

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY**TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION****PLACEMENT POLICY 2015****1. Overview**

1.1 This Policy will provide a framework for the fair allocation of suitable temporary accommodation within and outside of the London Borough of Bromley. This policy applies to the allocation of temporary accommodation secured under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

1.2 There is an insufficient supply of affordable, local, self-contained temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation may therefore be;

- In borough or out of borough.
- Self-contained or with shared facilities.
- Managed or un-managed.
- Short term or long term.

1.3 Taking into account all known and relevant facts officers will endeavour to place all households within or as close as possible to the London Borough of Bromley. This policy outlines which households will have priority for the differing units of accommodation that become available.

1.4 All placements will be considered in accordance with the suitability checklist. This is completed by officers to ensure that any property meets the required safety standards and that all known, relevant factors are taken into consideration when making a placement.

1.5 This policy does not prevent a household from considering other housing options, including asking the Council for advice, support and assistance in relocating to more settled accommodation or making their own accommodation arrangements.

2. Prioritisation

2.1 If the local authority has a duty to secure accommodation, an assessment will be carried out to determine the requirements of the applicant and their household. The assessment will determine whether the applicant has:

- Priority to be located in the London Borough of Bromley
- Priority to be located close to the London Borough of Bromley
- No priority to be located either within or close to the London Borough of Bromley.

2.2 The award of an 'In-borough' or 'Close to Borough' location priority does not guarantee the provision of temporary accommodation within those areas, rather priority for such accommodation should it be available and suitable for the needs of the household.

2.3 Where the household is in receipt of welfare benefits, this may place additional constraints on the availability of affordable accommodation, including constraints on its type and location.

2.4 The Council will have due regard to the principal needs of any children in the household, and the need to safeguard and promote the children's welfare. In particular, regard will be had to any disruption to schools, medical care, social work, other key services and other support.

2.5 The Council will have due regard to matters concerning public safeguarding and protection and will work with all relevant organisations to ensure the suitability of accommodation.

3. Priority for accommodation within the borough.

3.1 Priority for available in-borough accommodation will be given to certain households who the Council has assessed as having a particular need to be housed within the London Borough of Bromley. Households who satisfy one or more of the following criteria will be considered as having a priority for accommodation within the London Borough of Bromley:

- Those who are receiving treatment for a physical or mental health condition from a specialist hospital unit which cannot be transferred to another NHS service or where they are at a critical point in their treatment.
- Children subject to a Child Protection Plan in the London Borough of Bromley which cannot be transferred to another local authority without causing serious detriment to a child's welfare.
- Children subject to a Statement of Special Educational Needs in the London Borough of Bromley which cannot be transferred to another local authority without causing serious detriment to the child's welfare.
- In accordance with the criteria set out within the Allocation Scheme, those who have a longstanding arrangement to provide essential care to another resident of the London Borough of Bromley who is not part of the household.
- Other circumstances which demonstrate an exceptional need which cannot be met outside of the London Borough of Bromley.

3.2 An 'In-borough' priority does not guarantee an in-borough placement, but should suitable and affordable accommodation be available within that area, it does give that household priority over others without this assessed priority.

4. Priority for accommodation close to the borough.

4.1 'Close to Borough' priority is defined as priority for accommodation located within a specific travelling distance of the London Borough of Bromley by public transport.

4.2 Applicants or their household members to be housed with them who satisfy one or more of the following criteria will qualify for 'Close to Borough' priority:

- Those who are continuously employed within the London Borough of Bromley for 16 hours or more per week in a role which cannot be transferred to another area. Wherever practicable the Local Authority will seek to place such households within 90 minutes travelling distance by public transport from their place of employment which is in accordance with the DWP guidelines on reasonable travelling times for employment
- Women who are on maternity leave from employment and meet the above criteria will also be prioritised for placements close to the London Borough of Bromley. Wherever practicable the Local Authority will seek to place such households within 90 minutes travelling distance by public transport from their place of employment.
- Children who are enrolled in GCSE, AS, or A level courses in the London Borough of Bromley, with public exams to be taken within the current or next

academic year. Wherever practicable the Local Authority will seek to place such households within 75 minutes journey time to and from school using public transport, this is in accordance with timescales recommended by the Department for Education for children of secondary school age.

