

**Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**

**Draft Allocations Scheme**

**February 2023**

**DRAFT**

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## Policy Statement

1. The Allocations Scheme sets out the priorities and procedures for the allocation of affordable social housing in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM). It applies to all current applicants and future applicants.
2. All social housing allocated to registered applicants is made through the **nomination agreements** held with local registered social landlords, our **registered provider partners**. It applies to **applicants** joining the Housing Needs Register for the first time and current registered provider tenants wanting to **transfer**.
3. RBWM is committed to implementing the principles of **Choice Based Lettings**, enabling applicants to make well-informed decisions about their housing options. Registered applicants can bid for properties suitable for their housing needs and in their chosen location. Choice helps to improve tenancy and community sustainment and encourage residents to have a stake in their community.
4. This Allocations Scheme helps us to:
  - Fulfil our obligations in S167 of the Housing Act 1996 to allocate in accordance with an Allocations Scheme
  - Use the additional qualifying criteria discretion provided by the Localism Act 2011 in deciding who will be allowed to register for social housing
  - Meet the requirements of Part VI Housing Act 1996 (as amended); the Localism Act 2011; and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 by giving reasonable, but not always overriding, preference to applicants in greatest need
  - Achieve the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard
  - Deliver and have due regard to the RBWM Local Plan, Housing Strategy, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, Disabled Facility Grant Policy and nomination agreements with and the Tenancy Policies of our registered provider partners
  - Deliver our Domestic Abuse Policy, Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy and Domestic Abuse Strategy and those of our registered provider partners
  - Meet the requirements of the Government's Statutory Guidance for allocations, homelessness, and improving access for members of the Armed Forces
  - Take full advantage of the opportunities offered by digital and technological developments to deliver more people-centred and more cost-effective services
  - This is the revised 'Housing Allocations Policy for RBWM and will take effect in respect of all allocations of social housing on or after June 2023. The

assessment of need and qualifying criteria set out in this policy will be applied to all new and existing applicants from this date.

5. This Allocations Scheme helps us to deliver:

- Our Corporate Plan commitment to help more residents into affordable, sustainable homes; deliver the very best services that we can and strengthen the ways in which we engage with residents and communities
- Our Corporate Plan priorities for providing a ladder of housing opportunity to support better life chances for all; shaping our service-delivery around our communities' diverse needs and putting customers at the heart of all we do; promoting health and wellbeing and focusing on reducing inequalities, across all areas
- Our Housing Strategy objective to support vulnerable residents to obtain and sustain accommodation and increase support and prevention for homelessness by providing excellent customer service, a range of housing options and good quality temporary accommodation for those in need
- Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy priorities:
  - Reducing the number of people becoming homeless
  - Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and improving the quality of that accommodation
  - Supporting people into good quality, affordable and sustainable accommodation options
  - Reducing rough sleeping and supporting those who find themselves on the street
  - Improving the customer service provided to people approaching the housing service

6. The Scheme supports our statutory and regulatory responsibilities and is based on key principles shared by RBWM and our registered provider partners:

- Addressing the needs of a population of more than 150,000 which is both growing and ageing
- Allocating housing fairly, consistently appropriately and lawfully and to ensure that our decisions are transparent
- Removing barriers to accessing social housing for homeless households
- Meeting the emergency and long-term housing needs of people fleeing domestic violence and abuse
- Meeting the housing needs of people leaving care
- Improving access to suitable homes for people with disabilities
- Allocating housing in a way which registered provider partner's support
- Ensuring vulnerable households can navigate the allocations process by providing clear and easy to understand information
- Enabling applicants to express choice in selecting their accommodation wherever possible

- Ensuring the Housing Needs Register better reflects housing need than housing demand through effective management of the register
- Improving the way our Housing Register Team and our registered provider partners work together to ensure the effective allocation of social housing
- Providing appropriate advice to applicants RBWM is unable to register or nominate for an offer of accommodation, including accurate and timely referrals to other agencies
- Providing advice and signposting to applicants who may be able to access market housing including private rented, low-cost home ownership and shared ownership
- Providing key worker accommodation to those meeting the RBWM criteria
- Providing a high-quality service with clear standards
- Reducing the cost and use of emergency interim accommodation by providing advice and assistance to prevent homelessness and by making sure that homeless people and those threatened with homelessness are housed as soon as possible
- Reviewing the Scheme regularly and when prompted by changes in the law, Government Guidance and Regulation and to ensure continuous improvement
- Working with our registered provider partners to accommodate homeless households within the district, where reasonably practicable, or as close as possible to where they were previously living, including temporary accommodation
- Working with the RBWM Property Company Limited to ensure opportunities for the purchase of temporary accommodation options are maximised
- Ensuring the effective management of traveller sites while recognising gypsies and travellers as a minority group and providing services in a way that is sensitive to their specific cultural and traditional beliefs

7. The Allocations Policy Scheme applies to RBWM in maintaining the Housing Needs Register and nominating applicants to our registered provider partners which currently include:

