupier's medical condition and they cannot afford to buy or rent suitable alternative housing.
- The sale of the property would not able the owner occupier to purchase or rent an alternative property suitable to their needs.

False or misleading Information

Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Homeless priority

In order for the Council to maximise and make the best use of social housing stock as well as local private sector housing all Accepted Homeless households who are owed a full part 7 main duty with the following priority reason will be placed into Band C. The council will retain the main duty owed until such time as suitable accommodation can be sought to warrant the discharge of this duty.

At the end of all private sector leases further leased accommodation will automatically be considered. If at this time no accommodation can be sought or if for financial reasons or accessibility reasons the leased accommodation is no longer suitable (as decided by the temporary Accommodation Allocations Manager) the case will be recommended to the Homemove Team to be placed into Band A for social housing.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1988 (the Act) is designed to protect personal data about living individuals (Data Subjects). The Act also places obligations on those organisations that process personal data (Data Controllers). As a Data Controller, the council and its partners in the JHR are committed to complying with this legislation by applying the Principles of Good Information Handling across all services related to Homemove.

The Registration and Assessment Process

Homeseekers and Tenants must apply by completing the council's housing registration form. These are available from the Homemove team, from local housing offices and from www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/homemove. Some eligible persons, however, may be registered without completing the form, eg nominations from Adult Social Care.

- If not eligible to register, the Homemove team will notify the applicant in

writing giving the reason for the decision and informing them of their right to request a review and the timescale that the request must be made within.

- Once accepted onto the Housing Register, the Homemove team will make an initial housing needs assessment based on the information on the registration form and other information made available.
- In order for this Banding assessment to be completed official proof of ID and other relevant information will need to be provided. This information is stated on a checklist on the front of the Housing Application Form.
- Medical priority is assessed by the Medical Advisor based on the information supplied by the applicant using the council's Self Assessment Medical form and applicant's GP where appropriate. The Medical Advisor will refer the Self Assessment Medical Form to the Housing Occupational Therapist (OT) where there is a need for an OT assessment.
- Once assessed the applicant is placed in the appropriate bedroom category and into one of the four priority bandings and awarded a priority date.
- The Homemove team will write to the applicant to inform them of their priority date and registration number and give the following information:

Priority Band and reason for it.

Priority date, which is the date the application is received, or in the case of homeless applicants, the date that Brighton & Hove accepts a duty to rehouse.

The minimum and maximum bed size they can bid for.

Mobility group (level of access requirement) if applicable.

Advise the applicant that they have a right to see the information held in relation to the application. If they consider any details inaccurate then they can request a review.

Re-Registrations

All homeseekers and transfer applicants must complete a review form to stay on the Register. The Homemove team will send the review letter within three months of the anniversary of their registration date. Applicants will be allowed to re-register six weeks after the review date and if this is not responded to a final letter will be sent advising cancellation date if no contact is made.

If the applicant fails to re-register on time the Homemove team will check their contact details. If the applicant appears to be a vulnerable person and/or has a high priority need the Homemove team will visit or contact them by phone or letter, or refer to the relevant support service for intervention.

If there is no contact and the applicant fails to re-register the application will be cancelled. The Homemove team will notify the applicant in writing of the date and the reason for the cancellation.

Closing of Homemove applications

Once a household has been moved via the Homemove Scheme it will be deemed that housing need has been met and therefore all housing applications for the entire household will be closed and sent to the landlord for the information to form the start of the tenancy file.

The Banding Structure

The four priority Bands are:

Band A

- Overriding (severe and immediate) medical priority awarded by the Medical Officer– where the housing conditions are having a severe and immediate adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant emergency priority.
- Social Services nominations under quota arrangements.
- Witness Protection nominations under a quota arrangement and agreed through the National Witness Mobility Service.
- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by Brighton & Hove City Council and placed in temporary accommodation where the landlord requires the property back or the property is unsuitable to meet the applicant's needs or a member of the household's needs, and where the household have been assessed as ready to manage independent accommodation and no further temporary accommodation can be sought as agreed by the Temporary Accommodation Allocations Manager.
- Transfer applicants under-occupying family sized accommodation qualifying for the Transfer Incentive Scheme.
- Households who are statutorily overcrowded.
- Transfer applicants needing a permanent or temporary decant where the property is imminently required for major repair.
- Private Sector Housing nomination issued under a quota arrangements as agreed with the Private Sector Housing Team Manager.
- Where the property is deemed to be 'statutorily overcrowded' by the Private Sector Housing Team under section X of the 1985 Housing Act and there are no practicable means to make the property suitable for the number of occupants within a reasonable time period the applicant will be placed in band A.
- **Move on from care as agreed by housing options or leaving supported housing as agreed by supporting people.**
- Priority transfer, agreed in exceptional circumstances due to significant and insurmountable problems associated with the tenant's occupation and there is imminent personal risk to the household if they remain.
- Retiring council and HA employees, eg Sheltered Scheme Managers, Residential Estate Wardens where the council or HA has a contractual obligation to house.
- Non-statutory successors – where agreement has been provided by Housing Management and Housing Options that the council will try to re-house in accommodation suitable for the applicant's housing need.

Band B

- Severe Overcrowding – Households lacking two or more separate bedrooms.
- Management Transfers – agreed by Housing Management for transfers on management grounds.
- High (major) medical priority awarded by the Medical Officer – where the housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant extra priority.
- Ex-tenants returning from institutions, eg rehabilitation - where a prior commitment has been made in writing in order to secure the relinquishment of a council or HA tenancy on entering the institution.
- High priority hardship – homeseekers with a dependent child/ren living in insecure accommodation and not having a bedroom and lacking or sharing amenities.
- To enable fostering or adoption – where agreement reached to provide permanent accommodation on recommendation from Children & Young People's Trust.
- Unsatisfactory housing conditions as confirmed after a visit from the Private Sector Housing Team and classed as a category 1 hazard(s) that cannot be rectified within 6 months (as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004))).
- Multiple Needs that warrant high priority – applicants whose needs match more than three of the priority reasons from the band when considered cumulatively are deemed to be so severe as to warrant applicant being placed in a higher priority band.

Band C

- Moderate Overcrowding - households lacking one separate bedroom.
- Council and housing association tenants under-occupying that do not qualify for the Transfer Incentive Scheme.
- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by Brighton & Hove City Council placed in B&B or short term temporary accommodation where the only prospect of meeting the household's needs is in permanent accommodation (eg the applicant has obtained employment and is experiencing severe financial hardship or the household has severe medical or disability reasons).
- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC making their own temporary arrangements or suffering family split due to a genuine lack of accommodation.
- Accepted Homeless households occupying temporary accommodation on an assured short hold or non-secure tenancy until such time as the landlord requires the property back or the household's needs are no longer met unless offered permanent accommodation.
- Households identified in an Adult Social Care Plan where accommodation is required to assist in delivering a Care Plan or to relieve other social/welfare hardship as agreed in Adult Social Care & Housing.

- Low (minor) medical priority awarded by the Medical Officer – where the housing conditions are having a minor adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant reasonable priority.
- Unsanitary conditions that cannot be addressed by the Private Sector Housing Team action including lacking one or more of the following; a kitchen (eg sink and space for a cooker), an inside WC or a bathroom (e.g. basin and bath or shower).
- Other unsatisfactory housing conditions (higher category 2 hazard(s) where formal remedial action is being pursued, as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004))
- Applicants for sheltered housing where no higher need.
- People who need to move to a particular area in the city where failure to meet that need would cause hardship, eg to give or receive support.
- Multiple Needs that warrant high priority – applicants whose needs match more than three of the priority reasons from the band when considered cumulatively are deemed to be so severe as to warrant applicant being placed in a higher priority band.

Band D

- Transfer applicants with no other housing need.
- Homeseekers with no other housing need.
- Key workers.
- Owner-occupiers or those with a substantial amount of savings or substantial equity (not withstanding consideration of other needs e.g. medical).

Full details of how assessment and banding decisions are made can be found in Appendix A.

Lead Commissioner for Housing Discretion for other exceptional circumstances not covered by this scheme

From time to time a situation may arise that is not adequately reflected in this Allocations Scheme but the needs or circumstances are exceptional and significant. Where a case is considered exceptional but the applicant does not meet any of the Banding criteria or it is felt that a higher Banding than the one awarded is more appropriate then the Lead Commissioner for Housing in Brighton & hove City Council reserves the right to override this scheme and allow an applicant to have a higher priority than they would be entitled to under the Scheme. These cases will be few in number and will be closely monitored and reported on to ensure that the duty to achieve Reasonable Preference overall is not compromised. Lead Commissioner for Housing Discretion can also be used to block an allocation or to make a direct allocation of a property in circumstances not predicted by this scheme but where the Council is satisfied someone has unfairly taken advantage of the scheme to the detriment of those in housing need. Again, these cases will be monitored and will be few in number.

All of the above cases will be taken to Housing Management Consultative Committee on a yearly basis to review the numbers submitted, the outcome of the cases and brief reason for the case being submitted via this route

Priority for Working Household and those making a Positive Contribution to the City

There is an increased recognition of the importance of Allocations Schemes at a National level to ensure that Authorities make best use of housing stock, but also to improving access to affordable housing for those who are on low incomes and the ease of mobility for positively contributing to the community.

The Government has published “Fair and Flexible - Statutory Guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities In England”. This is enabling Local Authorities to be open to change within the Allocations Scheme so that is it responsive to local needs. To ensure that Brighton & Hove City Council promotes a positive contribution to the community **50%** of all permanent social council housing stock will be advertised with a priority being given to those who can show that the ingoing primary tenant(s) is/are working or is making a positive contribution to Brighton & Hove City.

