



Housing Register and Allocations Policy

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Equalities Impact Assessment

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Freedom of Information Act Exemption

FOI Exempt?	NO
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Document Location

Once approved this policy will be available on the intranet - and internet unless there is a clearly evidenced reason for exemption (eg FOI)

Document Distribution

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Name	Organisation	Date of Issue	Version

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Alternative Document Formats

Format	Location
Braille/Audio/Large Print/Easy to read format	Available on request
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Project Implementation and Communication Plan

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IMPORTANT NOTE: 1 APRIL 2019

On 1 April 2019 2 new Councils for Dorset were formed under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The new 'Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council' (BCP) replaces the previously separate Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Councils and the new 'Dorset Council' replaces East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Councils.

Government have agreed a period of 2 years to implement new Housing Allocation Policies for the 2 new Councils. This means there is no change at this time to how applicants apply for social housing or the criteria that need to be met to decide a local connection. Applications for social housing will therefore be considered under the separate Council geographical boundaries that were present before 1 April 2019.

Whilst Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset, Poole, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Councils no longer exist, references to these remain in this document and refer to the geographical area they covered. I.e. Bournemouth Borough Council refers to the Bournemouth area.

Homeless Applicants

If a household is awarded a duty under Homelessness Legislation to one of the new Councils, then they can be considered for the housing register in any of the areas covered by the new Council. Those households who are awarded a homeless duty, but do not have a local connection under the Allocation Policies, will be prioritised below those who do have this connection.

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Why do we have this policy?

Reason

The Council is required to allocate Social Housing according to a published Allocations Scheme which has been drawn up according to the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, and as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Localism Act 2011.

We have taken into account, as permitted by the law, prevailing local conditions - they are, the acute shortage of suitable available properties and the increasing demand for those properties, irrespective of the size or type of household.

Throughout this Policy the Council has had regard to fairness, equality and diversity and the need to demonstrate that due consideration has been given to all sectors of the community, and to those in greatest need, consistent with prevailing local conditions and relevant legislation.

Purpose

This policy determines who is able to join the Council's Housing Register and who is allocated social housing via the register. The policy serves as the formal Allocations Scheme required by the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, and as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Localism Act 2011.

Who must comply with the policy?

- All Housing staff
- Housing Providers who have nomination agreements with the Council
- Housing Register Applicants

Who else should be aware of this policy?

- Housing Providers such as Housing Landlord Services and Registered Providers
- Advice agencies such as CAB and Shelter
- Customer Services Team

What is the policy?

The Allocations Scheme has been designed to ensure that those in most housing need are given priority for housing by strictly adhering to the banding system. Only in respect of designated properties and local lettings schemes will the normal system of making offers not apply.

The Council's policy is to ensure that only those people who are eligible to be allocated an offer of social housing will be added to the Council's housing register and that any subsequent allocation is made according to priority need of the applicant. The Council is also committed to actively reviewing and the managing its register in order to ensure that those most in need of social housing receive it. This policy sets out the measures that the Council will apply in order to achieve this.

Equal Opportunities

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in April 2012 and can be found at appendix a. The findings have been considered and an action plan developed in conjunction with our partners.

Detailed monitoring of allocations outcomes will be undertaken and reported. Regular equality impact assessments of the service will be carried out and one will be completed before a local lettings scheme is implemented. Other measures will be taken to ensure that vulnerable or disadvantaged groups are aware of the opportunity for getting a housing association home and are able to effectively engage with the Allocations Service.

Sharing Information

The Council has agreed an information sharing protocol with Registered Provider's working across Bournemouth. The protocol establishes procedural arrangements for the exchange of information between the Council and Registered Providers for the purpose of allocations and nominations by the Council to the associations in respect of properties formerly owned by the Council. The protocol takes necessary account of the data protection legislation, health and safety legislation, human rights legislation, the law relating to defamation and the duty as to confidentiality of information. In particular, close regard is paid to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Statement on Choice

Home Choice is our Choice Based Lettings service providing an accessible method of letting social housing across the borough. More information about Home Choice can be found at <http://www.dorsethomechoice.org/dorset-homechoice/home.aspx>

Registering

An application to join the Housing Register must be made using the required form. A verbal request to be housed will be acknowledged but registration will only follow after receipt of a completed application. If you need help with this please contact the Customer Contact Centre or visit www.bournemouth.gov.uk

Once registered the applicant will receive a unique reference number (“Bournemouth HomeChoice number”) which must be used in all contact with the Council and **must** be used when bidding for properties.

The applicant will also be advised of which Band their application has been placed in and the “relevant date” of registration. “Relevant Date” is important as applicants will normally be housed in strict date order within whichever Band the application is placed.

Applicants must keep the Council fully informed of any changes in circumstances. Failure to do this may either lead to the applicant being placed in the wrong Priority Band, a bid or subsequent offer being cancelled because application details were incorrect, or the application being suspended from the list.

It is the responsibility of every applicant to ensure that their application details are correct at the time of registration and are subsequently updated when necessary.

It is an offence for an applicant to knowingly or recklessly give false information, or withhold information which the Authority has reasonably required to be given in connection with its functions under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

A person guilty of a summary offence will be liable to a fine not exceeding £5000. They will also be removed from the Housing Register. The Authority is also entitled to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by an applicant or someone acting at an applicant’s instigation.

Some applicants will not be eligible to join the Housing Register Register. More information on this is given under Eligibility.

Members of staff, their close family and elected members who require housing with the Council may apply for housing in the same way as other applicants. Their status should be disclosed on the application form at the time of applying.

If an applicant who is a member of staff, elected member or a member of their direct family, makes a successful bid for a property the Head of Strategic Housing will be informed and must approve the letting prior to the formal offer being made.

Applicants who deliberately worsen their situation to gain advantage will be assessed on the basis of their situation *immediately prior to* this taking place and may be excluded from the Register as above.

Eligibility and Qualification

In considering applications as a housing authority we must ascertain:

- if an applicant is eligible for an allocation of accommodation, and
- if he or she qualifies for an allocation of accommodation

Eligible Persons

People from abroad who are subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. There will be some people (as defined by the Secretary of State) who are subject to immigration control but, nevertheless, are entitled to register for housing. These are

- People who are refugees
- People subject to Immigration Control but who have been granted humanitarian protection or discretionary leave to remain
- People subject to Immigration Control and granted ILR (indefinite leave to remain) as long as they are habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (CTA). There may be other conditions as prescribed by the Secretary of State.
- People subject to Immigration Control and a citizen of a Country that has ratified ECSMA (EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON SOCIAL AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE) and ESC (Europe Social Charter) *as long as* they are in the UK legally or are habitually resident in the CTA.

NOTE: An applicant who is already in a Secure or Introductory Tenancy, or an Assured Tenancy allocated by the Local Housing Authority, is not subject to these eligibility requirements.

Unacceptable Behaviour

People who engage in or have been found responsible for, unacceptable behaviour. This is defined as behaviour which, had they been a secure tenant of the council at the time they engaged in it, would have resulted in outright possession proceedings successfully being taken. In this case further consideration will be given after a year, during which acceptable behaviour has been demonstrated, has elapsed. Each case will be treated on its merits and an applicant may appeal if not satisfied with the decision.