- Housing Solutions
- Abri
- A2Dominion
- Anchor Hanover
- One Housing
- Paradigm Housing
- Metropolitan Thames Valley
- Sage Housing

8. In framing the Allocation Scheme, RBWM has had regard to:

- Housing Act 1996 as amended
- Localism Act 2011
- Housing Act 1985

- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Fraud Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Mobile Homes Act 1983
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Allocation of Accommodation: Code of Guidance for local housing authorities in England
- Homelessness Code of Guidance
- Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces statutory guidance
- National Planning Policy Framework for traveller sites

## Choice

9. There is a very high demand for social housing in the RBWM area and we will balance providing choice and housing need to ensure that housing is offered in a way that helps to best manage the housing stock. In meeting needs in this way we may where appropriate use local Lettings Plans and S.106 agreements, however it is anticipated that the need for this will be limited and will only be in well-defined circumstances. Given this, Local lettings plans and S.106 agreements will only be used where there is a clearly identified case that they will promote settled communities and will assist in managing estates where there is a requirement to ensure community cohesion and meet our statutory requirements.
10. Properties are advertised online and will provide valuable information about the property, together with links to information about the local neighbourhood, helping applicants to make informed decisions about accommodation for which they will be considered.
11. While the aim of RBWM and our registered provider partners is to provide choice in the allocation of social housing in RBWM, the Scheme describes exceptional situations where this will not be possible, and a direct offer will be made without advertising.
12. Specifically, this would be where there are urgent operational or financial reasons. Examples include:
  - 12.1. Situations where urgent re-housing is required due to an applicant's existing property being uninhabitable, or where there are serious health and safety or personal protection issues that need to be addressed or in discharge of a statutory homelessness duty.

- 12.2. Urgent housing need situations where it would not be reasonable in the circumstances to wait for the Choice Based Lettings process to produce an offer.
- 12.3. Where there is an evidenced threat to life in the area in which an applicant currently lives.
- 12.4. Tenants in emergency cases whose homes are damaged by fire, flood or other disaster
- 12.5. Direct offers to persons who the council has a duty to rehouse under section 39 of the Land Compensation Act 1973.
- 12.6. Where an applicant is homeless and in temporary accommodation and owed a section 189B(2) Relief duty or 193(2) main duty the Council may wish to implement a short-term scheme to make direct lettings for a period of time to move applicants out of temporary accommodation, in order to manage any budgetary or legal impact, or a unit is to be temporarily designated as temporary accommodation (floating TA).
- 12.7. Where a vacant adapted property or a property designed to disability standards becomes available and there may be a need to offer that property to an applicant whose disability need best matches that property, regardless of the date they were registered.
- 12.8. Other examples include cases where an applicant is subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), or presents a risk to themselves or others

We will provide information about the number and types of homes, and current vacancy rates, to help applicants to make informed choices. The more flexible applicants are in their choice of areas and property types, the sooner they are likely to be successful in being offered a property that meets their need.

13. The number of direct offers will be monitored with a target that these should add up to no more than 20% of all lettings annually made. This is to preserve Choice Based Lettings as the primary method of letting social housing properties in RBWM. However, 20% is a guide only and may change depending on national and local pressures and circumstances.

14. We will support people who do not qualify to join the register or may have a long time to wait for an offer with advice on other housing options including:

- Use of the private sector
- Home ownership



- Intermediate housing
- Build to rent
- Mutual exchange

## **Equality and diversity**

15. We are fully committed to the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public bodies and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations.
16. Our Allocations Scheme promotes equal opportunities in the services it provides in accordance with our Equality Policy and Commitment to Equality and Diversity on our [website](#). Our aim is to implement and maintain services which ensure that no potential or current applicant is treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, race, colour, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, family status, transgender or transsexuality, nor is disadvantaged by the application of a rule, condition, or requirement, which has a discriminatory effect which cannot be justified by law.
17. Access to the scheme may be more difficult for people with a disability, sight or hearing impairment and for those who do not speak English as a first language. We are committed to helping all those who need assistance to access the Scheme particularly by working closely with other agencies and our registered provider partners.
18. The letting of property will be subject to the individual Equality and Diversity policies of our registered provider partners.
19. A summary and a full copy of the Allocations Scheme are available online. Our Housing Register Team will provide a full electronic copy of the Allocations Scheme on request, free of charge.

## **Making Changes to the Policy**

This Allocation Policy will be reviewed and revised as required, including in response to;

- National Policy or Legislative changes
- Policy changes instigated by RBWM
- The implication of any relevant case law

Any major changes must first be approved by the Council's Executive through the Cabinet/Full Council meetings.

Any minor changes to the policy or the operational procedures, will be delegated to the head of housing

## Roles and responsibilities

### Exceptional Circumstances

20. The Allocation Scheme may be overridden where the Housing Services 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 or emailed agreement of the Head of Service.
21. The Head of Service can make minor amendments to the Allocations Scheme to address changes in legislation, statutory guidance and local need without the need for statutory consultation. Major changes will be subject to full consultation and review.