Exceptions for Special Circumstances

There may be occasions where someone is serving a ‘Community order with an unpaid work requirement’, ‘community service order(s)’ or ‘compulsory manual labour’ and therefore would not be considered to be working or volunteering under this scheme and therefore would be excluded from the definition of the priorities above. The Council reserves the right to refuse that employment is relevant for the Policy where it is variance with Council policy and procedure.

Mobility standard flats and houses will be excluded from these allocations as will all Sheltered accommodation. It is hoped that this will help increase an economic balance within all parts of the city community.

Working Households

Economic Contribution

This part of the policy aims to support the economic growth of our city. We aim to encourage people who can, to work and want to raise levels of aspiration and ambition. We will offer priority on property adverts to the prime applicant(s) who is/are working (see definition below) and who are therefore making a contribution to Brighton & Hove’s economy. The priority for Working Households will apply to rehousing across the city and is not linked with a specified area or property type.

Definition of Working Households

For the purposes of this Allocations Scheme employment is described as having a permanent contract, working as a temporary member of staff or being self-employed. Applicants will only qualify if the worker has been

employed for 9 out of the last 12 months, is currently in employment and is working for a minimum of 16 hours per week. Verification will be sought at point of application as well as point of offer under the same terms. Applicants must provide payslips, P60, bank statements or a verifying letter on headed paper in order to qualify (we may also contact employers directly for confirmation of employment). If employment status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes. Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Income caps

In order to ensure those households most in need benefit from the council's Working Priority, income caps will be applied according to the size of property needed. For those who need a property of 2 or more bedrooms the cap will be £35,000pa gross income to include all forms of income to the household. For households requiring studio or 1 bed property, the cap will be £17,000 pa gross to include all forms of income to the household.

Applicants will be required to produce payslips at the point of application and offer.

Positive Contribution

Community Contribution

Brighton & Hove City Council wishes to recognise residents who make a positive contribution to the City and play a part in making their neighbourhood a strong, stable and healthy place to be. We believe those who help make it a good place to live, work and play are valuable people and they need to be recognised for the good they do. We will offer priority on property adverts to the prime applicant(s) who is/are positively contributing to their community (see definition below) and who are therefore making a contribution to Brighton & Hove's wellbeing. The priority for positive contribution Households will apply to rehousing across the city and is not linked with a specified area or property type.

Positive Contribution – definition

This covers households who are undertaking voluntary work or who are full-time carers and so unable to undertake paid work.

Volunteers

Volunteers must have been volunteering for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer. Volunteering must be for a not-for profit organisation or a charity and must be for a minimum of 32 hours per month.

Evidence required for voluntary work.

Letter from Manager responsible for Volunteers confirming applicant's involvement in **a minimum of 32 hours per month** of voluntary work in the requested area **for over 6 months**. This person must not be related to the applicant in any way and we may also contact manager directly for confirmation of work done. If volunteer status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home. The Council reserves the right to refuse that volunteering is relevant for the Policy where it is variance with Council policy and procedure.

Full Time Carers

If the prime applicant(s) provide care in an area of the City, the priority may be applied for in the area in which they provide care. Carers must have been providing for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer.

Evidence required for voluntary work.

Proof that full time care is required (this will be in the form of a care assessment from Adult Social Care or Children and Young Persons Trust in Brighton & Hove City Council) or a copy of the carers allowance that is being paid and proof of receipt of this. We will also require a letter from the person/people requiring care confirming applicant's full time involvement. We may also contact Adult Social Care, Children and Young Persons Trust, the person/people receiving the care or any other point of contact directly for confirmation of care given. If care status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Work & positive contribution and disability

The complexity and breadth of the needs of disabled people can not easily be tested by the means above and this is partly due to the fact that each individual will have varying degrees of ability which present unique barriers. We feel that it is important to recognise that many disabled people are and wish to remain active in their communities regardless of level of employment status or volunteer work and it has been found that they will likely benefit from being able to bid on all accommodation irrespective of level of work, paid or otherwise that they do. We therefore believe that anyone with a proven

chronic long term disability who works or volunteers (irrespective of hours carried out) should be able to be awarded this priority. Proof will still be required. If work or volunteer status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Exceptions for Special Circumstances

There may be occasions where someone is serving a 'Community order with an unpaid work requirement', 'community service order(s)' or 'compulsory manual labour' and therefore would not be considered to be 'working' or 'volunteering' under this scheme and therefore would be excluded from the definition of the priorities above.

The national and regional housing agendas are encouraging new housing schemes to be of mixed tenure. Where the council has the opportunity to nominate applicants to new schemes, the council will consider the needs of people in all Bands A - D to ensure new developments have a mix of residents.

Leaving Supported Accommodation

Accepted Homeless s193 households where supported housing is required

In some cases where a household has been accepted as homeless under s193 of the Housing Act 1996 Part VII, an assessment of the housing need will take place. If the outcome of the assessment is that the household is not ready for independent accommodation but need supported accommodation, then they will not be able to access general needs housing.

The Integrated Support Pathway comprises high support accommodation, leading to lower supported accommodation, until ultimately households are ready to move into the general needs housing with floating support.

Households are worked with throughout this process and their skills and abilities are thoroughly assessed to ensure that they are ready to make each step to greater independence.

Band 1 is primary contact organisations, e.g. Rough Sleepers Street Services Team

Band 2 is high support accommodation with 24 hour staffing and intensive support

Band 3 is step down accommodation, independent flats and shared houses with several support hours a week.

Band 4 is floating support provided to clients who are living in general needs housing or the private rented sector.

Band 5 is peer to peer support for clients who are stable but need some community support.

When these households are ready to move on from the Council's Integrated Support Pathway reasonable preference will be awarded when a household is assessed as ready to move to independent settled housing on the recommendation of the Support or Key worker.

If ongoing support needs have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan will be put in place. This will mean that only those households who are ready to manage a tenancy will be able to access social housing.

Re-assessing need and priority dates:

The council reviews all applications annually. If an applicant's circumstances change they may be moved up or down a band depending on their need.

All applicants must inform the Homemove team immediately when their circumstances change. If any change results in a band change, the Homemove team will write to inform the applicant of the new band, their new priority date if applicable and of their right to request a review of this decision. The principle of the scheme is that no one should overtake existing applicants in a band.

Moving up a band:

If an applicant moves up a band their priority date will be as follows:

- Overcrowding due to the birth of a child: the date will be taken from the child's date of birth.
- Transfer Priorities: the date as agreed by the Housing Manager.
- For Private Sector Housing Team reasons; the date the decision is received from the Private Sector Housing Team.
- For Social Services nominations, the date the request is received from Social Services.
- Medical reasons, the date the information is received into the Homemove Team.
- Homeless Households, the date duty was accepted by Brighton & Hove City Council.
- All other applicants, the date the application is received.

Moving down a band:

If an applicant moves down a Band, then their priority date will revert to the date that applied when the applicant was previously in that Band, or any earlier date in a higher Band.

Multiple Needs:

As part of the assessment of an applicant's needs, those applicants who have a range of needs will be identified. These cases will be assessed to identify

those applicants whose needs, when considered cumulatively, are deemed to be so severe as to warrant them being placed in a higher priority band. Where such exceptional circumstances exist and a higher priority band is thought to be appropriate the Homemove Team, having fully considered the details of the case, will forward their recommendation to the Lead Commissioner of Housing to seek authorisation that the applicant be placed in a higher priority band.

How does the council advertise empty properties?

The Homemove Magazine and website

The Homemove magazine is available on the Internet at www.homemove.org.uk and can be posted to applicants for a small fee. Full details of how to bid are set out in the Scheme User Guide which is sent out to all new applicants or is available from the Homemove website. The council will advertise all properties as being for Transfer applicants or Homeseekers or both and set the eligibility criteria for the property, such as:

- The minimum and maximum number of persons in the household.
- If there are age limits or for households without young children.
- The mobility group, if applicable, and details or potential for adaptation.
- If applications are restricted to special cases such as key workers.
- If pets are allowed.
- Whether it is sheltered housing.
- Who owns the property, whether council or housing association.
- The weekly rent, including any other charges.

The size of property you can bid for

An assessment of your housing need is made and you will be informed of the size of property you can bid for, please see the table below for guidance.

Size	Minimum people	Maximum people	Example Types of Household
Studio	1	1	Single Person
1 bed	1	2	Single Person or
2 bed	2	4	one to two child family or single
2 bed	2	3	A single person/couple
3 bed	3	6+ (depending on size)	two or more children
4bed	4	8+ (depending on size)	Five or more children

In deciding the appropriate size of a property the age and gender of the children within the household are considered for example a male and female child where one is over 10 years are not expected to share a bedroom. Therefore, some two child families are eligible for a two bedroom property and other two child families are eligible for a three bedroom property.

All properties adapted for disabled people will be advertised across all bands. Properties will have a mobility classification as below and priority will be given to those with a matching need. Properties will be also be advertised with notes where the potential for adaptation or further adaptation exists:

Mobility Group 1 – Typically suitable for a person who uses a wheelchair full time, ie indoors and outdoors. The property will provide full wheelchair access throughout.

Mobility Group 2 – Typically suitable for a person with restricted walking ability and for those that may need to use a wheelchair some of the time. The property will have internal and external level or ramped access, but some parts of the property may not be fully wheelchair accessible.

Mobility Group 3 – Typically suitable for a person able to manage two or three steps, but unable to manage steep gradients. The property may have adaptations to assist people with limited mobility.

Where a disabled applicant applies for accommodation which does not meet his or her access needs, the council will take into account whether it is reasonable and practicable to adapt that property when assessing the offer consistent with our duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and also whether it would meet the housing need. On occasion accommodation offers may be withdrawn from a case where the housing need would not be met.

Homeless Applicants and Property Size

In cases where households have been accepted as homeless under Part VII Housing Act 1996 and have been awarded the relevant band, a household may bid for accommodation that falls outside of the above criteria if it has been assessed that the property is reasonable for the households needs. The offer will discharge the council's duty under Part VII Housing Act 1996.

