

Allocations Policy Changes 2021

Item Number	Policy area	Detail	Decision	Type of Change
	Financial limits – Section 5 Band D	Need clear information about whose incomes will be taken account of when calculating who should be placed in Band D - e.g. if two adults are working, should both their incomes be considered?	Clarify policy - all adult household members' income will be considered. Policy should state that current financial limits area available upon request. Amend wording in section 5 - from applicant to household	Clarification of wording to state that all adult household members' income will be considered when assessing income levels
	Financial information – Section 5 Band D	Should we include other capital assets or where those who have shed assets to avoid them being included in their financial assessment?	Agreed. Add additional wording to specify this in section 5 of the policy	Additional wording for clarification
	Bedrooms and best use of space – section 6	Update wording - e.g. <i>'Applicants are also expected to make best use of bedroom sizes in their property. For example, the best use of bedrooms within a two bedroom property might be for an adult to sleep in the smaller of the bedrooms and their children to share the larger bedroom'</i>	Add the proposed wording to the policy – local authorities are already implementing this approach so it needs to be reinforced in the policy	Additional wording for clarification
	Overcrowding – section 5	Overcrowding - clarification required to state that overcrowding awards can only	Applicants can only be overcrowded in their own tenancy – not if they are e.g. staying with friends or family	Additional wording for clarification

		be given to tenants of social or private rented housing and not to those who are sharing facilities.		
	Foster carers – section 2.5	Current policy states that approved and local authority registered foster carers may be considered for an additional bedroom and/or additional preference on the housing register	Policy to be changed – an applicant cannot become an approved foster carer UNLESS they already have a spare room in their property. Foster carers do not get additional preference on the housing register. However, they may be considered under the welfare criteria for a higher band on the housing register	Clarify wording in policy
	Local connection to rural areas	Numerous issues around shortlisting S106 properties; applicants who are in the armed forces and exempt from the usual local connection rules do not understand that s106 or rural exception sites often have much more specific local connection criteria and that they would need to meet this criteria to be considered for these properties	Addition of a paragraph on rural housing to explain how rural exception sites and s106 properties are allocated.	Additional paragraph to clarify that rural housing may be allocated with preference given to those who can demonstrate a strong local connection to the relevant village/area
	Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse	<i>Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic violence</i> - this paper was published by MHCLG in Nov 2018 - need to review the paper and its recommendations fully with the next review of the AP	Reviewed this paper with regard – updated domestic abuse procedure stating that applicants fleeing violence who previously held either an assured or secure tenancy, must be offered the same tenancy type – not an introductory or fixed term	Legislation change -

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	Renewals & Effective Date	This section should state that 'the applicant will retain the same effective date when their application is reinstated (if within 3 months of it being closed)	Amend wording – assuming that there is no change to the household members or circumstances	Clarification
	Effective date for main duty accepted applicants	Need to clarify effective date for main duty accepted applicants	Amend wording to 'Where the main homelessness duty has been accepted the band B effective date will be the day after the relief duty ended (i.e. day 57) unless they were already in band B with an earlier date. The exception will be where an application had been in the 'reduced preference' band: in these circumstances the band B date will only be effective from when the reduced preference reason was rectified'	Clarification
	Applicants owed the prevention duty	Prevention applicants are not currently permitted to also have a medical Band	At present, if a customer has been assessed as Band A/Band B medical in their existing accommodation but they are under prevention, we are unable to apply the higher banding and have to award Band C prevention – they are essentially being downbanded due to them being threatened with homelessness. Allowing a severe or high medical award to be retained while under the prevention duty, allows customers to maximise their chances of being rehoused into an appropriate property before they are made homeless.	Amendment
	All household members over 18 should be asked to sign a Gateway declaration, even if they	Household members can currently claim to not be co-habiting couples and that don't want a joint application. The	Suggest that we need to add something like the following to para 4.12 of the policy: 'Any adult who is ASKING TO BE accepted or has been accepted as being part of a household but who is	Amendment

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	are not the main/joint applicant	'household member' in this example could have former tenant debt and unless we have a signed declaration from all adults on the application (regardless of whether joint applicants) any former landlords would not provide us with a landlord reference to enable us to establish whether there is any housing-related debt and whether reduced preference should therefore be applied.	not the applicant or joint applicant will be required to sign a declaration acknowledging that the relevant local authority may undertake enquiries into their circumstances.	
	Suspensions & potential fraudulent housing register applications	If an application is suspected to be fraudulent, can they be suspended?	Additional suspension reason added to section 3.8 so that suspected fraudulent applications may be suspended if appropriate - addition to section 3.8	Addition
	Prevention applicants	When an applicant is under the Prevention duty to one authority but who lives in another authority, which local authority should host the CBL application?	Whichever authority has the prevention or relief case should also host the relevant housing register application	Clarification
	Lettings policies of Gateway partner landlords	Some landlords have different policies regarding who/how many children can share bedrooms/bedroom allocations	Landlords can retain allocation rules which differ to the Gateway allocations policy but this should be stated on the relevant property advert	Clarification
	Housing register applications for those	Current policy states that for applicants who have mutually exchanged, their HRA should	HRAs for mutual exchange households should be suspended	Clarification

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	who have mutually exchanged	either be closed <i>or</i> suspended – but should be consistent for all applicants		
	Bedroom requirements for applicants under a homelessness duty	Exceptions to property size rules	Amend section 6.4 to include: <i>Similarly, where a household with a 2 bedroom need is assisted to secure 1 bedroom accommodation in the Private Rented Sector or Supported Housing Sector under a homelessness duty the application will be suspended for 12m or until a valid notice is served, whichever is sooner. Typically, this will be a household including an expectant mother or a newborn.</i>	Clarification
	Armed Forces – new guidance issued in June 2020	Local connection criteria for	Update policy to state that disregarding local connection criteria for spouses and civil partners who are required to leave accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following a breakdown in their relationship with their Service spouse or partner	Legislative change
	New builds – first let	Need to clarify that new build properties on first let are limited to people who have a local connection to the relevant area - they don't have to actually live within the relevant local authority	Added this to the local connection part of the Allocations policy and the new build section.	Clarification
	Local connection - through a family member	Local connection - if someone is claiming LC through a family member, does the family member need to have lived in the same district within the Gateway or can they have lived for e.g. 1 year in each of the	Update policy to allow a connection for a family member who has lived in the area of the Gateway scheme for 5 years but the applicant's connection is only to the district where they currently live and that district should host the application.	Clarification

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		Gateway districts and this will count for local connection		
	Band A - homeless households in severe need	Current policy states that only main duty accepted homeless applicants can be given Band A on the housing register	Update policy to allow a household owed any homeless duty (prevention, relief or main) and which is in severe need to be awarded Band A – homeless and in severe need	Amendment
	Downsizing	Housing register application form states that people cannot be given downsizing banding if downsizing from sheltered accommodation, but the Allocations policy doesn't specify this	Amend Allocations policy to state that downsizing priority is not given to those who are downsizing from sheltered accommodation	Clarification
	Other types of housing providers	Almshouses and Community Land Trusts are now operating within the Gateway	Added reference to Almshouses and Community Land Trusts to the glossary and state that where the 'registered provider' term is used, it also refers to almshouses and CLTs	Clarification
	Domestic abuse	<i>Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse – 2018 paper</i>	The Allocations Policy was reviewed in light of this guidance but no further changes were required	