### RBWM Housing Team Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Housing Register Team	<p>Managing the Housing Needs Register including eligibility, qualification, verification, assessment, registration, banding, allocation and nomination</p> <p>Assisting vulnerable applicants with registration and bidding</p> <p>Nominations to registered providers</p>
Housing Options Team	<p>Managing homelessness cases including prevention and relief</p> <p>Main duty decisions, appeals on decisions made by Assistant Housing Options Officers and Housing Options Officers</p> <p>Assisting vulnerable applicants with registration and bidding</p> <p>Housing options advice for people who are unable to join the Housing Needs Register</p> <p>Prevention and relief options in the Private Rented Sector and supported accommodation</p> <p>Assessing the suitability of accommodation</p>
Temporary	Sourcing temporary accommodation in both the

Accommodation Team	social housing and private sector and both in and out of RBWM  Arranging placements in suitable accommodation  Working with the Allocations Team to arrange permanent and move on accommodation  Arranging interim accommodation when needed
Housing Services Manager	Overall responsibility for the Housing Needs Register; homelessness decisions; appeals; exceptional circumstances and direct allocations  Performance management
Head of Service	Monitoring the use of exceptional circumstances  Minor changes to the Allocations Scheme  Direct allocation decisions
Registered Providers	Shortlisting, reviewing entitlement, making offers, viewing properties, signup and new tenant visits.

### **Safeguarding**

22. In any situation where there is evidence a child or adult may be at risk, RBWM will act promptly and in accordance with our safeguarding policies and procedures and those of our registered provider partners. All Housing staff will receive regular guidance and training on how to recognise and report safeguarding issues. More information about how we respond to safeguarding issues can be found in our **Safeguarding Policy**.

### **Right to information**

23. The 'Freedom of Information Act 2000' makes it a requirement for every public authority to produce a 'Publication Scheme' setting out the information it will make available to the public. The Council's publication scheme can be accessed on the website.

### **Complaints**

24. Complaints are separate to the circumstances where an applicant wishes to seek a review of a decision made on their application. A request for a review should be made under the review procedure set out in section 4 and not through the complaint's procedure. Unsuccessful reviews will not be progressed as a complaint. Where an applicant wishes to make a complaint about poor service, or the way they have been treated, this should be made using the Council's

complaints procedure. A copy of the current complaint's procedure is available on the Council's website.

## Data Protection

25. RBWM regards the lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important to its successful operations and to maintaining confidence between employees, residents and partners. More information about how we deal with personal information is in our **Data Protection Policy**.
26. Personal information will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and will be subject to appropriate confidentiality. Applicants have the right to see the information held about them and receive a copy of the information held on computer, or on paper file.

## The Housing Needs Register

### Joining the register

27. To join the Housing Needs Register applicants must be eligible, have a **local connection** within RBWM and either be in one of the **reasonable preference** categories or have a **housing need**. Local connection, reasonable preference and housing need are described in more detail below.
28. All applicants must complete an **online application form** to join the Housing Needs Register. Help will be provided to complete an application form on request from the applicant, a partner agency supporting the applicant or where it is clear an applicant is being disadvantaged by the online process. Details can be found on our and our housing provider partner websites.

### The eligibility persons from abroad qualification rules

Everyone over the age of 16 can apply to join the register but there are some groups of people who by law cannot join the register, regardless of their housing need or circumstances. These are people who:

- Come under the Government's eligibility rules and cannot lawfully be given housing help;
- Do not live habitually in the Common Travel Area (UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland);

- Do not have the right to live in the UK;
- Plus, other categories of people who the Government may in the future, decide are not eligible for housing assistance.

Under sections 160ZA (1), (2) and (4) of the Housing Act 1996 the Council cannot allocate a tenancy, or nominate a person for housing, if they are a person who is ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by virtue of being a person subject to immigration control, or a person from abroad, who is prescribed as ineligible.

The key relevant regulations that apply to eligibility are:

- Regulations 3 and 4 Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294
- All subsequent amendments including 'The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/861)
- The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/667) implemented from the 24 August 2020.

The above are not a complete list for all of the eligibility regulations. For example, there is significant legislation that relates to the UK's exit from the EU and access to housing assistance. The rules are complicated and change frequently. Anyone who is impacted or believe they may be impacted can approach the Council for advice or seek independent legal advice.

## **Applications from Under 18s**

29. Anyone over the age of 16 can join the Housing Needs Register, although acceptance for offer will not normally be an option until they are over 18 and subject to the Tenancy Policies of our registered provider partners.
30. In circumstances where an offer of a tenancy is to be made in accordance with the above provisions an assessment will be required to determine if the young person can live independently, can sustain a tenancy and has an identified package of support available to them. Should the assessment indicate that a tenancy is unsustainable the offer of a tenancy will not be made. Tenancies granted to people under 18 will be held by Trustees until they reach the age of 18. Such trustees will act as rent guarantors.