In addition

- Where there is overriding medical need to support the request the council will allocate households up to one additional bedroom over the standards set above.
- No applicants can bid for properties that would result in overcrowding or under-occupation.
- Where a household is moving to smaller accommodation, they may be entitled to assistance under the Transfer Incentive Scheme.
- If there are no eligible bidders over 50 years of age where an age restriction applies, applicants under 50 without children will be considered.

Sheltered Housing

Applicants can apply for sheltered housing using the Housing Registration form or can be referred by a relative, support worker, GP, or by the Medical Advisor recommending sheltered housing.

The council and Housing Association partners have a variety of sheltered accommodation specifically for an older community where it has been agreed with the Supporting People Team that a housing and support need is called for.

On receipt of an application for sheltered housing, the Homemove Team will register the application and place it in the relevant housing and support need band.

The Bidding Process

Eligible applicants can make bids for properties advertised by sending in a completed coupon, by telephone bidding, text bidding or by bidding online via the website. Applicants can also nominate a proxy bidder, and in exceptional circumstances request that the council bid on their behalf. Full details of how to bid are set out in the Scheme User Guide, which will be sent out to all new applicants and is available on the website www.homemove.org.uk.

Applicants with support needs and those who have difficulty with written English will be supported by an appointed support provider or the Homemove team.

Applicants who urgently need to move and who do not bid for properties may receive a direct bid. (see 'Direct bidding').

All bids for a property are checked against the eligibility rules, for example any age restrictions or size of property. Ineligible bids are excluded from consideration. We will provide advice and support to applicants who regularly bid for properties they are not eligible for.

Applicants can bid for up to three properties they are eligible for per fortnight. Bids can be made from the Friday the 'Homemove' magazine is published until 2pm the following Wednesday when bidding closes. Shortlists will be created within three working days and successful applicants contacted as soon as possible by the landlord.

Once an offer has been made the applicant has the choice to refuse the property. If they refuse they may be able to bid again the following cycle (see refusals). If an applicant is an Accepted Homeless case and refuses a successful bid (irrespective of bidding deadlines) then the Housing Options Team and the Homemove Team may consider that this is a full discharge of

duty. Any accepted homeless case considering refusing a part 6 offer should contact the Housing Options Team before formally refusing a property.

The Selection Process

All eligible bids for each property are placed in priority order. Priority is decided first by band, second by qualified local connection, thirdly by priority date within the band. Where a property has been advertised to give preference to a mobility group, bids from these applicants will be prioritised in band order above bids from members who are not in that stated group. Every bid will be assigned a random number when the bid is made. This number is used to resolve a tie; the highest number gets the priority. If there are no eligible bidders for a property the Homemove team may decide to re-advertise the property.

If the property is owned by a housing association, the prioritised list will be referred to the landlord for offer.

To minimise delays the landlord may arrange multiple viewings for up to three applicant households per property. Applicants will be required to bring proof of identity (for example Driving Licence or Passport) to the viewing. For general needs council housing, the Lettings Team will:

- Arrange accompanied viewings, advise on any non-essential repairs to be completed after the tenancy start date and give a target date for the completion of these repairs.
- Offer the applicant the option to accept and invite to sign for the tenancy or agree a decision within 24 hours.
- If the applicant chooses to refuse, the Lettings Officer will note the reasons for the refusal and the next applicant is selected for an offer. Some applicants are not penalised for refusing offers, there are however some cases listed in Direct Bidding and refusals that may lose priority if a suitable offer is refused and reason is not accepted.
- Applicants who do not provide proof of identity at the viewing will be given 24 hours to provide proof at a council office prior to signing for the tenancy, if this is not provided there is the chance the offer may be withdrawn and the case referred back to the Homemove team for investigation.
- Once an offer of accommodation has been accepted the Housing Application will be closed by the Homemove Team or the Lettings Team.

If the property is considered to be a sensitive let any issues surrounding this will be discussed with the incoming tenant prior to a tenancy being granted.

How Shortlisting Takes Place

Offers will normally be made to applicants at the top of the shortlist. In very exceptional circumstances we may need to reject an applicant on the shortlist

for a particular property to ensure that we meet the following objectives:

To ensure that communities are as balanced as possible

Landlords may adopt Local Lettings Plans for specific areas. These plans will need to be agreed by stakeholders and Brighton & Hove City Council and will consider the problems that need addressing, backed up by evidence. Properties subject to Local Lettings Plans will be clearly advertised and priority will be given to those that meet the agreed criteria.

To ensure that allocations are sensitively made

In exceptional cases, for housing management reasons, we may not offer to the person at the top of the shortlist. You will be contacted by the landlord in writing with the reasons for this decision.

To make best use of the council's stock and to reduce under occupation

From time to time a property may be advertised for those who are releasing larger council accommodation or reserved for those who need to move urgently because the council is undertaking work on the property.

To ensure properties are let quickly

This is important to minimise rent loss and empty property turn around time. Applicants must be available and able to take up an offer of accommodation, applicants will be contacted by telephone and letter, and if there is no contact after three days then the offer will be withdrawn.

If an offer is not made to the applicant at the top of the shortlist, the reasons will need to be agreed by the Homemove Manager in line with this policy.

Time Limits for Bidding for Properties

There is a six-month time limit for bidding for the following categories of applicants (except where otherwise noted):

- Social Services nominations under quota arrangements.
- Witness Protection nominations under a quota arrangement and agreed through the National Witness Mobility Service.
- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by Brighton & Hove City Council and placed in temporary accommodation where the landlord requires the property back or the property is unsuitable to meet the applicant's needs or a member of the household's needs, and where the household have been assessed as ready to manage independent accommodation and no further temporary accommodation can be sought as agreed by the Temporary Accommodation Allocations Manager.
- Households who are statutorily overcrowded.
- Transfer applicants needing a permanent or temporary decant where the property is imminently required for major repair.
- Private Sector Housing nomination issued under a quota arrangements as agreed with the Private Sector Housing Team Manager.

- Where the property is deemed to be 'statutorily overcrowded' by the Private Sector Housing Team under section X of the 1985 Housing Act and there are no practicable means to make the property suitable for the number of occupants within a reasonable time period.
- **Move on from care as agreed by housing options or leaving supported housing as agreed by supporting people.**
 - Priority transfer, agreed in exceptional circumstances due to significant and insurmountable problems associated with the tenant's occupation and there is imminent personal risk to the household if they remain.
 - Retiring council and HA employees, eg Sheltered Scheme Managers, Residential Estate Wardens where the council or HA has a contractual obligation to house.
 - Non-statutory successors – where agreement has been provided by Housing Management and Housing Options that the council will try to re-house in accommodation suitable for the applicant's housing need.
 - Under-occupiers who have succeeded to the tenancy where the council has grounds for seeking possession by offering suitable alternative accommodation.
 - Those leaving hospital under special arrangements have six weeks to bid.
 - Lead Commissioner of Housing discretion
 - Management Transfers – agreed by Housing Management for transfers on management grounds.
- Unsatisfactory housing conditions as confirmed after a visit from the Private Sector Housing Team and classed as a category 1 hazard(s) that cannot be rectified within 6 months (as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004))).

If an applicant does not bid within these time frames, the Homemove Team will bid on their behalf for suitable properties according to the case. If no bids are placed there is the right of the Homemove Team to review or remove the priority awarded and close the case.

Direct Bidding

It is our aim to advertise all properties through Homemove but there may be exceptional circumstances where we will make bids on behalf of households.

- Special circumstances, eg applicants who are assessed as high risk offenders have their application processed through a multi-agency panel. This group will be restricted from bidding and a property identified as recommended by the panel. The panel will make one reasonable offer and if refused the applicant can request a review.
- Accepted Homeless households in Band A who have failed to exercise choice through the bidding process within the six-week/month timescale or who have bid within the timescale but have not been successful. The council may make one reasonable offer of accommodation before duty is discharged, or priority lost.

- Retiring council employees or those who have highly specific requirements or who have failed to bid successfully within the six month time limit will be made a direct bids. If refused a Housing Manager will review the case and priority lost..
- Tenants who need to be temporarily or permanently decanted who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be offered one property. If the offer is refused Housing Management will review and/or begin proceedings for possession.
- Ex-council & HA tenants released or discharged from an institution that the council has given an undertaking to house who have not successfully bid within the timescale will be made one offer before duty is discharged or priority lost.
- Non-statutory successors who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one offer, if refused Housing Management will begin proceedings for possession.
- Priority Transfers who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one offer. If refused the Homemove Manager will review and may recommend priority lost and close the case.
- Those who have succeeded to a tenancy and are now underoccupying who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one offer. If refused the Homemove Manager will review and may recommend proceedings for possession.
- Retiring council and HA employees who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer. If refused the Homemove Manager will review and may recommend proceedings for possession.
- Those leaving hospital under special arrangements who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.
- **Move on from care as agreed by housing options or**
- Leaving supported housing as agreed by supporting people who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.
- Social Services nominations under quota arrangements who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.
- Witness Protection nominations under a quota arrangement and agreed through the National Witness Mobility Service who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.
- Private Sector Housing nomination issued under a quota arrangements, as agreed by the Private Sector Housing Manager, who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost..
- Severe need – exceptional circumstances and/or multiple needs, which warrant emergency priority – to be agreed by Head of TA and Allocations who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.
- **Lead Commissioner of Housing discretion priority who have failed to bid**

successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.

- Management Transfers – agreed by Housing Management for transfers on management grounds who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.
- Unsatisfactory housing conditions as confirmed after a visit from the Private Sector Housing Team and classed as a category 1 hazard(s) that cannot be rectified within 6 months (as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004)) who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.
- Where the property is deemed to be 'statutorily overcrowded' by the Private Sector Housing Team under section X of the 1985 Housing Act and there are no practicable means to make the property suitable for the number of occupants within a reasonable time period. who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.
- Those leaving hospital under special arrangements have six weeks to bid who have failed to bid successfully within their bidding time will be made one reasonable offer or priority may be lost.