Qualifying Persons

Local Connection

In order to be accepted onto the register you must meet at least one of the following criteria unless there are Statutory exceptions;

- a) Lived in the borough for at least 3 years at the point of application
- b) Have close relatives living in the borough (parents, grandparents adult children) and have done so for at least the last 5 years at the point of application

c) Be employed, or have a firm offer of permanent employment in Bournemouth/ have worked in the Borough for at least one year and the work is more than 16 hours a week and a permanent contract at the point of application

HM Forces

Applicants who meet the following HM Forces criteria will not be subject to the local connection qualification criteria;

- a. members of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge;
- b. bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner; or
- c. serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result

Right to Move

Where an applicant who is a current social housing tenant needs to move to Bournemouth to take up employment, there will be no requirement for a local connection. Specifically, the applicant must have Reasonable Preference because of a need to move to Bournemouth to avoid hardship.

The applicant must demonstrate that they need, rather than wish, to move for work related reasons. In this regard the following factors will be taken into account;

- the distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home
- the availability and affordability of transport, taking into account level of earnings
- the nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home
- other personal factors, such as medical conditions and child care, which would be affected if the tenant could not move
- the length of the work contract
- whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve their employment circumstances or prospects, for example, by taking up a better job, a promotion, or an apprenticeship

The following forms of work are excluded;

Short-term - whether work is regular or intermittent - the period of employment and whether or not work was intended to be short-term or long-term at the outset. Employment contracts of less than 12 months will be considered to be short term.

Marginal - the number of hours worked - unless exceptional circumstances apply, employment of less than 16 hours a week will be considered to be marginal in nature.

Ancillary - whether the main place of work is in Bournemouth or not

Voluntary work - where no payment is received or the only payment is in respect of any expenses reasonably incurred.

In determining whether an application qualifies under Right to Move, we will require the applicant to provide one or more of the following;

- a contract of employment
- wage/salary slips covering a certain period of time, or bank statements
- tax and benefits information
- a formal offer letter
- satisfy the authority they have a genuine intention of taking up the offer of employment (if they have not yet started the employment) as set out in Regulation 5 (1b).

It may also be necessary for us to contact the applicant's employer to confirm qualification.

Not everyone who applies for accommodation will be eligible. Those people may be excluded from the Housing Register and not be entitled to Housing from the Council. These include:

Housing Need

Applicants registering for housing who are assessed as having no housing need will not be accepted onto the housing register. Housing Need is defined as meeting one or more of the Reasonable Preference groups.

Ability to Meet Own Needs

Social Housing is for people who are considered to have insufficient resources to meet their housing need. The following applicants will therefore not be accepted;

Applicants who are owner-occupiers, whose home is not suitable for their needs and/or who have sufficient equity within the property to obtain suitable alternative accommodation. We will consider each application on an individual basis.

The resources available to each household will be assessed to determine whether they are sufficient to meet their housing need.

Applicants with a household income more than six times higher than the relevant Local Housing Allowance level prevailing at the time will normally be considered to be able to meet their housing need, through either renting privately or owner occupation.

The following types of income are fully disregarded:

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance

Capital, Savings and Equity

The capital, savings and equity available to an applicant's household will be assessed. If it is determined that, given:

- The applicant's capital, savings and equity
- The size and composition of the applicant's household

the local housing market (for example prices to buy or rent privately) an applicant can resolve their own housing need within their local housing market they will be ineligible

Verification of Eligibility and Qualification

The following documentation will be required to verify an applicant's qualification prior to receiving an offer of accommodation:

- Proof of identity
- Proof of residency of children (Child benefit, court order)
- Proof of pregnancy (maternity notes, letter from GP)
- Proof of income/benefits (bank statement, wage slips, DWP documentation)
- Proof of savings/stocks and shares (bank statement, relevant paperwork)
- If owner/occupier of property, most recent mortgage statement
- Confirmation of immigration status and workers registration certificate (if relevant) for persons from abroad
- Medical evidence (CSDPA number, blue badge, occupational therapist report)
- Notice of eviction (notice to quit from the housing provider) if not previously provided
- Any updated information from the original application
- Local connection evidence

Relevant Date of Registration

When an applicant joins the Housing Register, the date their completed application is received will normally be their Registration Date. However, if an applicant's circumstances change and as a result of this change, their band changes this may affect their Effective Date within their Band.

If, because of a change in a household's circumstances, the applicant moves from Silver to Gold band the applicant's new Effective date **will remain the date on which they originally made their application.**

Applicants moving from Bronze to Silver will not retain their original application date and the effective date applied will be the date they became eligible to move from Bronze to Silver.

Applicants being placed into the Emergency band will hold an effective date which will be the date they became eligible to move to this band.

Exclusions from the Register

An applicant will be removed from the Housing Register in the following circumstances:

- They were found never to have been or have ceased to have been an eligible person;
- They have failed to respond to an application review within the specified time limit

- An applicant who has not engaged with bidding for suitable accommodation through Dorset Home Choice for one year and therefore demonstrated that they are no longer a ‘homeseeker’

The applicant will be notified in writing if the Allocations Service is intending to remove them from the Housing Register and will be given the reasons for removal. If the applicant subsequently gives reasons why they should not be removed from the Register a formal review of their case will be undertaken.

High risk offenders will be excluded from the register without an appropriate assessment in the first instance, which will take MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) guidance into account, and will only be re-housed once a multi-agency risk assessment is carried out and there is suitable and safe accommodation available.

Application Renewals

In order to maintain the Housing Register as accurately as possible every applicant will be sent an invite to renew their application on annually on the anniversary of registration. Included in this will be a request to provide information on any changes in circumstances.

After a renewal request has been issued no reminders will be sent. If an application is not renewed within 28 days of the issue of the renewal letter the application may be cancelled without further notice.

If an application is cancelled any new application will have a new “Relevant Date” for the purposes of Choice Based Lettings and will not normally be backdated.

Applicants will have the right to seek a review of a decision not to include on, or to remove from, the Housing Register.

Reviews

Applicants have the right to ask for a review of any decision made under the terms of this Policy with which they do not agree.

Requests for a review must normally be made:

1. In writing (a request over the phone or made verbally will need to be confirmed in writing). Please ask if you need assistance.
2. Within 21 days of the date of the decision being appealed
3. To the Housing Resources Manager

Transfers

Applicants who already live in Council or Registered Provider property in Bournemouth will normally be regarded as “Transfer” applicants i.e. they are transferring from one Social Housing property to another.

These applications are known as “Transfer” applications and are treated as any other applications with a few exceptions:

1. The Council will occasionally, in the best interests of managing the Housing Stock, and by careful use of Transfers, maximize the number of lettings from an initial casual vacancy by giving Transfers priority over other Housing Register applicants. This will be made clear in the advertisement for the property.
2. The Council will allocate resources in accordance with the Communities and Local Government (CLG) Code of Guidance on Allocations and try to achieve a balance between existing tenants and new applicants

Reasonable Preference

The Council must provide ‘**Reasonable Preference**’ to certain applicants in housing need.

What is ‘Reasonable Preference’?

Reasonable preference means providing certain applicants with an **advantage** or **head start** compared to other applicants who do not have reasonable preference according to the law.

Reasonable Preference must be given to:

- People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including disability
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or others.

The Council does not have to provide the same advantage to all categories of reasonable preference. The allocations policy is there to meet local needs and housing demand, as well as the requirements of the law.

How does the Council provide ‘Reasonable Preference’?

The scheme provides Reasonable Preference to the above applicants through the banding scheme as well as through the strategic management of allocations through the Allocations Plan.