## **Joint Applications**

31. Applications from partners, including same sex couples, who are cohabiting can be registered as joint applications giving both parties joint and several rights and responsibilities for any future tenancy.

32. If one partner is ineligible due to their immigration status, the other partner will be registered as the sole applicant.
33. Other adults who are not partners of the applicant (such as residential carers) can only be made joint applicants based on the presentation to the Housing Allocations Team of clear evidence of need. In reaching a decision under this section the Housing Allocations Team may request the advice of an occupational therapy service in order to make an assessment of housing need.
34. If joint applicants ask to change to sole applications (for example, due to relationship breakdown) but want to remain registered, each sole applicant will retain the original application date as long as they are each still eligible to join the Housing Needs Register in their own right. Both applicants will have their housing needs reassessed based on their new circumstances.
35. An applicant with residency and parenting responsibilities for children may include them on the application. The other applicant may not include the children, even if there is shared custody or access arrangements.
36. Offers of accommodation to joint applicants for a joint tenancy will be subject to the Tenancy Policies of our registered provider partners.

### **Transferring tenants**

37. Our registered provider partners' tenants residing in the borough, can apply to join the Housing Needs Register subject to the same requirements and exclusions below.

### **Temporary Accommodation**

38. As a non-stockholding authority, we have a limited number of temporary accommodation units; including a family sized unit, block of four single units, two support accommodation units and lease properties from Abri and Housing Solutions to use as temporary accommodation for homeless households. We also work with private property providers to secure additional units of temporary accommodation to meet the demand. Priority for temporary accommodation in Borough is determined in accordance with Property Qualification Criteria 5 below.
39. Where no suitable properties are available in borough, a unit of accommodation will be secured in the nearest available location, or in a preferred location further afield.

40. Where it is not possible to place households in self-contained accommodation, Bed and Breakfast style accommodation will be secured. This may be out of area depending on availability. Families will be moved as soon as a self-contained unit of accommodation becomes available and will not remain in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for longer than six weeks. Although there is no time limit a single person can remain in Bed and Breakfast, we endeavour to secure self-contained accommodation for single households where there is a need for self-contained accommodation.

## Assessment

41. Applications will be assessed based on the information provided on the application form. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the form has been completed accurately and accompanied by all the documents required.
42. Applications will not be assessed until all the required documents have been received and the application is completed in full. Once a completed application is received, if after 28 days the required evidence is not received, the application will be cancelled, and the applicant will need to reapply.
43. Housing Register Team may request additional information or evidence where the details provided are not clear or not relevant to the information requested.
44. Housing applicants may receive an unannounced visit to verify the information provided.
45. Incorrect information could result in a change in priority at any stage of the process. Providing false information could result in exclusion from the Housing Needs Register and prosecution.
46. Further evidence will be required at nomination and offer stage depending on the separate requirements of our registered provider partners as described in their Tenancy Policies.
47. **Applicants from abroad** will be required to provide proof of their nationality and immigration status which will be verified.
48. Applicants with **medical, mental health or care needs** which may be improved or relieved by a move should include details on the Housing Needs Register application form.
49. Housing Register Team will require specialist evidence to assess current medical, mental health and care needs and the effect of a move to alternative accommodation on the condition. Advice may be needed from a medical

professional, social services or other individuals or agencies with a detailed knowledge of the condition. The assessment will determine the medical priority of the application.

50. The applicant is responsible for obtaining the information and any cost. Housing Register Team may seek its own specialist advice to determine medical, mental health or care needs. A home visit may be carried out to inform the assessment.
51. The Housing Register Team may request the advice of an occupational therapy service to assess housing need in cases where a member of the household has a substantial and permanent physical disability, other mobility needs or in cases where the Housing Register Team require further clarification regarding housing need
52. Priority on **welfare grounds** will be assessed by the Senior Allocations Officer, Housing Options Team Leader or Housing Operations Manager. Each case will be assessed by looking at whether the situation is serious and enduring, whether it is directly affected by the applicant's present housing and whether it would improve if the applicant were re-housed.
53. Young people leaving care under the Children Leaving Care Act, ready to move on to independent living and at risk if placed in private sector housing will be reviewed by the **Leaving Care Panel** for social housing based on these criteria:
  - Young people subject to Care Orders under section S31 of the Children Act 1989 where the council has parental responsibility (Looked After Children).
  - Young people with moderate learning difficulties or disability or those who are subject to a statement of educational needs or a psychological assessment.
  - Young people with significant mental health issues – who have been involved with CAMHS or CMHT for a period of three months or longer and are continuing to receive treatment.
  - Young people with complex needs placed in high-cost placements where they no longer require that degree of support and whose application has been approved by the 'Access to Resources Panel' or the 'Asylum High-Cost Placement Panel'.
  - Young people with significant offending behaviour, which limits access to other types of suitable accommodation.
  - Young people leaving care who are also parents and meet one other criteria listed (e.g. they or their baby are especially vulnerable).
54. Priority will be given to those applicants who have adopted or are currently fostering or where a recommendation is made by Children's Social Care to provide accommodation because the current accommodation is not large enough or would cause overcrowding.