Refusals following Direct Bidding

In the above cases the council will make a reasonable offer, one that as far as possible matches the size, and type of property the applicant is eligible for and in their areas of choice where possible. The applicant must give their reasons for refusing. The property will not be held empty while the refusal is reviewed but will be let to another applicant.

If the offer is to a homeless household the Temporary Accommodation Allocations Manager will review the case and will take the necessary follow-up action.

If an offer is to other categories of applicant the Homemove manager will consider the reasons for refusal. If there is a clear mismatch, eg where applicant or property details were incorrect, the offer will be withdrawn and the applicant notified. If the offer was found to be a reasonable one, the Homemove manager will advise the applicant of the reasons for this finding and of the effect that this decision has on their application.

Refusals of suitable accommodation

Applicants who have refused 3 reasonable first offers of accommodation within 12 months of the date of the initial offer will have their priority for re-housing reduced to Band D for a 12 month period, please note that if applicants who are second or third become first for an offer and refuse will be deemed 'first' under this part of the policy. After this 12 months period the applicant will have their case returned to their original band with their original date as long as a change of circumstances has not occurred.

It should be noted that if a tenancy is accepted and then refused without the tenancy being moved into this will be seen as a refusal and dealt with as the above and may result in a Band D priority for 12 months if the reason is not accepted.

All cases will be dealt with based on information supplied and submitted. There is no right to request a further review of the decision unless the applicant's circumstances change and they can provide evidence of this.

It should also be noted that this does not include Accepted Homeless cases in Band A where if households in this category are successful in obtaining an offer of accommodation within six months, this will be considered a final offer. The Council may exercise discretion to retain the current bandings in certain instances, for example where a Council or Housing Association tenant is releasing a property they are under occupying or one that has been adapted that could meet the needs of households who are waiting in a high banding.

Feedback on Let Properties

All properties let will be listed on the Homemove website showing the number of bidders for each property and the band and priority date of the successful applicant.

Ending a joint tenancy when one party to the tenancy leaves

Broadly speaking the council will grant a joint tenancy to partners applying together for housing. A joint tenancy remains in joint names until one or both joint tenants terminate the tenancy. In the case where one party to the joint tenancy has left the property and has no intention to return, the council may agree to offer a new sole tenancy to the remaining party if there is proof of priority Need and the accommodation matched the proved housing need, this will only occur once all Housing Options have been investigated. Council tenants must contact their Housing Officer for advice.

Local Lettings Plans

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

Local lettings plans allow the council or HA to:

- Identify and explore the barriers to access housing.
- Deliver better outcomes and improve life chances for current tenants and future residents.
- Developing a stock and demand profile of the area alongside the views of Local tenants and residents groups will primarily identify the need for any local lettings plans.

Four key elements will be considered when developing a new local lettings plan:

- Selective lettings - there may be some restrictions as to who can apply for certain properties or areas. For example this may involve age restrictions or a requirement to have a local connection.
- Making the best use of housing stock.
- Developing a balanced and sustainable community - where a local policy would promote community cohesion and balance the needs of existing and new tenants to create more inclusive neighbourhoods where people want to live. This may be in areas where there is a high turnover of properties either within an estate or amongst certain property types.
- Attract potential tenants - for example certain properties may be offered with a level of furnishings.

Key stages of development

Developing a stock and demand profile of the area - this may include a breakdown of and information on:

- Property types and numbers.
- Household type, including customer profile information of residents
- Voids and lettings within last financial year.
- Numbers and reasons for refusal.
- Reasons for rehousing and reasons why tenants leave.
- Where most availability has occurred and why.
- Number of registered transfers.
- The level of demand for properties in the area.
- How long tenancies are lasting.
- How quickly vacancies are filled.
- The layout of the area and services available.
- Social issues within the area and any multi-agency involvement.
- An estimate of vacancies expected.
- Local targets for performance.

Involving and consulting residents and tenants

The council and its partners will be responsible for consulting with residents and existing tenants and involving them in the development of any proposals for local lettings plans. This may involve carrying out 'door to door' surveys to collate resident and tenants views. Partner landlords who have stock within the area will be consulted on the need or otherwise for a local plan. Full Quality Impact Assessments will be carried out on all Plans.

Evaluating the information

The council will evaluate the information in the stock and demand profile. It will also take account of tenants' views when identifying recommendations to develop local lettings criteria. The council must also consider diversity and equal opportunity issues of local communities when formulating any local lettings plans.

Making recommendations

Recommendations may include some of the following criteria:

Setting a maximum or minimum age limit for certain properties.

- Preference to tenants / applicants with a local connection or who already live or work in that area.
- Preference to tenants / applicants who are giving or receiving support to or from family/extended family, voluntary work, day care, playgroups or other support from locally based organisations.
- Preference to people who are employed.
- Preference to other household types who would not normally be eligible under the council's letting policy – eg this could be couples without children, where there is a high density already in the area of families with children.
- Preference to specific groups of people for specific types of properties or in specific localities where this would benefit the community.
- Preference to people from BME and religious cultures.
- Meeting need of a category of people to ensure most appropriate use of stock.

Impact of Local Lettings Plans on the Lettings Policy

Once a report with recommendations has been finalised, the council will have to formally adopt the plan and this will override the current eligibility criteria. This will take into account the impact of overall lettings in the district. Any property subject to a local lettings plan will be clearly labelled within the advertisements.

Review of local lettings plans

The council will ensure that Local Lettings Plans are publicised and implemented. In addition, they will ensure that these plans are continuously monitored and reviewed annually with the involvement of local tenants and residents. If a local lettings plan is agreed it will be promoted within the affected area.

Housing Options

As you may be aware, there is a shortage of social housing in Brighton & Hove and a huge demand for accommodation. This means that council and housing association properties are not widely available and usually only go to those who are in the most need. Here are some other housing options you may wish to consider

Help and Advice: The Housing Options Team is based around preventing homelessness by offering housing options tailored to individual needs. They can offer specialist housing advice to help you keep your current home, advice for people who need support to live independently and advice on alternative housing options. Phone (01273) 294400 or e-mail housing.advice@brighton-hove.gov.uk for more information.

Private Renting: You can apply to the private rental agencies in the area for

suitable accommodation. You may be eligible for help with paying your rent by claiming for housing benefit. Contact Housing Options on (01273) 294400 for more information.

Mutual Exchanges: the council operates a mutual exchange system for council or housing association tenants who wish to swap their homes. Go to www.homemove.org.uk. Or speak to your Housing Officer.

Low Cost Home Ownership - if you are interested in Low Cost Home Ownership then register at www.homebuy.co.uk or call Moat Housing on 07002 662846 to be considered for new schemes in the City.

Appeals and Reviews

This section sets out the procedure for reviewing or appealing the following decisions:

- Not to put someone on the Joint Housing Register (or to exclude them from bidding) who has applied to be put on it or to remove someone from the JHR other than at his or her request.
- That a member is ineligible for an offer.
- Other decisions relating to the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, including banding and priority dates.
- Where a priority has been removed and a Direct bid implemented.

An officer senior to the officer making the original decision and who was not involved in making the decision will carry out these reviews.

Procedure

- A request for a review must be made within 21 days from the day on which the applicant is notified of the council's decision and the reasons for it. The council has discretion to extend the time limit if it considers this would be reasonable otherwise no appeal/review can be made.
- A request can be made in person, over the telephone or in writing.
- The officer carrying out the review will carry out an investigation, and, if further information is needed, invite the applicant to write or if unable to do this, make oral representation, or the applicant may also appoint someone on his or her behalf to do this.
- If the reviewing officer finds that the officer who took the decision did not take relevant information into account they will refer the file back to that officer for re-consideration.
- The officer will notify the applicant of their decision and the reasons for it within eight weeks of the request for a review, there is no right to request a review of the decision unless the applicant's circumstances change.

Appendix A: Assessments and Banding Decisions

Following the registration a decision will be made on what, if any, follow up action is appropriate e.g. referral to the Medical officer, Occupational

Therapist, Private Sector Housing Officer, Housing Options Team if there is a threat of homelessness, Social Services or Supporting People. The Homemove Team makes decisions about banding in the light of appropriate advice and the following guidelines.

Medical Needs

Members who indicate that they or anyone in their household have an illness or disability, which is affected by their current housing situation, or who may be vulnerable on physical or mental health grounds and in need of settled accommodation are requested to complete a medical self assessment form and/or mobility form. The Homemove Team considers this form, together with any relevant information from the General Practitioner, Hospital Consultant, or Occupational Therapist as appropriate. Where appropriate, the team also seeks advice from the Medical Officer.

Assessments are made of the effect of present housing on the state of health of the member or anyone in the household and not on the medical condition alone. In reaching the decision we will consider whether the overall effect on the household or any member of the household is sufficiently severe to warrant inclusion in a higher band.

In each case the recommendation is based on a judgement of housing need. Members with medical needs will be placed in one of the following bands:

Band A

Overriding (severe and immediate) medical priority awarded by the Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a severe and immediate adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant emergency priority.

Band B

High (major) medical priority awarded by the Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant extra priority.

Band C

Low (minor) medical priority awarded by the Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a minor adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant reasonable priority.

Where a household is overcrowded and/or there are other adverse circumstances the medical assessment will take into account the effect of the overcrowding and the adverse circumstances on the health of the household.

Mobility Needs

Irrespective of the band assessment, where a member, or one of the household, has a substantial and permanent physical disability which may place them in mobility groups 1, 2 (see below) the Homemove team will advise the household to refer themselves to the Occupational Therapist team, for a report on their housing needs. Taking into account the recommendations of the report the Homemove team will place the member in one of the following mobility groups:

Mobility Group 1 – Typically suitable for a person who uses a wheelchair full time, ie indoors and outdoors. The property will provide full wheelchair access throughout.