Decisions on Reasonable Preference and Additional Preference

Banding of an applicant will be assessed to reflect the relative needs of his/her circumstances and taking into account the due consideration shown to all applicants on the register, and within the context of local Housing Provision. This will only be carried out after all the information which the applicant has been reasonably required to provide has been received.

Applicants will be notified in writing of any decision made about their banding status within seven days of the decision being made. This notification will include advice and information about the time limit of the priority status, if awarded.

If an applicant disagrees with this decision they can appeal for a review, in writing within 21 days of the date of the decision. See Section 23 for further information on how to request a review.

Reasonable and Additional Preference is reflected in the Banding structure. An applicant may not be registered in the correct Band until this information has been received and assessed.

Banding

Applications will be recorded in date order within each band. The successful bid will normally be the oldest application in date order from the highest priority Band.

The banding structure described below provides for an assessment structure which officers can work within. They are not prescriptive however, and should the circumstances of a case require that exceptions are made to these bands, senior officers will use their discretion to make such a decision.

Emergency Band

Applicants will be placed in the Emergency housing need band if their need for housing is assessed as so exceptional that they take priority over all other applicants or if there is an urgent need to allocate a property for financial or operational reasons.

Substantial evidence must exist and be provided by any relevant statutory or voluntary agencies before such priority is awarded.

The following are **examples** of the type of situations that may qualify:

- Urgent health/ wellbeing need
- Emergency disrepair
- To escape violence or threat of violence, serious harassment or a traumatic event
- Where there is immediate and serious risk to a household living in the Borough

The Police or another appropriate agency will usually provide supporting evidence that the risk exists. The person at risk may be the applicant, or another person who might be reasonably expected to reside with them.

Where we accept a household being referred under the Witness Protection Scheme;

Applicants will be given this priority for three months. If an Emergency housing need band applicant does not make bids for suitable homes available through Home Choice (or refuses a suitable offer of a property) they will have their status reviewed and may be placed in one of the other bands dependent on their need. In very exceptional circumstances an applicant will be allowed to remain in the Emergency housing need band for longer than three months.

The decision to extend or remove the Emergency housing need band status will be made by the local authority and will be based upon: -

- Whether a vacancy occurred during the three month period that met the declared needs of the applicant.
- The reasons why the applicant failed to apply for the property and whether the reasons were valid.

Emergency status may also be awarded where the tenant of a 'sheltered' or 'adapted' property for the disabled has died leaving another family member in the property and the landlord wishes that family member to be moved quickly to enable the property to be let to an applicant who requires it.

In all emergency cases there is an expectation on the applicant, or their representative, to provide the information required to reach a decision.

Gold Housing Need

Applicants will be placed in Gold band if they fall within the categories set out below:

Lack of bedrooms / Overcrowding

Applicants who lack 2 or more bedrooms or have been confirmed as overcrowded (defined as a category 1 hazard and/or Statutory overcrowded) by a Local Authority officer, UNLESS evidence exists that proves the overcrowding is deliberate. Where an applicant is sharing facilities please also see Silver band Lodger/Shared Accommodation.

Under-occupation

The applicant is a tenant of the council or a Registered Provider partner who resides within the Bournemouth area and under-occupies their existing property and is looking to move to a smaller, more suitable property. These applications will be awarded one year's time credit in order to facilitate the release of larger accommodation and make best use of housing stock

Note: Where a tenant lives in specialist two-bedroom property this may not apply. Applicants will only be able to benefit from this banding once when applying to the register unless there is a subsequent change in their circumstances.

Harassment

The applicant is a victim of severe and/or persistent harassment or violence (including racial harassment) at their current property - providing evidence exists to substantiate the claim (e.g. from Police/Housing Officer), and re- housing is the most appropriate course of action.

Medical/Welfare

The applicant is awarded a 'high' medical priority.

Note that where public monies have been committed or works begun to adapt the applicants property to meet the applicants housing needs the applicant may be moved to bronze band.

Disrepair

Based on the conditions identified, the local authority has deemed your home to have the presence of Category 1 hazards, Bands A - C (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) that CANNOT be resolved or reduced to a Category 2 hazard within 6 months.

HM Forces

Applicants who qualify for reasonable preference who are;

- members of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge;
- bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner; or
- serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result

HM Forces applicants who have notice to leave their current accommodation will not be considered to have a reasonable preference on the ground of homelessness until 28 days before the expiry of the notice.

Care Leavers Move on

Where a young person who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated and has had a duty of care accepted under the Children Act in Bournemouth and is ready for independent living, they should be awarded gold band to enable a planned move on to independent suitable accommodation providing a support plan is in place. This will be subject to quota arrangements.

Cumulative need

The applicant is awarded four or more silver band housing needs with the exception of those applicants that are homeless (regardless of any statutory duties) and those applicants occupying temporary accommodation provided by the council in discharging its homelessness duties. (See Silver Band for homeless applicants). Cumulative need is aimed at those households who are at a permanent disadvantage rather than temporary disadvantage.

Decants

Social Housing Tenants whose existing properties are subject to major works for rebuilding/renovation/demolition or re-designation and need to move to another location, will be placed into the gold band to enable them to move quickly. Applicants will be placed into gold band up to 12 months before the proposed start date of the scheme/works (this date has to be confirmed by the landlord) and will be given an application date 1 year prior to their actual registration date.

Tenancy Succession

Where the Local Authority receives written support from a Bournemouth partner landlord that an applicant has been living in a social housing property but has no legal right to succession on that property, and the landlord confirms that they intend to pursue possession of the property, the applicant may be placed into gold band in order to facilitate their move on. The applicant will be subject to the financial assessment set out within the policy.

Effective management of social housing within Bournemouth

This priority will be awarded in a number of situations set out below to aid the efficient management of social housing stock

- Under occupation of social housing

- Those moving from one bed general needs property to one bed sheltered accommodation.
- As a management tool to resolve issues affecting a block or estate
- As a tool to help partner organisations address their housing responsibilities contained within employment contracts.

Applicants will also be placed in the Gold band if there is a proven social need or to support the delivery of another service. This applies to applicants who, for exceptional reasons, fall outside of the rest of this Allocations policy, and need to be found secure alternative accommodation. This may include children at risk or concern issues where children would otherwise be accommodated by social services.

Silver Housing Need

Applicants will be placed into Silver band if they fall into any of the following categories:

Medical/Welfare

Applicant awarded a 'medium' medical priority.

Disrepair

Based on the conditions identified by the local authority, it has been shown that your home has Category 1 hazards, Bands A - C (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) that CAN be resolved or reduced to a Category 2 hazard within 6 months and/or has shown that your home has Category 2 hazards, Band D (Housing Health & Safety Rating System).or at least 4 Category 2 Hazards.

Lack of bedrooms

Applicants who lack one bedroom in their current home.

Homeless/Threatened with Homelessness

People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017). This includes people who are intentionally homeless and those who are not in priority need;

People who are owed a (homeless) duty by ANY local authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are living in accommodation secured by ANY housing authority under section 192(3). The letter detailing the outcome of a homeless application will specify whether one of these sections applies;

Applicants accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) including Rent (Agricultural) Act Cases will be placed in the silver band.

Applicants awarded Silver Band for being homeless will not attract any other reasonable preference within this policy e.g. sharing facilities/lacking bedrooms.

Shared Facilities

Applicant in accommodation with facilities that are being shared with separate households. This will take precedence over any lack of bedroom requirements.