55. Priority for **keyworker accommodation** applicants is based on working in a permanent position in one of the following sectors: education, health, police, fire, social services and some other key public and voluntary services and public sector agencies and specific covid key worker roles.
56. Our Traveller Sites are specifically designed to meet the needs of the local gypsy and traveller community. Applicants must be a Roma, gypsy or traveller, either by ethnic group or by legal definition. We aim to support and enable communities that are balanced, safe, inclusive, and sustainable, whilst encouraging community cohesion. Priority for allocation of **traveller site pitches** is based on housing need, time on the waiting list and family connections to the relevant site in Property Qualification Criteria 4 below.
57. Priority for temporary accommodation will be determined in accordance with Property Qualification Criteria 5 below.

## **Local Connection**

58. Subject to the exemptions list below, joining the Housing Needs Register requires a local connection. Local connection is defined as:
- 58.1. The applicant or their joint applicant are currently living in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and have lived in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead permanently for at least 3 years immediately prior to the application date.
- 58.2. The applicant or their joint applicant has worked on a full or part time basis (at least 24 hours per week) in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the past 3 years and remains in employment in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 58.3. The applicant or their joint applicant needs to be in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to give or receive regular daily support from or for a close relative (parents, adult children, brother and/or sister). This support will be measured using a social needs matrix and must be required on an ongoing long-term basis and cannot be provided by other family members or available support agencies. The family member must be permanently resident in Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and have lived there permanently for at least 5 years immediately prior to the application date.
- 58.4. An applicant has been accepted as being owed the main homeless duty. The Homelessness main duty is defined as the main duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

58.5. A young person who is owed a leaving care duty by RBWM under section 23C of the Children Act 1989.

58.6. The applicant is of pensionable age and is owed a prevention or relief duty under the Homelessness reduction Act 2017.

59. Housing Register Team **will not disqualify** the following applicants on the grounds that they do not have a local connection with the local authority:

59.1. Members and former members of the Armed Forces where the application is made within five years of discharge

59.2. Bereaved (or divorced or separated) spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving services family accommodation following the death of (or divorce or separation from) their spouse or partner

59.3. Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service

59.4. People who have experienced domestic abuse as defined by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and have established accommodation in refuge located in RBWM and it is safe to remain in RBWM.

59.5. Care leavers placed outside of RBWM where RBWM has a responsibility

59.6. Victims of domestic abuse who are placed in temporary accommodation where RBWM has a responsibility

## **Exclusions from the Housing Needs Register**

60. Applicants will not qualify to join the Housing Needs Register if one or more of the following criteria apply to their household:

### **People from abroad**

61. People from abroad cannot be allocated accommodation if they are ineligible under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996. There are two categories in S160ZA; a person under immigration control and a person other than a person under immigration control. The regulations are subject to change and are all explained in detail in the Allocation of Accommodation statutory guidance. Housing Register Team staff can advise people from abroad on the regulations and how they affect their application.

## **People guilty of unacceptable behaviour**

62. Housing Register Team will exclude an applicant from the register for up to the five-year timeline where the applicant, or a member of the household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour within the past 5 years in any type of tenure, which if the applicant was a tenant of one of our registered provider partners would entitle them to a possession order (Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985). Exceptional circumstances must be approved by the Head of Service, where evidence is provided of behaviour change.

63. Unacceptable behaviour can include:

- Abusive and verbal behaviour
- Arson
- Assault
- Criminal behaviour
- Criminal damage
- Damage to property
- Perpetrator of domestic violence
- Drug and alcohol misuse/abuse
- Harassment
- Homophobic, biphobia or transphobic Hate Crime
- Has behaved unacceptably toward Council staff or partner agencies. This includes verbal abuse, harassment and intimidation, threatening behaviour or abusive language.

64. Applicants excluded because of unacceptable behaviour will remain excluded for a period of 5 years since the unacceptable behaviour incident or offence. The applicants may re-apply to the Housing Needs Register after this period of exclusion.

65. Applicants who successfully bid for a property will be subject to a further review by the registered provider making an offer in accordance with their Tenancy Policy.

## **Rent arrears and housing related debt**

66. Applicants with rent arrears of six weeks or more of housing related debts to any landlord in any sector will not be accepted onto the register. This will not apply where the applicant is living in unaffordable accommodation. Housing related debt includes:

- Current rent and service charges
- Rent bonds and deposits

- Any recoverable payments made on behalf of the applicant in respect of homelessness
- Debts in relation to previous tenancies with a registered provider partner
- Council Tax debt
- Housing benefit overpayment
- Storage and removal costs
- Rechargeable repairs
- Support charges
- Legal costs

67. An applicant who can evidence they have maintained a regular repayment plan for a minimum of twelve weeks will be accepted onto the Housing Needs Register and enabled to bid however, their housing related debts will be further reviewed by RBWM or registered provider at the point of offer and in accordance with their Tenancy Policy.