Mobility Group 2 – Typically suitable for a person with restricted walking ability and for those that may need to use a wheelchair some of the time. The property will have internal and external level or ramped access, but some parts of the property may not be fully wheelchair accessible.

Mobility Group 3 – Typically suitable for a person able to manage two or three steps, but unable to manage steep gradients. The property may have adaptations to assist people with limited mobility

Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions and Statutory Duty

The Homemove Manager agrees with the Private Sector Housing Team Manager an annual quota for housing clients in housing need.

Households will be placed in **Band A** where there are:

- Private Sector Housing nomination issued under a quota arrangements as agreed by the Private Sector Housing Team.

Households will be placed in **Band B** where there are:

- Other unsatisfactory housing conditions (category 1 hazard(s) that cannot be rectified within 6 months as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004)).

Households will be placed in **Band C** where there are:

- Unsanitary conditions that cannot be addressed by the Private Sector Housing Team action including lacking one or more of the following; a kitchen (eg sink and space for a cooker), an inside WC or a bathroom (e.g. basin and bath or shower).
- Other unsatisfactory housing conditions (higher category 2 hazard(s) where formal remedial action is being pursued, as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004))

Overcrowding

- Where the property is deemed to be 'statutorily overcrowded' by the Private Sector Housing Team under section X of the 1985 Housing Act and there are no practicable means to make the property suitable for the number of occupants within a reasonable time period the applicant will be placed in band A. Applicants will be placed in band B if they lack two or more bedrooms and band C if they lack one bedroom below these minimum provisions

Applicants will be placed in band B if they lack two or more bedrooms and band C if they lack one bedroom below these minimum provisions:

An independent adult (18 years+)	1 bedroom, including a bedsit
Co-habiting couples	1 bedroom
A dependent child	1 bedroom
Two children of opposite gender where one is	2 bedrooms
Two children of the same gender (any age)	1 bedroom

Please note that if there is a second reception room it will generally be deemed to be available for use as a bedroom and box rooms, which can reasonably be used by a child, will count as a single bedroom.

Accepted Homeless Applicants

Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by Brighton & Hove City Council under s193 of the 1996 Act or s.65 of the 1985 Act will be placed in the following bands:

Band A

- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC, placed in temporary accommodation where the landlord requires the property back or the property is unsuitable to meet the applicant's needs or a member of the household's needs, and where the household have been assessed as ready to manage independent accommodation and no other temporary accommodation can be sought.

Band C

- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by Brighton & Hove City Council placed in B&B or short term temporary accommodation where the only prospect of meeting the household's needs is in long term accommodation (eg the applicant has obtained employment and is experiencing severe financial hardship or the household has severe medical or disability reasons).
- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC making their own temporary arrangements or suffering family split due to a genuine lack of accommodation.

- Accepted Homeless households occupying temporary accommodation on an assured short hold or non-secure tenancy until such time as the landlord requires the property back or the household's needs are no longer met unless offered permanent accommodation.

Social Welfare Considerations

Where there are social welfare needs the Homemove Team will consider the recommendations of Social Services and other relative agencies and take into account any multiple needs. They will place the member in the appropriate band as follows:-

Band A - Severe Need Authorised by the Lead Commissioner for Housing where members are in 'severe need', where exceptional circumstances and/or multiple needs warrant emergency priority and they meet the criteria laid out in 'lead Commissioner for Housing Discretion'

Band B – Multiple Needs - Authorised by the Homemove Manager where an applicant who would otherwise be placed in band C, has needs which when assessed cumulatively are deemed to be so severe as to warrant them being placed in band B (three or more band reasons from Band C).

Band B - High priority hardship – To be authorised by the Homemove Manager for homeseekers with a dependent child/ren living in insecure accommodation and not having a bedroom (see the minimum bedroom standards) and lacking or sharing amenities.

Band B - Enabling Fostering/Adoption – Where social services make a recommendation that permanent accommodation be provided to enable someone to foster or adopt a child, if the Homemove Team agrees this then the applicant will be placed in band B. This is only accepted with the full support of Brighton & Hove City Council Children and Young Persons Trust.

Band C - Other social welfare/hardship – Households who need to move to a particular area in the city where failure to meet that need would cause hardship e.g. to give or receive care or support.

Band C - Delivering a Care Plan – This is where accommodation is required to assist Brighton & Hove City Councils Social Services in delivering a Care Plan (eg moving the member nearer to the source of care and support or to accommodate a carer), or to relieve other social/welfare hardship as agreed between Social Services and Housing.

Other High Priority Categories (applicable to Transfer Applicants only)

Band A - Priority Transfers

Agreed in exceptional circumstances by the Homemove Manager and

Housing Manager where there are significant insurmountable problems associated with the tenant's occupation of a dwelling and there is imminent personal risk to the tenant or their family if they remain in the dwelling.

Where the Homemove Manager and Housing Manager agree a non-urgent management transfer band B will be awarded.

Band A - Moving for major works

Awarded to transfer applicants if their property is imminently required for essential works and the tenant cannot remain in the property. Although the council will encourage and assist such tenants to make bids through the Homemove system we recognise that we have a duty to provide suitable alternative accommodation and will make a reasonable offer within the necessary timescale whether a successful bid is made or not.

Council Interest Transfers

Band A is awarded to facilitate a tenant's move in one of the following circumstances;-

- Make best use of adapted stock – for example where providing adaptations in the current property is not feasible but there may be a suitable alternative property available.
- Enable tenants under occupying family accommodation or adapted property they no longer require, to move to smaller accommodation or alternative accommodation under the Transfer Incentive Scheme (information on this scheme can be requested from your housing officer). Under occupiers who do not qualify for this scheme will be placed in band C.
- Non-statutory successors – approved by Housing Management, Housing Options and The Homemove team for an offer of suitable accommodation.
- Retiring council and HA employees, eg Sheltered Scheme Managers, Residential Estate Wardens where the council or HA has a contractual obligation to house.

Band B is awarded to facilitate a tenant's move for the following circumstance;-

- Ex-tenants returning from institutions, eg rehabilitation where a commitment has been made in order to secure the relinquishment of a council or HA tenancy on entering the institution.

Transfer Incentive Scheme (TIS)

The TIS scheme is a popular and successful route for many households, wanting to list to downsize to smaller flats from larger family homes they no longer need.

The table below shows the payment amounts (before any deductions)

	payment
Downsizing by one bedroom	1,000
Downsizing by two bedrooms	1,500
Downsizing by three bedrooms	2,000
Downsizing by four bedrooms	2,500
moving from a wheelchair-adapted property, even if the same size	1,000

The scheme to also include tenants moving from not just fully wheelchair adapted properties, but also partially adapted properties they no longer need (graded Mobility 2), to non-adapted, non-Mobility rated properties. This is because there are very few fully wheelchair adapted properties in our council stock, but many that have been partially adapted (eg with level access showers, ramps).

It should be noted that some Housing Association Tenants can qualify for the Priority Banding but that the payments listed above are for Council tenants who have held standard tenancies for at least 12 months.

Other categories

Move on from care – Band A

The Housing Options Team assists those moving on from care to find suitable accommodation. For the majority of applicants, supported accommodation is appropriate, but some applicants are referred by Housing Options to the Homemove team who place the applicants in band A. Applicants must normally have a local connection as defined by Part V11 of the Housing Act 1996.

Move on from Support Housing – Band A

For the majority of applicants agencies will be expected to work with their clients to access the private rented sector. For exceptional cases, who has been accepted as homeless under s193 of the Housing Act 1996 Part VII, an assessment of the housing need will take place. If the outcome of the assessment is that the household is not ready for independent accommodation but need supported accommodation, then they will not be able to access general needs housing.

The Integrated Support Pathway comprises high support accommodation, leading to lower supported accommodation, until ultimately households are ready to move into the general needs housing with floating support.

Households are worked with throughout this process and their skills and abilities are thoroughly assessed to ensure that they are ready to make each step to greater independence.

Band 1 is primary contact organisations, e.g. Rough Sleepers Street Services Team

Band 2 is high support accommodation with 24 hour staffing and intensive support

Band 3 is step down accommodation, independent flats and shared houses with several support hours a week.

Band 4 is floating support provided to clients who are living in general needs housing or the private rented sector.

Band 5 is peer to peer support for clients who are stable but need some community support.

When these households are ready to move on from the Council's Integrated Support Pathway reasonable preference will be awarded when a household is assessed as ready to move to independent settled housing on the recommendation of the Support or Key worker.

If ongoing support needs have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan will be put in place. This will mean that only those households who are ready to manage a tenancy will be able to access social housing.

Social Services Nominations under quota arrangements – Band A

The Homemove Manager and Housing Options Manager agrees with Social Services an annual quota for housing clients in housing need under two schemes: 1. The Divert Scheme, which has been designed to prevent children being looked after by the Local Authority, and 2. General Social Services Nominations as recommended at Head of Service level.

Witness Protection – Band A

The Homemove Manager agrees with NWMS (National Witness Mobility Service) an annual quota for housing clients in housing need.

APPENDIX 7

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Recommended Changes:

Local Connection

Applicants are able to apply for social housing within Brighton & Hove from anywhere within the United Kingdom. However, in order to ensure that the Council meets the needs of the local community, reduced priority will be given to those people without a local connection.

Response from RSL

Could the wording be changed to make it a bit clearer ie Brighton and Hove is a high demand area where demand for social housing is in excess of supply. For this reason applicants, who live outside the area with no local connection to it, cannot expect the same priority for housing as those with a local connection.

Response from support provider.

Due to the limited amount of social housing available, some of the team felt it would be fairer to close the list to families without a local connection but allow them to access mutual exchanges.