Split Families

Applicants who, not by choice are living in separate households due to the lack of suitable accommodation available, and cannot live together and wish to be re-housed and have not been accepted under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017). This includes those who may not have been living as part of the household at the time of the application, but whom it would be reasonable to expect to live with the applicant, as part of his/her household.

An application form must be completed by the household living in the worst property out of the households applying, to ensure the application is placed in the correct banding.

Work/Support

Applicants who are able to demonstrate the need to move nearer their place of work within Bournemouth because they have secured or has permanent employment (over 16 hours) in the area (evidence of the employment must be provided). Also applicants who are able to demonstrate the need to move nearer local facilities or relatives, in order to receive, or give, support or care within the Borough. This priority is only available to applicants whose main residence is outside the Bournemouth Borough Council boundary at the point of application.

Relationship Breakdown

Applicants who wish to live independently but who still reside with their ex partner/spouse following a relationship breakdown.

Right to Move

Applicants who meet the Right to Move criteria will be placed into the Silver band to reflect Reasonable Preference. Any additional housing need elements will be considered at banding stage and may result in increased priority.

Bronze Housing Need

Applicants may be placed in Bronze band if they fall within the categories set out below. Please note that each case will be considered on its own merits:

Reasonable Preference but no local connection

Households that have a reasonable preference but no local connection to Bournemouth.

Deliberate Worsening of circumstances

Households that have been assessed as having deliberately worsened their housing circumstances by moving into accommodation that is unsuitable for their needs and /or by taking no action to improve their circumstances which can be evidenced may be placed into bronze band.

Deliberate worsening of circumstances will arise where local authorities decide that an applicant has given up accommodation that was suitable for their needs where there was no requirement or obligation to do so. To reduce the likelihood of applicants moving into poorer accommodation in order to qualify for higher priority and quicker re-housing, applicants who are deemed to have deliberately worsened their circumstances will be placed into Bronze Band.

Substantial rent arrears

Applicants who have substantial rent arrears to a landlord who have been (or would be) assessed as having accrued these rent arrears intentionally will be placed in the Bronze band. Intentionally means that the applicant deliberately did something (or failed to do something) that resulted in the rent arrears. An act or omission in good faith on the part of the applicant will not be treated as deliberate if they were unaware of any relevant fact.

Where efforts are being made to commit to a payment plan and the applicant's landlord is satisfied with this commitment, the applicant will be placed in the appropriate band to meet their housing need. Until this has been demonstrated (for a minimum period of three months), any bids made will be rejected.

Unacceptable behaviour

People who engage in, or have been found responsible for, unacceptable behaviour. In this case further consideration will be given after a year, during which acceptable behaviour has been demonstrated, has elapsed. Each case will be treated on its merits and an applicant may appeal if not satisfied with the decision.

Unreasonable Refusals

Following 2 unreasonable refusals, the applicant shall be placed in the band below their current band for 12 months.

Homeless Applicants

Households accepted as homeless and re-housed into bed and breakfast or temporary accommodation managed by the Council or a Registered Provider (RP) will be registered on the Housing Register.

Persons who have been accepted as homeless and re-housed in temporary accommodation will be placed in the silver band and allocations made to homeless households within the band will be made in accordance with the Allocations Plan.

The Council will discharge its duties under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017), to those applicants upon the acceptance of an offer made through Home Choice, or upon the direct offer. Applicants have the right of a review of the suitability of any accommodation offered. Decisions will be made in accordance with the prevailing Code of Guidance for Homelessness.

The Council reserves the right to alter the time limits for Homeless Applicants Silver status at any time, according to changes in demand.

Homeless applicants who refuse one suitable offer of accommodation will have their silver status removed, and where it is determined that the offer of accommodation was suitable under the provisions of the Council's statutory homelessness obligations, the duty to them will be discharged.

Exceptional Circumstances

The policy may be departed from where the Housing Options & Advice Manager considers that an individual's exceptional circumstances warrant a departure from any part of this policy, has recorded reasons for that decision, and has the written/emailed agreement of another senior housing manager within Bournemouth Borough Council.

Supported Housing Move On

- The applicant will suffer a significant impact to their health and wellbeing should they move on to any form of non secure accommodation
- There is no other suitable option for meeting their housing need other than social housing

Applicants being considered under this criteria will require evidence from professionals involved in their care and/or support. Applicants who occupy supported housing and are ready to move on but do not have an established need for long term settled accommodation will be assessed in accordance with the general terms of this policy. Having regard to all the circumstances and supporting information, the final decision will rest with the Housing Options & Advice Team Manager

Allocations and Nominations

An allocation is the selection of a person to be nominated to a Registered Provider (RP) for an offer of accommodation. It includes moves by existing RP tenants, which are known as 'transfers'.

Allocations are made in accordance with this Policy based on expressions of interest (bids) for accommodation advertised through the council's choice based lettings scheme, Home Choice. With the exception of automated bids, and direct offers, no applicants will be considered for an allocation of accommodation unless they have made a bid for it.

Further information about Home Choice can be found at <http://www.dorsethomechoice.org/dorset-homechoice/home.aspx>

In determining which applicant will be considered for an offer of accommodation the council will consider;

- Who has the most priority (the applicant in the highest band with the oldest application)
- The suitability of the allocation for that applicant
- Risk issues associated with the allocation (to the applicant, other tenants, the community)

Direct Urgent Allocations

Direct Urgent Allocations will be made:

- Where current accommodation is having a severe detrimental effect upon the day-to-day living;
- an urgent move is essential to resolve or significantly improve the applicant circumstances;
- the applicant cannot reasonably be expected to secure suitable accommodation for their household;
- all potential alternative solutions have been explored and are not viable.

Urgent transfers will be agreed through the Management Transfer approval system and Priority Band awarded, or if requested, by a direct let outside of the CBL system. Management Transfers are defined as;

Cases considered to be urgent and serious enough to require a direct allocation to be made outside of the Council's normal policy and procedure are defined as follows:

- a) threats to life
- b) racial or homophobic harassment
- c) extreme anti-social behaviour
- d) vulnerable witnesses
- e) any other significant and/or immediate need for a move to more suitable, alternative accommodation

Housing providers will be expected to demonstrate that they have taken reasonable steps to deal with urgent cases before referring for an emergency request.

All potential alternative options must have been explored and assessed as not viable, making an urgent move essential in order to resolve or significantly improve the applicants circumstances.

Urgent cases agreed through this policy will be awarded Emergency Band, or if requested, by a direct let outside of the CBL system.

Withdrawal of Offers

In the following very exceptional circumstances, offers may be withdrawn:

- Where there has been a change in the applicants circumstances
- Following verification the applicant is not eligible for the property; or

- Where an error has been made in the advertising criteria
- Where an offer of accommodation could put a vulnerable person at risk of any harm
- Where an applicant has knowingly or otherwise provided information that is false and/or misleading

Length of Tenancy Term Offered

From April 2012, most new tenants will be granted a fixed term tenancy. In general this will be for five years although the Council reserves the right to make this for a lesser period of time. We will continue to grant a secure lifetime tenancy to people moving into our independent senior living accommodation. Tenants granted a fixed term tenancy will enjoy many of the same rights as secure tenants, including the right to buy.

More detail on the council’s position with regard to tenancy terms can be found in the Bournemouth Council Tenancy Strategy 2012-2017.