68. Housing Register Team staff will carry out verification of housing related debts and will exempt any debts which result from benefit delay.

### **Homeowners**

69. Applicants and household members who own their own home in the UK or abroad will not qualify to be included on the Housing Needs Register if that home is affordable to them and it meets their needs in terms of their health and/or disability. The following exceptions apply:

- People who are in financial difficulty because their home is being repossessed.
- People who require specialist housing because they have a disability or a medical condition where their current accommodation cannot be adapted
- People who are fleeing domestic abuse and where a homeless duty has been accepted

### **Applicants with sufficient income and/or savings to secure alternative housing**

70. Main and joint applicants (including partners of the main and joint applicants) with a combined gross annual income of £60,000 or more will not qualify to be included on the Housing Needs Register.

71. Main and joint applicants (including partners of the main and joint applicants) with combined savings of more than £16,000 will not qualify to be included on the Housing Needs Register. Savings are also taken to mean accessible equity within a property.

72. The income and savings criteria do not apply to tenants currently in social housing wanting to downsize.
73. Armed Forces end of service payments will not be considered in calculations of financial resources.

## **Registration**

74. Once an application is verified and needs are assessed, RBWM will register the application and apply a registration date. The registration date is the date the application is received, or in the case of homeless applicants to whom a full duty is accepted, it is the date RBWM accepts a duty to accommodate, if this is earlier.
75. The applicant will receive written confirmation of their registration date, their priority status and reason for it, the property size for which they can bid and mobility group if appropriate.
76. If an applicant disagrees with their registration date, their priority Band or the assessment of their needs, they can appeal as described in the Review and Appeal section below.

## **Change of circumstances**

77. All applicants are required to inform Housing Register Team immediately when their housing circumstances change. A change in circumstances may mean an application is moved up or down a Band, or local connection or local priority is altered. If any change results in a Band change Housing Register Team will write to inform the applicant of the new Band, their new priority date if applicable and their right to appeal.
78. If an applicant is moved into a higher Band, their priority date will be the date they were accepted into the higher Band. If an applicant is moved to a lower Band their priority date will be their original acceptance date.
79. Additional adults will not be added to an application where this results in the need for larger accommodation than the applicant's household was originally eligible without evidence of an overriding medical, mental health, mobility or care need as agreed by the Housing Operations Manager.
80. Applicants who require an additional bedroom to enable full time (24 hour) care, or couples who have a medical or welfare need for separate bedrooms, may include this on their application subject to specialist evidence of need being agreed.

81. An applicant or member of their registered household expecting a child or children will be able to include the child or children on their application from 8 months into the pregnancy and have their housing need and housing requirements reassessed accordingly.

## **Intentionally altering circumstances and false information**

82. Applicants have a responsibility not to intentionally worsen their circumstances to join the Housing Needs Register or to progress to a higher Band including:

- If an applicant has voluntarily given up accommodation which is suitable for their needs
- Where a deliberate act results in the worsening of overcrowding or other housing circumstances without good reason; or the applicant has failed to take Housing Register Team advice regarding their housing need

83. Housing Register Team may assess the application based on previous circumstances and applicant's housing need at their previous accommodation prior to the intentional act. This may result in the application being suspended or removed from the Housing Needs Register.

84. It is an offence under section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 to intentionally provide false information or intentionally withhold information that should have been given to RBWM. If an applicant intentionally provides false information or withholds information when applying to RBWM for housing, Housing Register Team will exclude the application from the Housing Needs Register for a period of 5 years. RBWM may also take legal action against the applicant.

85. If the applicant has already been granted a tenancy, and false information was used to obtain it, our registered provider partners may take legal action in accordance with their Tenancy Policies.

86. Allocations of accommodation made to employees of RBWM or to RBWM Councillors, or to members of their family where these family links are known to Housing Register Team, will be checked and authorised by the Head of Housing, to ensure these allocations comply fully with the Allocations Scheme.

## **Renewing Applications**

87. Housing Register Team will write to an applicant on or after the anniversary of their application to establish whether an applicant wants to remain on the Housing Needs Register. If no response is received within 4 weeks a final letter will be sent advising the applicant that the application will be cancelled in one week if they fail to make contact. Housing Register Team will re-contact

vulnerable applicants. No further contact will result in the application being removed from the Housing Needs Register.

88. Applicants who do not bid during a twelve-month period will be subject to the same review process.

## Removals from the Housing Needs Register

89. An application may be removed from the Housing Needs Register if:

- An applicant does not respond to pre-registration correspondence within 28 days
- An applicant asks Housing Register Team to cancel their application
- Where the applicant has died
- Where the applicant moves and does not provide a contact address for the applicant to be re assessed
- An applicant accepts the tenancy of a property provided by a social housing landlord
- An applicant accepts the offer of a home purchased by shared ownership
- An applicant no longer qualifies for the Housing Needs Register
- An applicant successfully moves under the mutual exchange scheme
- An applicant is no longer eligible to be on the Housing Needs Register

## Housing Need Bandings

### Reasonable Preference

90. RBWM is required to give reasonable preference to the following categories of applicant:

- people who are homeless within the meaning of [Part 7 of the 1996 Act](#) (Including those who are intentionally homeless and those not in priority need)
- people who are owed a duty by any housing 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 occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3)
- people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability, and
- people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others)

Applicants may fall into more than one of these categories. In such cases, the highest Priority Band will apply.