The following factors will be taken into account in determining whether or not an applicant has a local connection with the Brighton & Hove City Council area. An application is awarded a local connection if:

- an applicant is currently residing in the City in either temporary or permanent accommodation and has been resident in the city for a minimum of 24 months or is a serving member of the armed forces and is posted in the Brighton & Hove City Council Area.

Response from RSL

There is no mention if they do not live but are in permanent paid work – is this going to be included.

Response from Supported Accommodation provider

The Family Connection is not included in the Consultation paper.

Could you confirm the Family Connection is still in place? If it were removed this would have a big impact on many of our clients who rely on the support of their families.

Comment from Conservative Councillor

Should this not be open to all armed forces wherever they are/have been based?

Comment from a tenant

I couldn't see any provision in the Allocation policy for this aside from that if people were based here as part of the forces then it would give a local connection. However, in terms of those who had lived here prior to going in the forces, then after several years are coming out – then they wouldn't have a local connection here. Can we include this in the consultation along the lines of residency prior to the armed forces and ignoring the period they were in the forces in order to consider Local connection e.g. if someone lived here for 5 years and then joined the forces for the next 5 years and then applied to us – we'd ignore the 5 years in the forces and look at the 5 years they were resident?

Response from Support provider

Why are the armed forces identified as a special case? Serving members of the forces have a reasonable income and generally have access to housing.

For the purposes of determining local connection, living in Brighton & Hove will not include the following:

- Occupation of a mobile home, caravan or motor caravan which is not placed on an official residential site.
- Occupation of a holiday letting which includes a permanent building, hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation for the purposes of a holiday.
- Resident of Bail Hostels or other such accommodation.
- In-Patient of Hospitals/specialist centres

Exceptions

There may be occasions not predicted by this Allocation Scheme where the application of the Local Connection Policy is deemed inappropriate by the Council and accordingly there is a Director level Discretion available not to invoke the Policy in these Special Circumstances. One example might be someone who has been placed out of Brighton & Hove for a period of time, whilst being looked after by the Children & Young Persons Trust, or the Community Mental Health Team – although each case would be considered on its merits.

Applicants who do not have a local connection with Brighton & Hove but to whom the City Council have accepted a full Homelessness duty under section 193(2) will not be subject to any reduction in their priority (as the Council is under a statutory duty to provide long term settled housing).

Leaving Supported Accommodation

Accepted Homeless s193 households where supported housing is required

In some cases where a household has been accepted as homeless under s193 of the Housing Act 1996 Part VII, an assessment of the housing need will take place. If the outcome of the assessment is that the household is not ready for independent accommodation but need supported accommodation, then they will not be able to access general needs housing.

The Integrated Support Pathway comprises high support accommodation, leading to lower supported accommodation, until ultimately households are ready to move into the general needs housing with floating support.

Households are worked with throughout this process and their skills and abilities are interrogated to ensure that they are ready to make each step to greater independence.

Band 1 is primary contact organisations, e.g. Rough Sleepers Street Services Team

Band 2 is high support accommodation with 24 hour staffing and intensive support

Band 3 is step down accommodation, independent flats and shared houses with several support hours a week.

Band 4 is floating support provided to clients who are living in the general needs sector.

Band 5 is peer to peer support for clients who are stable but need some community support.

When these households are ready to move on from the Council's Integrated Support Pathway reasonable preference will be awarded when a household is assessed as ready to move to independent settled housing on the recommendation of the support worker.

If ongoing support needs have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan will be put in place. This will mean that only those households who are ready to manage a tenancy will be able to access Social housing.

Responses from support provider

1. The heading and introduction to Section 2 refer explicitly to cases accepted as homeless under s193 of the Housing Act 1996. But some clients in supported housing, who have been referred there because they need support, have not actually been accepted as statutorily homeless. So despite the heading and introduction, do the recommended changes equally apply to them?

2. Section 2 focuses only on the Integrated Support Pathway. However the term “Supported Accommodation” also covers services such as sheltered housing and specialist accommodation for victims of domestic violence, people with learning difficulties, people with mental health problems, offenders, etc. If clients are ready to leave those other types of supported housing, do the recommended changes equally apply to them?
3. Currently people living in supported accommodation have the same rights as all other housing applicants to apply for council accommodation and to be considered under the normal allocations policy. Consequently they might qualify for a council tenancy by virtue of medical circumstances, employment, positive contribution to the city, etc. even straight from a Band 2 hostel. Do the recommended changes mean that this right will no longer apply? Do the recommended changes mean that supported single homeless clients must travel through every stage of the Integrated Support Pathway before leaving supported housing, regardless of their personal needs? If so, is this expected to apply when moving to private housing or just to social housing? Exactly who is the “support worker” who will assess when a household is ready to move to independent settled housing?
4. Service users are only allowed to stay in different Bands of the Integrated Support Pathway for certain lengths of time, typically 2 years. However they are not allowed to move into independent settled housing until they are ready to do so. When someone’s support needs genuinely last longer than ISP time limits, for example through combinations of mental disability and ill health for which no cure is readily available, where should they therefore go?
5. Would it be possible to change terminology so that confusion can be avoided between “Bands” in the Integrated Support Pathway and “Bands” in the Housing Allocation Policy?

Response from support provider

Route 1 is not part of the Integrated Support Pathway, as is a Mental health service. Therefore, can you confirm where Route 1 sits within this context?

Response from Green Party

This system will only work if there is support available for people moving on from the Council’s Integrated Support Pathway through **Professional Support Workers** yet I understand that we have a shortage of them already

Responses from Support provider

What if someone doesn't want to live in supported accommodation and what about families?

The word "interrogated" was felt to be inappropriate. "thoroughly assessed" may sound better.

'When these households are ready to move on from the Council's Integrated Support Pathway reasonable preference will be awarded when a household is assessed as ready to move to independent settled housing on the recommendation of the support worker.'

What criteria will be used to make this assessment of skills?

'If ongoing support needs have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan will be put in place. This will mean that only those households who are ready to manage a tenancy will be able to access Social housing.'

Does this mean manage a tenancy without even floating support?

Refusals of suitable accommodation

Applicants who have refused 3 reasonable offers of accommodation within 12 months of the date of the first offer will have their priority for re-housing reduced to Band D for a 12 month period. After this 12 months period the applicant will have their case returned to their original band with their original date as long as a change of circumstances has not occurred. This does not include Accepted Homeless cases where if households in this category are successful in obtaining an offer of accommodation within six months, this will be considered a final offer.

Response from an RSL

What about applicants that sign for a tenancy and then rejects the property, does this count as a refusal?

Response from a Support Provider

Please could you explain what constitutes 'reasonable accommodation'?

Is there an opportunity to appeal against a decision to demote banding if a client disagrees that proposed accommodation is of a reasonable standard?

Does this rule apply only to offers or does it also include viewings? Given that the mental health of our clients may impair their decision making process will there be any allowance made for this?

Also, if a client is third priority and offered a flat that both priority candidates turn down will the same rules apply?

Response from Green Party

Refusals of suitable accommodation. We are concerned that there is no support for people who are 'voluntarily homeless' as there are reported cases of people who are classed in this bracket when, although they may have defaulted on some rent payments (in private and council rented accommodation), they have made tremendous efforts to make up for this. These people are even refused advice from the Housing Options Team.

Response from Hastings Borough Council

Not objecting to but goes against the Sussex Homemove principals that applicants are free to exercise choice without being penalised for refusing. Also, may discourage people from bidding for hard-to-let properties which may impact upon voids times increasing. Could force household to apply as homeless if they have no realistic chance of being rehoused after banding reduced.

Response from an RSL

We would strongly support a change whereby a nominations priority is reduced to a band D if they decline three reasonable offers. There is a particular high rate of refusals in B&H and nominations are very aware that currently there is no consequence to declining properties, for any reason however trivial.

Response from Housing Management:

My understanding is that currently home seekers or transfer applicants can bid for, view and then refuse a property limitlessly. I welcome the idea of limiting the number of refusals. However, I think it would be helpful to have some guidance on how the decision as to what constitutes a reasonable offer is made. It might be that this is different for different categories of applicant. I'm thinking for example where we are desperate to get back a particular property from a transfer applicant i.e. a 5 bed house or a property with very much needed adaptations – in such cases we may want the flexibility to allow more than two refusals. This may particularly be the case where the property being left is pristine and the new property only meets our basic minimum standard.

Leaving Care

Move on from Care.

Applicants are awarded this category in accordance with protocols between the Housing Service and the Children and Young Persons Trust. Applicants

must be a former “Relevant Child” as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2002 and be a young person at risk.

The evidence to support this will be provided by the City’s Housing Options Team and will consist of confirmation that:

- The care leaver is ready to move to independent settled housing and is genuinely prepared for a move to independent living.
- The care leaver possesses the life skills to manage a tenancy including managing a rent account.
- The care leaver is in need of either long term or medium term tenancy support.

The Council wants to ensure that care leavers and other vulnerable people with a support needs are helped to move on from schemes. It is important that they are only able to access social housing when they are assessed as ready to move on.

Therefore their application for housing will be demoted to Band D until they are ready to move on and this has been confirmed by the Housing Options team specialist worker. At this point the applications will be placed in the appropriate Housing Need Band as assessed under the full Allocations Scheme.

The following cases leaving care will qualify for Reasonable Preference under this category:

- An applicant is ready to move to independent settled housing on the recommendation of the Housing Options Team.
- The applicant is in need of appropriate tenancy support.
- That a support package has been assessed and where required, is in place.

Ongoing support needs have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan is in place.

Once this information has been assessed and received by the Homemove Team a Housing Needs assessment will take place in accordance with the main assessment criteria laid out in the Allocations Scheme.

Responses from a Support Provider

Leaving Care

Please see point 2. As Route 1 does not follow the ISP is this where our clients would fit into the consultation ?

How long will the demotion process to Band D take?

How will readiness for move on be assessed? Who is the specialist worker who confirms this (David Allerton?)?

