

## Changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme

Previous Scheme	Proposed Scheme	Consultation Response
<p><b>The Bands</b> 4 x Bands: A, B, C and D. Those who are not eligible or not included do not have their details recorded.</p>	<p>4 x Bands: Emergency, Gold, Silver, Bronze</p> <p>Those who are not eligible or not included will have their details recorded for monitoring purposes.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Refining of criteria aims to reduce the numbers in higher bands to bring more in line with overall number of lettings to better manage expectations/waiting times.</p>	<p><b>Majority agree with proposal but disliked proposed Band names : Amend Band names / Implement Change</b></p> <p>5 x Bands: Emergency, 1, 2, 3, 4 Those who are not eligible or not included will have their details recorded for monitoring purposes.</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Band to be added in order for the scheme to remain lawful: to included applicants who would previously have been "suspended" as most recent case law has meant that suspensions eg for rent arrears are no longer lawful.</p>
<p><b>How Priority is Determined?</b> A number of different housing needs can result in a client being banded on the Housing Register. This means that even those with a low priority and no realistic chance of achieving a move can be included onto the Housing Register. Cumulative preference is also given so that those with low multiple housing needs can achieve a higher priority on the Housing Register.</p>	<p>Streamline the eligibility criteria focusing on the reasonable and local preference categories.</p> <p>Signpost households with resolvable housing issues to the appropriate services rather than include on the Housing Register.</p> <p>Remove cumulative preference and instead award the highest single level of priority that is achieved – holistic and easier to understand assessment of need.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Overall this will make the system more transparent with higher bands better reflecting the level of lettings.</p> <p>Direct link created to pursuing all alternative housing options and resolving housing need with banding only being awarded if unable to resolve.</p>	<p><b>Majority agree with proposal: Implement change.</b></p>

<p><b>The Reasonable Preference Categories</b>  <b>Homelessness:</b> All classes of eligible homeless applicants must be given a level of reasonable preference. Those applicants who are homeless but to whom a full rehousing duty is not accepted are placed into Band C. Those that are accepted as having a full homeless duty are placed into Band B.</p>	<p>Homeless applicants to whom a full duty has not been accepted will be placed into the Bronze Band (now named Band 3). Those that are homeless and assessed as being in priority need will be placed into the Silver Band (now named as Band 2),</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b>  Effectively dropping a level of banding for each category, with increased emphasis on homeless prevention and pursuing alternative housing options.</p>	<p><b>Majority agree with proposal: Implement change.</b></p> <p>In addition we have included the option to add urgent prevention of homelessness applicants into Band 1.</p>
<p><b>Insanitary Housing Conditions:</b> Applicants can be placed into Bands A/B/C depending upon the severity of the conditions within their home. An assessment is carried out in conjunction with Residential Services.</p>	<p>All cases will be assisted to work with their landlords to ensure that conditions within the home are reasonable.  Inclusion onto the Housing Register will only happen where a Category 1 hazard is identified and cannot be resolved within a specified period of time.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b>  Significant reduction in applications on these grounds / reduced number of households on the housing register.  Improvements in the condition of social and private rented accommodation.</p>	<p><b>Majority agree with proposal: Implement change.</b></p>
<p><b>Bedroom requirements / assessing overcrowding:</b> Offers a generous assessment which awards a higher number of bedrooms than either Housing Benefit or the bedroom standard assessment. Children of opposite gender qualify for their own bedroom. Children of the same gender are expected to share a bedroom (as long as there is less than a 10 year age gap). Anyone over the age of 18 (excluding couples) qualifies for their own bedroom.</p> <p>Currently those assessed as lacking 2 bedrooms are awarded Band B. Those lacking 1 bedroom are placed into Band C.</p>	<p>2 x options:  1) Bring in line with the current Housing Benefit assessment. Children of the same gender (who are younger than 10) would be expected to share a bedroom. Anyone aged 16+ (excluding couples) qualify for their own bedroom.  2) Bring in line with the recognised bedroom standards. These are broadly similar to the Housing Benefit assessment but stipulate that a household member would only be entitled to their own bedroom once they reach the age of 21.</p> <p>Severe overcrowding = Band 1, lacking one bed space = Band 3</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b>  This would significantly reduce the number of applicants in higher banding levels simply because of lacking bedrooms, better managing expectations, brining the focus on most severe overcrowding and also perusal of alternative options to resolve overcrowding including increased take up of the private rented sector. .</p> <p>This also starts to prepare for the forthcoming HB changes in 2013 whereby benefit will be reduced in</p>	<p>2 x want no change to current assessment  17 x adopt Housing Benefit assessment  9 x adopt Bedroom Standard assessment  5 x adopt a mixture of both proposed assessments  1 x unsure  1 x not answered</p> <p><b>Majority agreed with changing the criteria, but split recommendation on which criteria to adopt.</b>  Following careful consideration it has been decided <b>to implement the Bedroom Standard assessment on</b></p>