## **Right to Move**

91. The Right to Move regulation supports current social housing tenants to move between local authorities in order to take up a job or live closer to employment or training in order to avoid hardship.

92. The employment should be long-term – at least 12 months and should be for at least 24 hours per week. The work must be based in RBWM, not just requiring the applicant to travel to the borough occasionally. Where an applicant has received an offer of a job, there must be genuine intent to take it up. Voluntary work is not eligible, but apprenticeships are eligible.

93. Applicants must provide evidence to confirm employment, and the reason(s) they would experience hardship if they were not able to move into the borough. This may include:

- A contract of employment.
- A formal offer letters.
- Wage/salary slips.
- Bank statements.

## **Housing Need Bands**

94. Once an application is fully assessed it will be placed in a one of the subcategories defined within each priority Band reflecting the housing need of the application, including reasonable preference.

95. There are four priority Bands:

- Band A: Urgent priority
- Band B: High priority
- Band C: Medium priority
- Band D: Low priority and specialist accommodation

96. Band A

- Only one offer will be made for applicants while they are in this Band



- Housing Register Team will offer assisted bidding while applicants are in this Band

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
A1	Medical A	<p>The applicant or a member of the household has an emergency or life-threatening medical or mental health condition which makes the current accommodation unsuitable to continue to occupy and is essential to rectify urgently.</p> <p>The condition, why the current accommodation is unsuitable, an explanation of how this can only be improved in alternative suitable accommodation and the type of accommodation required must all be confirmed by the Housing Occupational Therapist</p>	<p>Housing Register Team will override the choice-based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
A2	Emergency priority	<p>Severe housing need for exceptional circumstances, in crisis situations which warrant emergency priority as agreed by the Housing Services Manager. This may include applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required to move as determined by the police for witness protection reasons or because they under threat of immediate and serious violence</li> <li>• Requiring urgent hospital discharge where their current accommodation is totally unsuitable for their needs</li> <li>• Required to leave their homes as a result of Overcrowding Notice or Prohibition Order served in relation to the premises under the Housing Act 2004 or as the result of action taken by the Fire and Rescue Service</li> <li>• Required to move because they or a member of their</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Register Team will override the choice-based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>

		<p>household is being seriously and adversely affected by their current accommodation and there is a severe and very urgent need to move for welfare reasons. Priority on welfare grounds will be assessed by the Housing Register Team Leader or Housing Services manager. Each case will be assessed by looking at whether the situation is serious and enduring, whether it is directly affected by the applicant's present housing and whether it would improve if the applicant were re-housed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required to move because of a combination of high needs</li> <li>• Required to move for other very extreme circumstances</li> </ul> <p>This does not include homeless applicants to whom RBNW has a duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).</p>	
A3	Homeless (owed the main duty)	<p>The priority will be awarded to applicants who are owed a full homelessness duty by RBWM under Section 193(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), except those who are owed this duty because of the inclusion of a 'restricted person' in their household.</p> <p>This includes homeless applicants owed the main (unintentional) duty by RBWM, who qualify for a 'reasonable preference' as per the Housing Act 1996, Part VI and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and to whom the local connection criteria of the allocations scheme do not apply.</p>	<p>If statutorily homeless and placed in band A. The council will discharge its homeless duty into the first suitable property that is offered.</p> <p>If a homeless applicant refuses the offer of a suitable property, the council will view its statutory homeless duty as having been discharged and the banding reviewed</p>

A4	Returning homeless after being accommodated in the private rented sector	<p>Previously homeless households accommodated in the private rented sector (which discharged RBWM's main unintentional duty) who have become unintentionally homeless again within 2 years. Main unintentional duty is defined as in Section 193 Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017).</p> <p>In these cases, the local connection criteria of the allocations scheme do not apply.</p>	<p>For homeless applicants making their own housing arrangements while bidding for permanent accommodation: no required timescale for bidding.</p> <p>For homeless applicants placed in emergency or temporary accommodation: the Housing Services Manager will make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge RBWM's duty.</p>
A5	Fostering or adoption	Priority will be given to those applicants approved or being assessed for approval to adopt or foster and where recommendation is made by social care to provide accommodation because the current accommodation is not large enough or would cause overcrowding	No required timescale for bidding
A6	Urgent management transfers	Applicants living in registered provider accommodation in the RBWM who are under-occupying one or more bedrooms.	Housing Register Team will override the choice-based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.