- Other exceptional circumstances, where applicants demonstrate an exceptional need to be housed close to the London Borough of Bromley.

4.3 Such priority does not guarantee a placement within the suggested travelling distance of the London Borough of Bromley by public transport, but should suitable and affordable accommodation be available within that area, it does give the household priority over others without that assessed priority.

5. No priority for accommodation within or close to the borough.

5.1 Applicants who meet none of the 'In-borough' or 'Close to Borough' criteria may automatically be offered properties further afield than 90 minutes travelling distance of the London Borough of Bromley by public transport, when no suitable property is available within these areas.

6. Priority for managed temporary accommodation.

6.1 Priority for accommodation with either on site or remote management will be given to those assessed as;

- Requiring or would benefit from support; the type of which is provided at the accommodation.

6.2 Such priority does not guarantee placement into managed accommodation but should suitable managed accommodation be available within that area, it does give the household priority over others without that assessed priority.

6.3 Where additional support needs are identified officers may decide to refer an applicant and their household for assistance from the Council's Housing Support team or other agency.

7. Priority for long term temporary accommodation.

7.1 Long term temporary accommodation is accommodation provided or managed by the Council, a Registered Provider or private company on behalf of the Council.

7.2 Priority will be given to households who;

- Have been accepted as requiring assistance in accordance with s.193 of the Housing Act 1996.
- Have other exceptional circumstances that the Council considers appropriate to be offered long term temporary accommodation.

7.3 Short term temporary accommodation is accommodation managed by a private company and paid for on a nightly basis. This type of accommodation will normally be given to households who have been accepted as requiring assistance in accordance with s.188 of the Housing Act 1996.

8. Priority for self-contained temporary accommodation.

8.1 Self-contained accommodation is accommodation where the applicant and their household do not have to share facilities with another household.

8.2 The Council is required to ensure that shared 'bed and breakfast' style accommodation is only used for families with children and young vulnerable people where there is no alternative accommodation. In the event that shared accommodation is utilised for families with children or households that include a pregnant woman it should be for a maximum of 6 weeks.

8.3 Accommodation that is owned by the local authority is not defined as shared accommodation for the above purposes even when facilities within the premises are shared.

9.4 Priority for self-contained accommodation will be given to households where;

- There are children within the household.
- There is an identified medical need which the Council has assessed would be best managed within this type of accommodation.
- There are issues relating to safeguarding or public protection.

- A household has belongings that must be protected and where no suitable arrangements to ensure this have been identified.
- There is an identified exceptional need which the Council considers would be best met by this type of accommodation.

9.5 A priority for self-contained accommodation does not guarantee such a placement, but should suitable self-contained accommodation be available it does give that household priority over others without this assessed priority.

10. Multiple priorities.

10.1 Where there are multiple priorities identified i.e. where there are conflicting schooling, medical and employment needs it will be determined by the Council as to which priority it chooses to give weight to in the event that not all needs can be met.

11. Move on from temporary accommodation.

11.1 Where the Council determines that a placement does not meet the legally defined standards of suitability as a result of incorrect information from the temporary accommodation provider at the time of placement, through a change of circumstances or through the production of new information it will seek to make an urgent offer of alternative accommodation as soon as one that is suitable and affordable becomes available.

11.2 Where the Council determines that a placement does meet the legally defined standards of suitability but considers that an alternative offer of accommodation would better meet the needs of the applicant and their household it will seek to make an offer of alternative accommodation. Such an offer will only be made in the event that a property which is suitable and affordable becomes available and which is not required for a household who have been assessed to have a more urgent need for the placement.

