

ALLOCATIONS POLICY CONSULTATION- RESPONSE FROM Housing Adaptations Service & Children's Disability Services

Thank you for inviting us to respond to the consultation. A group representing Housing Adaptations Service & Children's Disability Services met to review the proposed changes. We would like to make specific comments on the following sections of the policy as they apply to disabled people and families with disabled children and mobility standard properties:-

Working Households
Positive Contribution

We would also like to comment on the policy re allocation of Sheltered properties- although this is not specifically covered in the document.

Working Households and positive contribution

It is acknowledged in the policy that disabled people are more likely to face difficulties in finding and maintaining paid or unpaid work- and this is reflected in a number of national indicators.

However a policy that gives priority to disabled people who are in paid employment or undertaking voluntary work discriminates against those people who are most disabled and least able to undertake any of these activities, including people with very profound physical and learning disabilities and family/household members who are providing care. These are often the households who have the highest priority need to move e.g unable to access essential facilities such as a toilet or bathroom, unable to get out of the property to access the community and where there is no potential to adapt the property. The exclusion of people who are full-time carers of a disabled household member under the positive contribution policy e.g. a [single parent with one or more disabled children](#) also potentially discriminates against those in greatest need.

From a housing perspective, the application of the policy to mobility standard properties mitigates against the Council making best use of accessible and adaptable housing stock.

There is a critical shortage of family size accessible and adaptable homes in the City particularly of Mobility 1 and 2 properties, with very few new build properties of this type and size being delivered. Recent feedback from Homemove to the Major Adaptations Panel reported that there had been no 3 bed Mobility 1 properties available in the past year, with 43 people on the register requiring this type of property (MAP minutes 14th December 2011). This means that people (and their households) who are very disabled are likely to have a considerable wait for a suitable property and under this policy could be waiting even longer.

This has major implications for both Adaptations and Social Care budgets as there remain statutory duties to meet needs and reduce risk to disabled people and their carers.

One consequence is that difficult decisions have to be made in Major Adaptations Panel as to whether to adapt properties that may not meet the current tenant's long-term needs and cannot be adapted to provide a mobility standard property for future tenants.

Appropriate housing for families with disabled children often reduces the burden on the council's social care budgets as there is less family breakdown and less respite required. It is also the case that the privately rented market is rarely an option for disabled people/families as it is rare to find a landlord that will guarantee a long enough tenancy for an expensive adaptation to be worth the investment.

Sheltered housing

We would also like to highlight our concerns about the current policy of giving priority to existing sheltered tenants within the same block or for a move to another block. Again this seems to discriminate against those who may be in highest priority need, particularly if the property meets a mobility standard. It also mitigates against being able to offer under-occupiers who wish to move into sheltered accommodation a range of options.