	social housing for under occupiers.	the following grounds: 1) This assessment framework is the same as that used by the CLG for reviewing the Strategic Housing Market Assessments. 2) A comparison exercise was carried out which showed that the HB assessment was more generous and could lead to under-occupation in the social sector, higher levels of recorded "overcrowding" and therefore a mismanagement of applicant expectation.
<b>Assessing medical priority:</b> There are a number of different priorities that can be awarded on medical grounds dependent upon the medical needs of the households. A medical advisor is contacted in order for a recommendation to be made in respect of priority.	<p>Only those with a medical need that is made significantly worse by their current accommodation and where that condition will be demonstrably improved by a move to alternative accommodation will be included on the Register in the Gold Band (now Band 1)</p> <p>Assessments will be carried out by housing staff in conjunction with Occupational Therapy, Adult Care and Support and Resettlement staff. Where specialist knowledge is required advice will be sought from a third party such as Now Medical.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Strengthening the link between actual housing situation and impact upon health and also consideration of alternative initiatives to relieve the situation.</p>	<b>Majority agree with proposal: Implement change.</b>
<b>People who need to move to a particular locality where failure to meet that need would cause hardship:</b> Clients are awarded Band C. Out of Borough applicants are usually then dropped to Band D. Only minimal information is requested to confirm the status of the person being supported and the person offering support.	<p>Stricter criteria demonstrating significant hardship which cannot be resolved without a move. Clients will be placed into the Silver Band (Now Band 2).</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Applicants included on the register would generally be those where situation is severe enough to otherwise be considered as homeless due to the level of hardship. Greater information will need to be provided to determine that such a move is required and will be beneficial in the long term.</p>	<b>Majority agree with proposal: Implement change.</b>
<b>The Local Preference Categories. People who are employed, volunteering or in</b>	A minimal number of properties will be advertised with preference given to those who are employed, volunteering or in training within the borough	<b>Majority agree with proposal: Implement change.</b>

<p><b>training within the borough:</b> No criteria currently detailed in the policy.</p>	<p><b>Rationale:</b> Start to dispel the myths that those in employment etc are overlooked in the Allocations Scheme.</p> <p>Assist in creating and sustaining mixed communities.</p> <p>In ensuring that properties offered via this preference are of a high quality encourage those that can to enter into employment etc. This also directly links into the proposed housing benefit changes for 2013 where HB will be reduced for those who have been long term unemployed and seeks to promote entry into training, employment etc.</p>	<p>However have revised to include those working / volunteering outside of the borough as well (as long as other local connection rules / eligibility criteria are met)</p> <p>Intend to gather additional data regarding this client group and review proposed LP quota after year 1.</p>
<p><b>Households identified as part of decant programmes</b> Not currently set out in the current policy.</p>	<p>Tenants of partner Housing Associations with 24 months until they are required to be decanted will be placed into the Silver Band (now Band 2). Those who have 12 months until they are decanted will be placed into the Gold Band (now Band 1). They will only be eligible to bid on accommodation that meets their assessed housing need. This may differ in size from the accommodation that they currently reside in. Any decant moves would come out of the Housing Associations own nominations quota. Non partner Housing Associations can request assistance with decants where a reciprocal agreement is entered into.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Reduce unnecessary under-occupation in HA stock.</p> <p>Avoid delays in processing new build developments / refurbishments.</p>	<p>32 x agree 0 x disagree 3 x not answered</p> <p><b>Majority agree with proposal: Implement change.</b></p>
<p><b>Local Connection</b> No criteria included in current policy</p>	<p>2 x Options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Re-introduce local connection. In order to qualify for inclusion onto the Housing Register clients must have been resident in the borough for 6 of the last 12 months. The exceptions to the local connection rule are: tenants of partner Housing Associations, returning members of the armed forces who have an identified housing need in accordance with the local or reasonable preference categories and anyone referred under a South East London Housing Partnership protocol.</li> <li>2) The above differs from local connection guidelines when assessing homelessness. The guidelines for which state that local connection (residency) is met where an applicant has resided in the borough for 6 of the last 12 months or 3 of the last 5 years</li> </ol> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Due to level of need against limited supply, ensure that the focus remains on borough residents.</p>	<p><b>Mixed Response: Implement 6 out of 12 months or 3 out of 5 years.</b></p> <p>This mirrors the criteria for those applying as homeless and will provide consistency of assessment across the service.</p>

<p><b>Out of Borough Applicants</b>  Out of borough applicants are assessed in the same way as in borough applicants. However, usually, they will be placed one band lower than the assessment.</p>	<p>Out of borough applicants will no longer normally be eligible for inclusion on the housing register. In exceptional cases they will be eligible for inclusion as long as they have an identified need to be in the borough and where their Local Authority or if they are a social housing tenant their Housing Association has agreed to enter into a reciprocal agreement (i.e. make a property of the same size and type available for a Bromley household).</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b>  Reduction in numbers on the Housing Register: Reduce the number of applications from out of borough applications which will in turn reduce general administrative tasks / reviews etc for example in Sept 2010 37% of applications received were from those applying from outside of the borough.</p> <p>Increased number of reciprocals will mean greater mobility for LBB residents. Also more vacancies available within LBB for local residents as fewer out of borough applicants will be able to secure accommodation via the Housing Register.</p>	<p><b>Majority agree with proposal: Implement change.</b></p>
<p><b>Limiting the number of properties offered</b>  Unlimited number of properties offered to applicants</p>	<p>Clients will be able to refuse up to two properties but will then be expected to accept the third. This will be combined with a more robust system of reviews, the frequency of which will be determined by the level of priority awarded. Failure to accept the third offer will result in either the cancellation or reduction in priority of the application or (primarily in the cases where a statutory duty is owed) a final direct offer being made.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b>  Reduction in “cherry picking” and better management of expectations.</p> <p>Those awarded priority will move within a more reasonable period of time.</p> <p>Greater staff involvement required in order to ensure that these changes are implemented</p>	<p><b>Majority agree with proposal: Implement change.</b></p>