12. Monitoring.

12.1 The Council continuously monitors the numbers in temporary accommodation in order to ensure that budgetary pressures can be monitored and reported upon, that data regarding housing need can be used to procure appropriate temporary accommodation and so that adjustments can be made to the annual lettings plan in order to ensure that appropriate provision is made in respect of long term housing options.

Appendix 1:

Suitability checklist for offers of temporary accommodation – Completed by both the procuring and allocating officers prior to a placement.

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| Address of property being offered | |
| Applicant Name | |
| Landlord name | |
| Bedroom Size | |
| Tenure of property offered | |

The provisions of the Housing act 1985 relating to slum clearance and overcrowding

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| Is property in such poor condition that demolition or clearance is required? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| Is the property, or will the property become, statutorily overcrowded? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |

The provisions of parts 1-4 of the Housing Act 2004 relating to housing conditions, houses in multiple occupation and licensing of accommodation

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| Are there known category 1 hazards? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| Is the property a HMO? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| Is it licensed? (M&A) | Choose an item. |

The affordability of the accommodation

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| What is total cost of accommodation including charges? (M&A) | |
| Does the above figure include utilities? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| What is income of household? Benefits (Alloc) | |
| What is the income of household? Employment (Alloc) | |
| Is there a substantial shortfall between contractual rent and housing benefit? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |

The public sector equality duty at Equality Act 2010 s149

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|---|---|
| Please select which “protected characteristics” are present in the household. | Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion and belief <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> |
| How has this been considered? | |

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| Are there any issues mentioned in guidance given in the Codes of Guidance that would suggest property unsuitable? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
|---|-----------------|

The relevant content (if any) of their own Homelessness strategies:
Our Homelessness Strategy details that we will provide suitable Temporary Accommodation and minimise use of Nightly Paid Accommodation. This offer is in line with that approach.

Type of accommodation, space & arrangement

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| Are there children, disabled people or elderly in household? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Does property need adaptations to be made suitable for these people? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Can adaptations be made? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| Are doors, windows, fire doors operative? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| Are bathroom and toilet accessible for household? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |

Health & Safety, condition & standards

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|---|-----------------|
| Are there any reported problems with major disrepair? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| Is there a valid Energy Performance Certificate? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| Is there a valid Gas Safety Certificate? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| Is there a valid Electrical Safety Certificate (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| Is the property fitted with suitable smoke detectors? (M&A) | Choose an item. |

Location

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|---|-----------------|
| Is the property in district? (M&A) | Choose an item. |
| If out of district, was this the closest property available? (Alloc) If no, further info: | Choose an item. |
| Are there any problems with journeys to schools that causes an unacceptable disruption? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Are there any problems with journeys to employment that cause an unacceptable disruption? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Are there any problems with distance from medical facilities and support that causes an unacceptable disruption? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Are there any problems with proximity and accessibility of local services, amenities and transport that causes an unacceptable disruption?? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Are there any problems with known risk of violence/harrasment at accommodation? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Please detail consideration of any key issue:(Alloc) | |

Medical and physical needs

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| Are there any household members with specific needs that require consideration? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Does this affect the property type needed? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Please detail consideration of any key issues (Alloc) | |

Other social considerations

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| Are there any other considerations that may make this particular property unsuitable for this particular household? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
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Any risk of violence or racial harassment

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| Is there any specific indication that any household member may be at risk of violence or racial harassment at this property? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
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Need for security and secret location for those fleeing violence

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| Is this applicant or a member of their household fleeing violence? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Is this address in an area where they may be at risk? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Is the property secure? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |

Final checks

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| Is this S188 or S193? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Does this applicant have any other arrangements they can make? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |
| Is property offered suitable for duration of placement? (Alloc) | Choose an item. |

Any other circumstances that may be relevant in particular case.

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| Offer suitable? Choose an item | Officer Choose an item. | Date Time: |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|