Match of household type to property size

Applications will be assessed to determine the size of property that their household requires. A household is defined as –any other person who normally resides with the applicants as a member of his/her family or any other person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant (Housing Act 1996).

Household members living together as a couple will be assessed as requiring 1 bedroom, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Additional adults (defined as being 18 years old or over) living permanently in a household will require an extra bedroom.

Examples of the property sizes that households are able to bid for are set out below:

Household Type	Bedroom standard entitlement/property size
Single adult	1 bedroom
Two adults living together as a couple	1 bedroom
Households with 1 child	2 bedrooms
Households with 2 children under 10 years old	2 bedrooms
Households with 2 children of the same sex aged under 16 years old	2 bedrooms
Households with 2 children of opposite sex where one is aged over 10 years old	3 bedrooms
Households with 2 children of the same sex aged over 16 years old	3 bedrooms
Households with 4+ children	4 bedrooms

Please note: This is not an exhaustive list. Applicants with a large number of household members may require larger properties.

Please note: Individual partner housing provider letting policies or local planning policies may affect the size of households that may apply for particular properties. Any such restrictions will be included in the property advert.

These property sizes will not apply to existing tenants of a partner housing provider who are seeking to move to a home that is at least 1 bedroom smaller. For example a single person living in a 4 bedroom home will be able to move into a 2 bedroom property. This is to make the most effective use of social housing and free up family accommodation.

Where households have particular needs (for example due to health issues) these will be taken into account in determining the size of property that they are eligible to apply for. For example, where the local authority agree that an applicant requires a regular overnight carer they may be eligible for an additional bedroom.

Because of the very high demand for properties within Bournemouth, additional bedrooms will not be awarded for children who do not normally live permanently with the applicant.

Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and will be determined by the local authority's decision as to which parent or guardian the child is dependent on in terms of their primary day-to-day care, and with whom the child would therefore be expected to ordinarily reside. One indication may be drawn, for example, by checking circumstances such as which parent receives the Child Benefit.

Additional Criteria

Priority for family sized properties with gardens will be given to households with children under 14 unless medical evidence of the need for a property with a garden exists.

Priority for Ground floor accommodation will normally be given to someone who requires level access on the grounds of age, disability or medical need.

Applicants who have been awarded a higher banding to take account of difficulty with stairs and the need for ground floor accommodation will not usually be allowed to bid on any property with either internal or external stairs unless there are appropriate adaptations already in place.

Applicants who need adaptations will only be offered a property where the adaptation is in situ. Exceptional cases will be considered at the discretion of lettings staff where there is a very urgent need to move and the risk to the applicant to remain in their current accommodation is significant, and where a move into a standard ground floor property will significantly reduce the risk

In order to be eligible for bedroom spaces for children, the adult(s) must demonstrate that the child(ren) live(s) with them on a full time, permanent basis.

Applicants awarded higher banding for needing ground floor accommodation will not be allowed to bid on properties with stairs.

When we have registered your application and we advise you of your banding we will tell you what size of properties you can place bids on.

Sheltered Accommodation and One Bedroom Bungalows

Applicants wishing to be considered for independent senior living accommodation must be over 60 years of age.

Applicants wishing to be considered for one bedroom bungalows within the Council's own housing stock must be over 60 years of age. Exceptions will be considered where medical evidence for the need for a bungalow is provided and where it is clear that there are no alternative options for meeting the identified housing need within the social housing stock in Bournemouth.

Senior officers from Strategic Housing and Housing Landlord Services will sign off any exceptions.

Quota Arrangements and the Allocations Plan

The Council has an Allocations plan which is used to manage the way in which the council allocates properties available to meet housing needs. The plan includes estimates of the likely supply of lettings and sets out how the available properties should be divided between different groups of applicants. The purpose of this is to achieve a spread of lettings across different categories of applicants, whilst ensuring that the Council provides reasonable preference according to the legislation.

In order to meet the targets set within the plan the council will clearly label each property advert with information about which group is to be targeted as a priority for each property.

The Allocations Plan will be monitored on a monthly basis and feedback provided to applicants through Choice Based Lettings to ensure transparency, as well as to providers and Members.

Move On from Supported Housing Quota

10% of all 1 bedroom vacancies (to include studio flats) will be targeted at people moving on to independent accommodation from Supported Housing (which has been provided with assistance from Supporting People). This is to assist people who are seeking independent living and free up places in supported housing where others need extra support. The quota will be allocated to those with an established need for long term social housing.

Looked After Children Quota

A number of vacancies each year (to be determined between the Housing Needs Manager and the Looked After Children (LAC) Team Manager) will be allocated directly each year to assist children and young people leaving care to move into independent living.

Right to Move

A quota of 1% of lettings will be allocated in the Allocations Plan for Right to Move. The quota will be reviewed on an annual basis and set according to demand.

Allocating Affordable Rented Properties

The Council is not intending at this point to differentiate between working and non-working households in the allocation of Affordable Rent housing.

Affordable Rent will be accessed in terms of the priorities and requirements set out in the Council's Allocation Plan which accompanies the Allocations Policy which will set the annual priorities for re-housing and allocation. This will allow the Council to maximise use of housing supply to meet need.

The Strategic Housing team will also set local letting plans for new developments where appropriate. Consideration will be given to establishing local lettings plans where there is a high level of social rented housing in a particular block, estate or neighbourhood. There may also be certain circumstances where a local letting plan might be used or agreed where Affordable Rent lettings will be prioritised for certain groups of applicants.

These might include:

- Where there is a high level of deprivation in the area and there is a need to increase the number of economically active households living there.
- Where a development is creating a new community or where a significantly large number of new affordable units are being built, or where a block or cluster of dwellings is being let, and there is a need to consider the mix and balance of allocations being made.
- Where the Council has a particular housing need/demand it needs to meet - to encourage under occupation transfers, to meet particular special needs, to meet.

Local Lettings Policies/Schemes

Local lettings schemes will be designated by RP's following detailed consultation with the Council and an assessment of the impact. Once agreed these schemes will have their own allocations criteria. Local lettings schemes will be put in place for a specific area or estate and will be set up in response to particular local circumstances. They will include a clear commitment to equality of opportunity, the provision of clear and accurate information to applicants and an appeals mechanism.

The aim of local lettings schemes is to work towards more balance within local communities to result in outcomes that reflect the wider community and address issues such as child density and the proportion of households in employment in any one area or estate.

Working towards more balanced communities may mean housing a mix of:

- a) Different household types;
- b) Households of different ages and/or with children of different ages;
- c) People who are in paid employment and those who are not in paid employment;
- d) Families which have one parent and those which have two parents;

e) Households that have previously had a tenancy and those that have not;

The precise approach to be adopted will reflect the particular problems/issues of an area or estate.

Developing local lettings

Proposals for any local lettings scheme will need to set out the following:

- a) A clear definition of the problem(s) backed up by evidence of the problem(s)
- b) A method which is likely to address the problem(s)
- c) Some assessment of possible adverse impacts
- d) A way in which the scheme can be monitored
- e) Proposals for reporting and reviewing the scheme

The mechanics of local lettings schemes can work in a variety of ways. For example:

- By-pass the mainstream rehousing policy and procedures altogether;
- Select some, or all, allocations from within the mainstream system, but change the weighting given to various aspects of housing need;
- Select some, or all, allocations from within the mainstream system, but introduce additional criteria for the scheme;
- Select from the mainstream system but according to locally set targets.