Response from a Support Provider

What is the criteria for this and how will it be assessed and verified?

Priority for Working Household and those making a Positive Contribution to the City

There is an increased recognition of the importance of Allocations Schemes at a National level to ensure that Authorities make best use of housing stock, but also to improving access to affordable housing for those who are on low incomes and the ease of mobility for positively contributing to the community.

Response from Housing Management

I'm assuming the first paragraph here is referring to people working or volunteering within organisations that the council would not wish to support – i.e. those with extreme views or whose beliefs contradict the council's values. If that is not what was meant then this needs to be included wither here and / or in the positive contribution section.

The Government has published "Fair and Flexible - Statutory Guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities In England". This is enabling Local Authorities to be open to change within the Allocations Scheme so that is it responsive to local needs.

To ensure that Brighton & Hove City Council promotes a positive contribution to the community at least 50% of all permanent social council housing stock will be advertised with a priority being given to those who can show that the ingoing primary tenant(s) is/are working or is making a positive contribution to Brighton & Hove City.

Response from Green Party

Priority for Working Household and those making a Positive Contribution to the City

For the reasons outlined in the introduction we think 50% is too high a quota and would propose this is reduced to 25%.

Response from Policy, Performance & Analysis

With regard to paragraph 5 and priority for working household, the target of 50% seems very high. However I am sure that there are robust calculations to arrive at this figure and I am aware that the Administration is particularly keen on promoting this policy.

Exceptions for Special Circumstances

There may be occasions not predicted by this Allocation Scheme where the application of the priority given to working family policy/positive contribution is deemed inappropriate by the Council and accordingly there is Director Level Discretion available not to invoke the Policy in these Special Circumstances.

Mobility standard flats and houses will be excluded from these allocations as will all Sheltered accommodation. It is hoped that this will help increase an economic balance within all parts of the city community.

Response from Housing Management:

To exclude sheltered housing and mobility standard flats from the Working Households and Positive Contribution LLP effectively discriminates against older people with a need for sheltered housing and those requiring mobility standard properties who may well be working and / or contributing. With a growing older population, better health care and the current economic climate older people are often working well beyond retirement age or volunteering. Indeed it is recognised that keeping active both physically and mentally helps keep older people happy and healthy

Working Households Economic Contribution

This part of the policy aims to support the economic growth of our city. We aim to encourage people who can, to work and want to raise levels of aspiration and ambition. We will offer priority on property adverts to the prime applicant(s) who is/are working (see definition below) and who are therefore making a contribution to Brighton & Hove's economy. The priority for Working Households will apply to rehousing across the city and is not linked with a specified area or property type.

Response from Green Party

Definition of working households: Applicants will only qualify if the worker has been employed for 9 out of the last 12 months, is currently in employment and is working for a minimum of 16 hours per week. We feel this definition is too harsh, particularly in these times of recession. Someone may have tried very hard to find work but only succeeded in finding a little. We would propose therefore that this is changed to 6 out of the last 12 months.

Definition of Working Households

For the purposes of this Allocations Scheme employment is described as having a permanent contract, working as a temporary member of staff or being self-employed. Applicants will only qualify if the worker has been employed for 9 out of the last 12 months, is currently in employment and is

working for a minimum of 16 hours per week. Verification will be sought at point of application as well as point of offer under the same terms. Applicants must provide payslips, P60, bank statements or a verifying letter on headed paper in order to qualify (we may also contact employers directly for confirmation of employment). If employment status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes. Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Response from a support provider

Is there an income limit?

Response from Housing Management:

Do we need to include the maximum household income in this section of the policy – even if the policy states this will be reviewed every 12 months or 2 years?

Response from a support provider

How much is a substantial fine? Some of the team thought that loss of home on its own was adequate as families on low incomes would struggle to pay the fine.

Positive Contribution

Community Contribution

Brighton & Hove City Council wishes to recognise residents who make a positive contribution to the City and play a part in making their neighbourhood a strong, stable and healthy place to be. We believe those who help make it a good place to live, work and play are valuable people and they need to be recognised for the good they do. We will offer priority on property adverts to the prime applicant(s) who is/are positively contributing to their community (see definition below) and who are therefore making a contribution to Brighton & Hove's wellbeing. The priority for positive contribution Households will apply to rehousing across the city and is not linked with a specified area or property type.

Positive Contribution – definition

This covers households who are undertaking voluntary work or who are full-time carers and so unable to undertake paid work.

Volunteers

Volunteers must have been volunteering for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer.

Volunteering must be for a not-for profit organisation or a charity and must be for a minimum of 32 hours per month.

Evidence required for voluntary work.

Letter from Manager responsible for Volunteers confirming applicant's involvement in a minimum of 32 hours per month of voluntary work in the requested area for over 6 months. This person must not be related to the applicant in any way and we may also contact manager directly for confirmation of work done. If volunteer status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Full Time Carers

If the prime applicant(s) provide care in an area of the City, the priority may be applied for in the area in which they provide care. Carers must have been providing for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer.

Evidence required for carers.

Proof that full time care is required (this will be in the form of a care assessment from Adult Social Care or Children and Young Persons Trust in Brighton & Hove City Council) or a copy of the carers allowance that is being paid and proof of receipt of this. We will also require a letter from the person/people requiring care confirming applicant's full time involvement. We may also contact Adult Social Care, Children and Young Persons Trust, the person/people receiving the care or any other point of contact directly for confirmation of care given. If care status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Response from a support provider

Are people requiring full time care likely to be able to write a letter

Work & positive contribution and disability

The complexity and breadth of the needs of disabled people can not easily be tested by the means above and this is partly due to the fact that each individual will have varying degrees of ability which present unique barriers. We feel that it is important to recognise that many disabled people are and wish to remain active in their communities regardless of level of employment status or volunteer work and it has been found that they will likely benefit from being able to bid on all accommodation irrespective of level of work, paid or otherwise that they do. We therefore believe that anyone with a mobility 1 assessment on the Housing Register who can prove that they work or volunteer (irrespective of hours carried out) should be able to be awarded this priority. Normal proof (as stated above) will still be required. If work or volunteer status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Response from Accessible Housing Coordinators

New amended paragraph suggested:

Work & positive contribution and disability

The complexity and breadth of the needs of disabled people can not easily be tested by the means above and this is partly due to the fact that each individual will have varying degrees of ability which present unique barriers. We feel that it is important to recognise that many disabled people are and wish to remain active in their communities regardless of level of employment status or volunteer work and it has been found that they will likely benefit from being able to bid on all accommodation irrespective of level of work, paid or otherwise that they do. We therefore believe that anyone with a proven chronic long term disability who works or volunteers (irrespective of hours carried out) should be able to be awarded this priority. Proof will still be required. If work or volunteer status changes whilst on the Housing Register or at the point of offer it is up to the prime applicant(s) to inform the homemove team immediately of the changes, as part of Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that we reasonably require to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information that leads to gaining a tenancy. We will take appropriate action against anyone who gains a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may result in a substantial fine and/ or the loss of the home.

Exceptions for Special Circumstances

There may be occasions not predicted by this Allocation Scheme where the application of the priority given to working family policy/positive contribution is deemed inappropriate by the Council and accordingly there is a Director Level Discretion available not to invoke the Policy in these Special Circumstances.

It should be noted that anyone serving 'community service order(s)' or 'compulsory manual labour' would not be considered to be working or volunteering under this scheme and therefore would be excluded from the definition of the priorities above.

Response from a Support Provider

Please can you confirm the 'Special Circumstances' exemption from this rule?

Does this rule apply to our clients?

How is disability defined?

Will there be any allowance made for our client's who are unwell or may have periods where their Mental Health will not allow them to attend their voluntary or work placement.

Please clarify what a 'mobility 1' assessment is and who carries this out?

Response from Green Party

Exceptions for Special Circumstances. We feel as the restrictions are already harsh it's hard to imagine what kind of special circumstances there could be other than 'community service order' / 'compulsory manual labour'. Without examples to justify this we feel the first paragraph should be removed.

Response from a Support provider

Will this be reported in the public domain i.e. Homemove magazine and website?

Response from Policy, Performance & Analysis

Paragraph 5 exceptions for special circumstances refers to Director Level Discretion –given the recent restructure I wonder if this should be either the Head of Service or the Chief Executive given roles and responsibilities and line management arrangements. The same applies to section 7.

Regarding paragraph 5.2 volunteers, 32 hours per month seems very high – this translates to approx. 8 hours a week. I would suggest that a range may be more inclusive, for example a single non-working parent may only be able to volunteer for one morning a week due to child care but is still making a valid contribution to the local community and city economy. Having a range would allow for greater recognition of individuals different, valid, circumstances.

Minor wording changes regarding Private sector housing repairs banding to bring the allocations scheme into line with the H&S hazard rating system

Band A

Private Sector Housing nomination issued under a quota arrangements as agreed by the Private Sector Housing Team.

Band B

Other unsatisfactory housing conditions (category 1 hazard(s) that cannot be rectified within 6 months as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004)).

Band C

Unsanitary conditions that cannot be addressed by the Private Sector Housing Team action including lacking one or more of the following; a kitchen (e.g. sink and space for a cooker), an inside WC or a bathroom (e.g. basin and bath or shower).

Other unsatisfactory housing conditions (higher category 2 hazard(s) where formal remedial action is being pursued, as assessed by the Private Sector Housing Team using the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (part 1 HA 2004))

Appendix A

Overcrowding

Where the property is deemed to be 'statutorily overcrowded' by the Private Sector Housing Team under section X of the 1985 Housing Act and there are no practicable means to make the property suitable for the number of occupants within a reasonable time period the applicant will be placed in band A. Applicants will be placed in band B if they lack two or more bedrooms and band C if they lack one bedroom below these minimum provisions

Response from a Supported provider

Please can you explain what this means?