Once a local lettings scheme has been designated and the rules that will apply agreed, the Allocations Service will allocate all vacancies in the area or estate according to the agreed rules. The policies that apply to all other general needs properties will be suspended. A system for monitoring the impact of the scheme will be agreed and the results reviewed at meetings of the Housing Needs Partnership Board and Allocations Group.

Pilot Schemes

From time to time the Council in conjunction with housing association partners will wish to pilot certain schemes to make best use of the social housing stock. Full details of any current scheme will be published on the Council's website.

Reciprocals

Other local authorities sometimes request rehousing on a reciprocal basis. The following criteria will be applied:

- The nominated person would be at risk in their present property, and
- The referring organisation is unable to intervene to mitigate the risk or to house the nominated people themselves.

Once accepted for housing assistance will be on the following basis:

- The applicant will be offered time limited priority with which to bid through Home Choice
- The Allocations Service will have nomination rights to the resulting vacancy or another property of similar type or size;
- The accommodation will be of a similar size and type to that occupied at present;
- The offer of accommodation will be at a safe distance to the present accommodation.

Exceptions

There are some exceptions to this Policy based upon Primary and Secondary Legislation, or upon locally agreed arrangements

- Part 6 of the 1996 Act does not apply to Mutual Exchanges within a Council's own stock, or via national schemes such as Homeswapper.
- The following cases are also exempted:
 1. Where a tenant dies (either secure or fixed term) and a succession takes place under The Housing Act 1985
 2. Where assignment takes place by way of mutual exchange under the Housing Act 1985
 3. Where a secure tenancy is granted by order of a Court under Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, or Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984, or Children Act 1989.
 4. Where an Introductory Tenancy becomes a secure tenancy

There are also some circumstances in which allocations may be made other than in accordance with the scheme detailed in this policy.

These include:

- Supported accommodation (i.e. accommodation in which support is provided as a condition of occupancy).
- Accommodation for keyworkers, as defined locally
- Lettings to joint tenants, where a tenancy is currently held by one of the joint tenants as a sole tenancy (when this is in accordance with eligibility for the specific property type in question and the Councils Tenancy Management policy).
- Letting to a former tenant, where a joint tenancy has been terminated by one joint tenant and the other tenant wants to remain in the property (when this is in accordance with eligibility for the specific property type in question and the Councils Tenancy Management policy). An alternative property may be offered where there is no eligibility for the specific property in question.
- Letting to someone who has lived in a property as the relative or carer of a tenant who has died, but there is no statutory right for that person to succeed to the tenancy. An alternative property may be offered where there is no eligibility for the specific property in question.
- Letting of a property for the purpose of decanting an existing Council or Registered Social Landlord tenant (e.g. where their current property requires

work which cannot be carried out with the tenant in residence, or if the current property is scheduled for demolition).

- Letting of a property to an existing Council or Registered Social Landlord tenant, for management reasons. Such allocations can only be carried out with the prior approval of the Tenancy Services Manager.
- Letting of a property which is particularly suitable for an applicant by virtue of its design, construction or adaptation.
- Letting of a property to a person referred to the Council by the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) as a result of Domestic Violence.
- Lettings which are required in order to secure a 'chain letting' whereby the Council maximises use of the stock available to meet the most housing need.
- Preference may be given for the allocation of bedsits to single people under 35.

Any decision to allocate accommodation outside of the policy will be signed off by the Senior Strategic Housing Manager.

How is this policy implemented?

Procedures

- Housing Register Administration
- Home Choice
- Allocations Procedure

Roles and responsibilities

Cabinet - responsible for adopting any new or major changes to the Policy.

Portfolio Holder for Housing - Responsible for the Policy, Annual Reviews and minor changes to the Policy.

Service Director for Housing, Parks and Bereavement Services - Senior Policy Owner responsible for overall management of the Policy and for ensuring that it fits with Corporate Priorities.

Senior Strategic Housing Manager - Policy Owner responsible for the development, management, monitoring and review of the Policy.

Housing Manager (Affordable Housing) - Policy Manager responsible for managing the daily administration of the Policy and ensuring that services correctly adopt and apply the content. This manager is also responsible for the assessment of Reasonable, and Additional preference and for all decisions made within the context of the Policy itself. Any complaints related to this Policy or reviews of decisions made with regard to the allocation of accommodation will be dealt with by this manager.

Housing Admin Officer - responsible for determining eligibility and banding, and for undertaking all administrative functions relating to the Housing Register and Allocations Policy.

Lettings Officer - Responsible for making decisions on the allocation of accommodation in accordance with this Policy and for considering all reviews of decisions relating to eligibility and banding decisions made by Housing Admin Officers.

Applicant - It is every applicant's responsibility to ensure that they provide correct information and that the Council is updated of any changes in their circumstances as soon as possible. Applicants must provide accurate information about their circumstances. Failure to do so may result in legal action.

Supporting Information

The Legal Framework: Allocation Priorities

This section explains how the Council meets the principal legal requirements for allocation schemes, as set out in the Housing Act 1996, as amended.

Legislative Context

- Housing Act 1996, Part 6 - as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- The Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997 (SI 1997 No.483)
- The Allocation of Housing (Reasonable and Additional Preference) Regulations 1999 SI 1999/1902
- The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Review Procedures) Regulations 1999 SI 1999/71
- Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation (ODPM, effective from 31 January 2003)
- Fair and Flexible - Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation December 2009
- Localism Act 2011

Strategic Context

In writing this Policy the Council has had regard to the following Council Strategies:

- Housing Strategy 2013-2020;
- Learning Disability Housing Plan 2007-2012.
- Tenancy Strategy 2012-17

Dorset Home Choice Partnership

Dorset Home Choice partnership provides the IT that enables Bournemouth applicants to bid for properties of their choice.

The partnership is made up of the 6 local authorities in the Dorset area and their partner housing providers. The 6 local authorities are:

- Borough of Poole
- Bournemouth Borough Council
- North Dorset District Council
- Purbeck District Council
- West Dorset District Council
- Weymouth & Portland Borough Council

Elements of this policy are common to the Dorset Home Choice Allocations Policy. However, please note that Bournemouth's Allocations Policy is administered and managed by Bournemouth Borough Council and therefore the policy position contained within it is that of the Council's alone.

Additional Notes

A copy of this Policy, or a summary, is available from Bournemouth Borough Council offices or via the website at www.bournemouth.gov.uk

Advice and assistance on the Housing Register and how to secure accommodation is available free of charge from Housing Solutions at Housing Reception, Town Hall Extension, St Stephens Road, Bournemouth BH2 6LL or by telephoning 01202 451467

The Council will provide a draft and consult on the details of any significant changes to this policy. All stakeholders will be consulted, including (but not exclusively) Registered Provider (RP) partners, applicants, and representatives of statutory and voluntary agencies.

Appendices

Appendix A - Equality Impact Needs Assessment

The Diversity Promise - *Making it Happen!*



Title of Policy/Service/Project	Allocations Policy Tenancy Strategy
Service Unit	Strategic Housing
Lead Responsible Officer and Job Title	Kelly Ansell, Strategic Housing Projects Manager
Members of the Assessment Team:	Kelly Ansell, Penny French
Date assessment completed:	23.4.12

About the Policy/Service/Project:

<p>What type of policy/service/project is this? (delete as appropriate)</p> <p>Existing New/proposed Changing</p>	
<p>What are the aims/objectives of the policy/service/project? (please include here all expected outcomes)</p> <p>Allocations Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the council will have a more accurate measure of local housing need • applicants expectations will be better managed so that if there is no chance of being re-housed in Bournemouth, this is clear from the outset and they can pursue other options • the council will reduce its administrative costs • the council will be able to maximise the benefit of the housing stock in meeting local housing need and locally defined priorities <p>Tenancy Strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that a crucial balance is struck between use of affordable rent and the requirement to meet local needs b) To ensure that the approach to fixed term tenancies in Bournemouth is consistent and enables the best use of stock to meet housing need c) To ensure that the implementation of flexible tenures does not have a negative impact in terms of homelessness d) To acknowledge that some neighbourhoods have specific issues/needs and to tailor solutions to address these e) To improve communications with the public, existing and potential customers about what is on offer, how this meets need and demand and what other options exist f) To identify who will not have their needs met through the new offer, and prompt action to address gaps in provision so that this can be addressed in the council's Housing Strategy 	
<p>Are there any associated services, policies or procedures?</p> <p>If 'Yes', please list below:</p> <p>Housing Strategy Homelessness Strategy</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>

<p>List the main people, or groups of people, that this policy/service/project is designed to benefit and any other stakeholders involved?</p> <p>Housing Register Applicants Social Housing Tenants Housing Providers</p>
<p>Will this policy/service/impact on any other organisation, statutory, voluntary or community and their clients/service users?</p> <p>Advice services such as Shelter, CAB</p>

Consultation, Monitoring and Research

Where there is still insufficient information to properly assess the policy, appropriate and proportionate measures will be needed to fill the data gaps. Examples include one-off studies or surveys, or holding informal consultation exercises to supplement the available statistical and qualitative data.

If there is insufficient time before the implementation of the policy to inform the EINA, specific action points will be need to be clearly set out in the action plan. Steps must include monitoring arrangements which measure the actual impact and a date for a policy review.

Consultation:

<p>What involvement/consultation has been done in relation to this (or a similar) policy/service/project and what are the results?</p> <p>A Member Working Group chaired by the Housing Portfolio Holder has guided the development of the Allocations Policy and the Tenancy Strategy. In addition, all Members were invited to attend a Challenge Session to discuss the proposals on 1st February 2012 and these were positively received.</p> <p>Both the Allocations Policy and the Tenancy Strategy are subject to statutory 12 week consultation per with stakeholders. An external consultation exercise has therefore been undertaken with a range of stakeholders with an emphasis on housing providers, housing applicants and residents. A workshop was facilitated at the Bournemouth Housing Forum in March to further inform the proposals. The results of consultation provide generous support for the proposals and have been used to formulate specific policy a For full details of the results of the consultation, please see the background paper, Consultation Report.</p> <p>There has not been any consultation specifically designed to consult on equalities related issues. The need for such will be determined following this assessment.</p>
<p>If you have not carried out any consultation, or if you need to carry out further consultation, who will you be consulting with and by what methods?</p> <p>N/A</p>

Monitoring and Research:

<p>What data, research and other evidence or information is available which is relevant to this EINA?</p> <p>Housing Register Data allows the examination of demographics in terms of who is accessing the housing register, who is bidding through Home Choice, and who is being made offers of accommodation.</p> <p>Bournemouth demographic data can then be used to compare the patterns of data above and draw conclusions about access for each strand.</p>

CORE Housing Data monitors the letting of all social housing tenancies and is a means of further considering accessibility issues for equalities strands.
Is there any service user/employee monitoring data available and relevant to this policy/service/project? What does it show in relation to equality groups? Housing Register Data
If there is a lack of information, what further information do you need to carry out the assessment and how are you going to gather this?

Assessing the Impact

	Actual or potential benefit	Actual or potential negative outcome
Age	<p>Older people will benefit from the ability to secure sheltered accommodation and the fact that they will be considered for a lifetime tenancy rather than a fixed term.</p> <p>In addition, the allocations policy has been simplified in order to make it easier to use and to understand, and to make the allocations process more transparent.</p> <p>Older people may struggle to use the housing register and allocations system as we rely more on online services. However, this has been considered and procedures developed to enable assisted application and bidding through Home Choice. Information is also available in a wide range of formats.</p>	
Disability	<p>Those with a disability will see a positive benefit from the system by being able to bid for properties of their choice through Home Choice. Applicants who have a lifelong need for their accommodation will also be eligible to be considered for a lifetime tenancy rather than a fixed term. However, there will also be situations where a fixed term tenancy enables improved use of adapted properties as circumstances change.</p> <p>Some people with disabilities may struggle to use the housing register and allocations system as we rely more on online services. However, this has been considered and procedures developed to</p>	

	Actual or potential benefit	Actual or potential negative outcome
	<p>enable assisted application and bidding through Home Choice. Information is also available in a wide range of formats.</p> <p>An additional benefit to disabled applicants is that through Dorset Home Choice, authorities intend to create a housing register specific for those requiring adapted properties, which will enable greater use of adapted housing stock and more rehousing options for those with physical needs.</p>	
Gender	All applicants expectations will be better managed so that if there is no chance of being re-housed in Bournemouth, this is clear from the outset and they can pursue other options	None
Race	People where English is a second language or not spoke may struggle to use the housing register and allocations system as we rely more on online services. However, this has been considered and procedures developed to enable assisted application and bidding through Home Choice. Information is also available in a wide range of formats.	
Religion or Belief	Local Lettings Plans will be used to allocate schemes with a specific target group such as the Jewish Extra Care scheme currently under development.	None
Sexual Orientation	All applicants expectations will be better managed so that if there is no chance of being re-housed in Bournemouth, this is clear from the outset and they can pursue other options	None
Transgender	All applicants expectations will be better managed so that if there is no chance of being re-housed in Bournemouth, this is clear from the outset and they can pursue other options	None
Any other factor/ groups e.g. socio-economic status/carers etc	The new Allocations Policy and the tenancy strategy contain local priorities which will enable greater housing chances for households on low incomes, those who are making a positive contribution to the community and foster carers	
Human Rights	All applicants expectations will be better managed so that if there is no chance of being re-housed in Bournemouth, this is clear from the outset and they can pursue other options	None

Stop - Any policy which shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination must be stopped, removed or changed.

If impacts have been identified include in the action plan what will be done to reduce these impacts, this could include a range of options from making adjustments to the policy to stopping and removing the policy altogether. If no change is to be made, explain your decision:

Action Plan

Include:

- What has/will be done to reduce the negative impacts on groups as identified above.
- The arrangements for monitoring the actual impact of the policy/service/project

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact	Timescale	Responsible officer
Accessibility for Older persons and disabled applicants	Assisted applications, paper application, assisted and automated bidding, already in place to tackle this.	Completed	Penny French
Improve data collection on equalities generally to include all strands	New Locata system will enable the generation of reports to capture this data.	System went live April 12 Commence reporting quarterly from June 12	Penny French

Appendix b - Assessment of Housing Need

Overcrowding

Disrepair Criteria

Gold: High

Based on the conditions identified the Private Sector Housing Team has deemed your home to have the presence of Category 1 hazards, Bands A - C (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) that CANNOT be resolved or reduced to a Category 2 hazard within 6 months.

Silver: Medium

Based on the conditions identified the Private Sector Housing Team has shown that your home has Category 1 hazards, Bands A - C (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) that CAN be resolved or reduced to a Category 2 hazard within 6 months.