Directors Discretion (for other exceptional circumstances not covered by this scheme)

To replace Severe need – exceptional circumstances and/or multiple needs, which warrant emergency priority – to be agreed by Head of TA and Allocations.

From time to time a situation may arise that is not adequately reflected in this Allocations Scheme but the needs or circumstances are exceptional and significant. Where a case is considered exceptional but the applicant does not meet any of the Banding criteria or it is felt that a higher Banding than the one awarded is more appropriate then the Strategic Director for Housing reserves the right to override this scheme and allow an applicant to have a higher priority than they would be entitled to under the Scheme. These cases will be few in number and will be closely monitored and regularly reported on to ensure that the duty to achieve Reasonable Preference overall is not compromised. Directors Discretion can also be used to block an allocation or to make a direct allocation of a property in circumstances not predicted by this scheme but where the Council is satisfied someone has unfairly taken advantage of the scheme to the detriment of those in housing need. Again, these cases will be monitored and are will be few in number.

Response from Housing Management:

Would be useful to know where and to whom these cases will be reported and also how frequently.

Homeless priority changes

In order for the Council to maximise and make the best use of social housing stock as well as local private sector housing all Accepted Homeless households who are owed a full part 7 main duty with the following priority reason will be placed into Band C. The council will retain the main duty owed until such time as suitable accommodation can be sought to warrant the discharge of this duty.

The following bands will now be placed into Band C and will be helped via the Temporary Accommodation Allocations Team.

- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by Brighton & Hove City Council placed in B&B or short term temporary accommodation where the only prospect of meeting the household's needs is in permanent accommodation (e.g. the applicant has obtained employment and is experiencing severe financial hardship or the household has severe medical or disability reasons).
- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC making their own temporary arrangements or suffering family split due to a genuine lack of accommodation.

These band reasons will now be aligned with the following that is currently Band C under the allocations scheme:

- Accepted Homeless households occupying temporary accommodation on an assured short hold or non-secure tenancy until such time as the landlord requires the property back or the household's needs are no longer met unless offered permanent accommodation.

At the end of all private sector leases further leased accommodation will be considered. If at this time no accommodation can be sought or if for financial reasons or accessibility reasons the leased accommodation is no longer suitable (as decided by the temporary Accommodation Allocations Manager) the case will be recommended to the Homemove Team to be placed into Band A for social housing. At this time the following band reason will be given:

- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC, placed in temporary accommodation where the landlord requires the property back or the property is unsuitable to meet the applicant's needs or a member of the household's needs, and where the household have been assessed as ready to manage independent accommodation.

Response from a Supported Provider

If a client approaches Route 1 with a status of homelessness or vulnerability do the Council discharge their duty of care?

Are Route 1 considered temporary accommodation?

Response from an RSL

Whilst the effect of such changes may not have a direct impact on HydeMartlet, we were surprised by this area as it looked like it may lead to a large increase in temporary accommodation/ B&B costs.

Closing of Homemove applications

Once a household has been moved via the Homemove Scheme it will be deemed that housing need has been met and therefore all housing applications for the entire household will be closed and sent to the landlord for the information to form the start of the tenancy file.

Change in wording for adapted property releases in Band A

Previous

- Releasing an adapted property or to make best use of adapted stock – at the council's discretion, where the tenant does not require adaptations or where the existing property cannot be adapted to meet the applicant's needs

Change to

- Releasing an adapted property or to make best use of adapted stock – at the council’s discretion, where the tenant does not require the mobility 1 or 2 assessed adaptations or where the existing assessed property cannot be adapted to meet the applicant’s mobility 1 assessed needs.

Medical priority wording changes

Band A

Overriding (severe and immediate) medical priority awarded by the Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a severe and immediate adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant emergency priority.

Band B

High (major) medical priority awarded by the Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant extra priority.

Band C

Low (minor) medical priority awarded by the Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a minor adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the current household as to warrant reasonable priority.

Response from a Supported provider

Please can we have a copy of the original wording to compare this version against?

Response from Green Party

Medical priority wording changes

We feel that there should also be changes to the wording in the priority bands to include people suffering from domestic violence who should be in Band A as well as people suffering from bullying and harassment which we feel should be classed as Band A or Band B depending on the severity of the case

Transfer (not tenants) Incentive Scheme

The TIS scheme has proved very popular and successful, currently there 120 tenants on the waiting list to downsize to smaller flats from larger family homes they no-longer need (usually when adult children have left home).

However there is evidence to suggest Brighton & Hove currently offers very high rates of incentive payments compared to other local Authorities. This combined with the need to continue to ensure we make best use of the

existing social housing stock and meet the needs of the city has prompted a value for money review of the Scheme without affecting its success.

Recommendations:

- Reduce the amount of incentive payment so around 20- 30 additional tenants can be helped to move, releasing large family homes, within the same budget.

	Current payment	Proposed new payment
Downsizing by one bedroom	2,000	1,000
Downsizing by two bedrooms	2,500	1,500
Downsizing by three bedrooms	3,000	2,000
Downsizing by four bedrooms	3,500	2,500
moving from a wheelchair-adapted property, even if the same size	2,000	1,000

- Amend the scheme to also include

tenants moving from not just mobility 1 standard properties, but also adapted properties that have been assessed as meeting a mobility 2 standard, that they no-longer need and are moving to non-adapted, non-mobility assessed properties. This is because there are very few fully wheelchair adapted properties in our council stock, but many that have been partially adapted (e.g. with level access showers, ramps). These properties are in great demand and there are currently 162 disabled residents waiting for this type of property.

- The scheme currently pays an incentive payment if tenants move to the private sector, releasing a family home. However there is currently a 3 month waiting period. This is acting as a disincentive for tenants to move, and so it is recommended that the waiting period be removed.

Response from Housing Management:

I didn't understand what was meant by a waiting period? Is this the same as a cooling off period so that households aren't rushing into perhaps better quality and more appropriate but less secure private rented accommodation. If so then I think the waiting period should remain or check and balance be put in place to ensure we know a person in this position fully understands what they are agreeing to and what may happen in the future.

General Feedback:

several comment from the Survivors Network Brighton-

I received a copy of the proposed changes to the allocations policy at the Domestic Violence Forum and would like to feed in some comments.

Survivors' Network works with women who have experienced sexual violence and abuse. We work with approximately 1000 women a year and provide a range of confidential services designed to provide practical information and emotional support. The majority of the women that we work with are survivors of childhood sexual abuse and as a result have long entrenched coping strategies resulting from PTSD. The other significant category of clients we work with are adult women who have experienced rape or sexual assault. More details on our services can be found on our website.

I have been with Survivors' Network now for four years and in my time with the organisation I have been made aware of a growing unmet need in the city with regard to changes in housing and a lack of flexibility for survivors with regard their housing priorities. I feel that the revisiting of the allocations policy gives us an opportunity to express these clients' wishes.

Firstly it should be noted that the majority of women will not face immediate threat of homelessness as a result of their sexual violence experience – in this way women who have experienced sexual violence are at a lower risk level than those who have experienced domestic violence or abuse. I do believe though that a woman's experience of sexual violence does mean that she has significant housing needs that are not currently taken into account.

Survivors of childhood sexual abuse have commented to us that their housing has become untenable due to their experiences of childhood sexual abuse. This can be to do with location – for example a survivor who lived across the road from her the house that her abuse happened in, or proximity of their perpetrator. These concerns have not resulted in a high priority for relocation and I can see no indication in the proposed changes to the allocations policy that these very real safety concerns or concerns for ongoing well-being will be addressed by the new allocations policy.

There have also been concerns about style of housing – for example one woman was allocated a property which caused flashbacks and nightmares due to the layout of the upstairs bathroom and bedrooms. The complexities involved in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of childhood abuse and the often related issues of safety and self harming or compulsive disorders to maintain safety are often listed as low (minor) medical priorities in Band C which due to limited housing stock means that clients are often unable to move or are unallocated properties. There is a very real concern for me that because clients are unable to explain fully the impact that their housing has on the post trauma symptoms that they are experiencing that they are mistaken

for mild/moderate mental health needs and provided with lower medical priority.

Another area that I don't feel is covered by the proposed changes to housing allocations' policy is the large number of women who are raped or sexually assaulted in their own home. I feel that these women should be named as a priority area for re-homing and allocation of a council property. The majority of our service users are raped by someone known to them and a significant proportion of those are raped in their own home. For those who report to the police – forensic examination of the scene of crime often results in the clients possessions being removed from her home – in some cases even her mattress or sofa. To feel completely safe in your own home after an assault of this nature is extremely difficult and for some may never be possible. We firmly believe that women who need to change their housing as a direct result of their experience of sexual violence should be treated as a priority by the city.

If you would like clarification on any of the above points or further discussion please do not hesitate to contact me either by email or on the telephone number listed below.

Green Party reports to proposed changes to the Allocations policy

We welcome many aspects about these changes but remain very concerned about other aspects of it, in particular the high proportion of homes that are reserved for working families or those making a positive contribution. Whilst we understand the reasons for this in terms of aiming to create more mixed communities, we must not forget the enormous housing shortage in this city. We also need to bear in mind the fact that the current economic climate is putting many hard working families out of work, so that they will be failing to meet the allocations criteria not only through no fault of their own, but as a direct result of government policy. This policy is radically different from any other allocations policies in the country and we have still not seen the Equalities Impact Assessment of this. We feel this policy is in serious danger of being discriminative to those most in need. Until housing need is properly met in the city we think there should be a much lower proportion of homes that are reserved for working households.

We also have concerns that these proposals will lead to a loss of overall housing stock as it falls into the hands of those who are more likely to be able to afford to buy it outright. We understand that take-up of Right to Buy is low at the moment but if the recession finishes or people's income increases this could change. And whilst we understand the proposal is to cap joint family income at £40K, individuals or families on this salary may still have a deposit large enough to make purchase possible