And/or has shown that your home has Category 2 hazards, Band D (Housing Health & Safety Rating System).

Bronze: Low

No significant hazards identified justifying enforcement action by the local authority.

Medical Assessment

When ill health, disability or old age is aggravated by housing conditions and would improve if other accommodation were offered. The award for medical consideration is a range from Gold to Bronze Band;

Level of Need	Criteria	Examples	Band
Medium	Moderate Problems	This is a high banding award and should only be used to reflect moderate medical difficulties that have a clear relationship to existing housing circumstances. It is distinguished from the previous sub-division (i.e. Serious Problems) because in this instance the person's life cannot be considered to be at risk. With both serious and significant problems officers have a certain amount of discretion regarding the award. This will be of particular use to visiting officers in assessing the	Silver

		degree of seriousness of any medical problem.	
High	Serious Problems Medical issue(s) which have a serious impact on your housing need or make it unreasonable to remain in your current accommodation.	This band will be reserved for those cases where an applicant's or tenant's housing need is seriously affected by their medical conditions and those conditions are so serious that it is unreasonable for them to remain in their current accommodation. Please note that gold band will only be made where the property cannot be adapted to meet the applicants needs or funds are not available for such adaptations or landlord permission cannot be obtained.	Gold
Urgent	Urgent Medical need which is life threatening or which is causing bed blocking with hospital/care facility		Emergency

The two crucial factors that are looked for in any awards of medical conditions are:

1. The physical link between the identified medical complaint and the current housing accommodation/situation.
2. That there is a realistic expectation that the identified medical condition would improve if alternative, more suitable accommodation was made available.

The Housing Team will carefully consider any representation received and check the circumstances outlined with any banding award that may have previously been made. Where there is a need, a change to banding will be made. You do not normally need to submit medical certificates or letters from your GP. However, no supporting evidence is refused and may assist the Housing Officer in assessing your application. Please note that the Local Authority will not pay any costs associated with the provision of supporting medical evidence.

When determining what banding to award, staff must approach the matter from the standpoint of assessing what degree of need exists and, secondly, what adverse effect this has on the lifestyle of the household as a whole?

We may seek an independent medical opinion whenever an applicant does not normally fall within one of the priority categories under part VI and VII of the Housing Act 1996

(as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) and/or experiences health problems which are likely to make them vulnerable in a homeless situation. This information will be used to inform the relevant local authority officer to decide the Local Authority obligations.

The following list covers some of the main factors, which can be reflected in a banding award under medical considerations.

1. Mobility - Inability to manage stairs/control-heating (e.g. put on extra clothing or adjust fire). size of accommodation, garden.
2. Applicants or tenants who are more or less confined to their existing accommodation, or where they depend on others to enable them to leave the dwelling.
3. Where present accommodation is causing the applicant's mental or physical disability, which could be overcome by a move to more suitable accommodation.

The approach in this instance is to focus on how the applicant or tenant's circumstances could be improved by a move to alternative accommodation - banding will be awarded accordingly.

The possible link between Applicants or Tenants who are assessed to have high Medical Problems (Gold Band) and recognising the scope to regard the Application as an 'Emergency Band'.

Medical factors can constitute one of the most urgent forms of housing need. Housing staff will scrutinise, with extreme care, applications which attract Gold Banding for Medical Consideration. It may be appropriate to consider the application as an Emergency Banding.

Summary of Banding

Emergency Band	Gold Band	Silver Band	Bronze Band
<p>Exceptional housing need that takes priority over other applicants;</p> <p>There is an urgent need to move the applicant for financial or operational reasons;</p> <p>Emergency Disrepair issues;</p> <p>Urgent health/wellbeing issue;</p> <p>Witness protection scheme applicants</p>	<p>Overcrowded by two or more bedrooms;</p> <p>Under occupation;</p> <p>Severe and/or persistent harassment;</p> <p>Applicants in Supported housing ready for move on</p> <p>High Medical or Welfare needs;</p> <p>High Disrepair needs;</p> <p>Combined medical/welfare/disrepair needs;</p> <p>Cumulative needs (4 or more silver band needs);</p> <p>Decant applicants</p> <p>Tenancy Succession</p> <p>Efficient management of housing stock</p>	<p>Homeless/Threatened with Homelessness;</p> <p>Applicants in supported housing ready for move on;</p> <p>Medium medical/welfare needs;</p> <p>Medium disrepair needs;</p> <p>Shared facilities;</p> <p>Overcrowded by one bedroom;</p> <p>Split families;</p> <p>Relationship breakdown;</p> <p>Need to move for work/support</p>	<p>Applicants with reasonable preference but no local connection</p> <p>Deliberate worsening of circumstances</p> <p>Applicants with substantial rent arrears</p> <p>Applicants who have a history of anti social behaviour</p>

Appendix C - Glossary of Terms

Additional preference - The phrase used in the Housing Act to allow local authorities to prioritise applicants with the greatest need in the reasonable preference categories.

Advocate - A responsible person who has been given approval to act 'on behalf of an applicant e.g. support worker, family member.

Applicant - A person who applies to register on, including tenants of a local authority or a housing provider.

Application date - The date the application is assessed having received all relevant information from the applicant.

Bands - A way of prioritising housing needs within the housing register that places those of similar need within the same band and places bands in a hierarchy of housing need.

Band start date - The date an applicant is placed into a band.

Bedroom Entitlement - The number of bedrooms that an applicants will be considered for.

Bidding - To be considered for an available home, applicants are required to make a bid 'or express an interest' in a property. No money is involved in making a bid or expressing an interest in a property.

Bidding cycle - The number of days in which an applicant has the opportunity to place a bid or 'express an interest' in a home once it is advertised.

Choice Based Lettings - A system which enables applicants for social rented housing the choice of where they would like to live form a listing of available properties based on their eligibility for those properties.

Codes of Guidance - Relevant government guidance provided to local authorities to use when drawing up allocations policies.

Cumulative Need - More than one housing need has been identified in the reasonable preference categories.

Decant - The need to move an existing tenant out of their accommodation to enable building works to be done on that property.

Housing Need - An applicant who needs to be rehoused because their current living arrangements are detrimental to their (or a member of their household) health and welfare.

Housing/Registered Provider - A registered social landlord, arms length management organisation or local authority stock holding landlord.

Local connection - A defined connection to a settlement or area.

Local lettings policies - Policies that allow certain properties in certain areas to be let against specific criteria.

Normally be resident - Normally resident for the purposes of this policy means that an applicant is if they are normally living in the area (apart from temporary or occasional absences), and their residence there has been adopted voluntarily and for settled purposes as part of the regular order of their life for the time being.

Offer - An offer of accommodation that an applicant has bid for.

Personal reference number - A unique number that will be provided to an applicant once their application is registered on Dorset Home Choice.

Property label - A description of a property being advertised as available to let.

Reasonable Preference - The phrase used in the Housing Act to describe those types of housing need that should be given priority in a local authority's allocations policy.

Registration date - The date an application is received by a local authority.

Rural Areas - Settlements with a population of less than 3,000

Shortlisting - The process by which bids received on a property are prioritised so that the applicant with the highest housing need and then the oldest band start date is at the top of the list of bidders.

Under Occupying - A person underoccupies when they occupy accommodation that has more bedrooms than their maximum bedroom entitlement.

Urgent management move - The need for a housing provider to urgently move an existing tenant to make best use of their housing stock.