			<p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
		<p>Applicants releasing an adapted property or to make best use of adapted stock where the tenant does not require adaptations.</p>	<p>Housing Register Team will override the choice-based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
		<p>Statutory and discretionary successors living in registered provider properties, where the registered provider has agreed to rehouse an applicant to more suitable accommodation than that currently occupied by the applicant</p>	<p>Applicants required to bid within 12 weeks of being placed in Band A. However, the Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
		<p>Registered provider transfer</p>	<p>The Housing</p>

		<p>applicants needing temporary decant where the property is imminently required for essential works and the tenant cannot remain in the property.</p>	<p>Services Manager will override the choice-based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
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97. Band B

<b>Band code</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Bidding requirement</b>
B1	Medical B	<p>The applicant's or a member of the applicant's household's medical condition, mental health, learning disability or care needs will only be able to substantially improve or be met by suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>Evidence is required from a specialist medical professional of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The medical or mental health condition, learning difficulty, or unmet care need;</li> <li>• The effect of the current accommodation</li> <li>• How suitable alternative accommodation will support an improvement</li> </ul>	<p>Where an applicant fails to bid successfully within 3 months, the priority of the case will be reviewed, which may result in down-banding or the removal of the application.</p> <p>However, the Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p>

B2	Homelessness or homeless (Relief stage)	<p>Applicants who are defined as threatened with homelessness or homeless by RBWM under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017), prior to the main homelessness duty being determined.</p> <p>The Council reserves the right to withdraw Band B awarded on the grounds of homeless prevention if the applicant refuses the offer of a suitable property or fails to act on the advice of their housing adviser in order to prevent them becoming homeless.</p>	<p>The Housing Services Manager may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>If a homeless applicant refuses the offer of a suitable property, the council will view its statutory homeless duty as having been discharged</p> <p>Where applicants fail to bid within 56 days the Housing Services Manager may agree a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation and discharge RBWM's duty</p> <p>Direct allocations may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge the RBWM 's duty.</p>
B3	Preventing homelessness through early intervention	Applicants who would have been classed as family/friend eviction, where continued accommodation has been agreed for a period of at least 6 months to prevent homelessness	<p>For applications who would otherwise be homeless save the intervention of housing options and agreement by potential excluder</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable</p>

			<p>alternative accommodation</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
B4	<p>Additional preference for people fleeing domestic abuse</p>	<p>Applicants, including out of Borough applicants, who are being accommodated in designated safe accommodation or temporary accommodation</p> <p>Enabling victims to put a safe distance between themselves and their abuser</p>	<p>No required timescale for bidding</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
B5	<p>High Priority due to serious or adverse effect of current accommodation on health or welfare needs</p>	<p>Where the applicant or member of their household is being seriously and adversely affected by their current accommodation and there is an urgent need to move for welfare reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority on welfare grounds will be assessed using a matrix of social need in the procedure guide, by the Housing Register Team Leader or Housing Services Manager. Each case will be assessed by looking at whether the situation is</li> </ul>	<p>No required timescale for bidding</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be</p>

		<p>serious and enduring, whether it is directly affected by the applicant's present housing and whether it would improve if the applicant were re-housed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An improvement notice has been served in relation to the applicant's dwelling by the private sector housing team and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the remedies that are needed to reduce the hazard will require the property to be vacated for a significant period of time</li> <li>○ the cost of the remedies is beyond the means of the applicant (where applicable)</li> <li>○ the remedies will make the property unsuitable for occupation by the applicant.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where there is significant evidence of serious harassment or violence, where a change of accommodation could be reasonably expected to alleviate the problem and there is no other remedy.</li> <li>• Applicants with a combination of medium needs.</li> </ul>	<p>reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
B6	<p>Overcrowding by Two Bedrooms excluding those in temporary accommodation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants with dependent children lacking 2 bedrooms</li> <li>• Applicants who have no access to a kitchen or bathroom or sharing a kitchen or bathroom with non-family members (as defined by S.113 Housing Act 1985); or lacking 2 bedrooms.</li> </ul> <p>This excludes households in interim or temporary accommodation provided by RBWM</p>	<p>No required timescale for bidding</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation</p>



			If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.
B7	Returning from institution	Applicants who were previously tenants of a registered provider who are returning from institutions, when a housing commitment was made in order to secure the relinquishment of the tenancy on entering the institution	<p>No required timescale for bidding</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
B8	Additional preference for young people leaving local authority care	<p>To enable a planned move on to independent suitable accommodation providing a support plan is in place the following criteria will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they are ready and prepared to move to independent settled accommodation</li> <li>• they have the life skills to manage a tenancy</li> <li>• they have a support package and appropriate plan</li> <li>• they have not, or have not previously, been a tenant of a registered provider as a result of being granted this</li> </ul>	No required timescale for bidding

		<p>priority. In exceptional circumstances priority may be given to former relevant children (up to the age of 25) who have completed higher education</p> <p>Applicants moving on from care or supported housing, as authorised by the Housing Services Manager</p> <p>Care leavers approved by the Care leavers Panel</p>	
B9	Existing Social Housing Tenants (Social or Affordable rent) Under occupying their current accommodation	This applies to current registered provider tenants who are under occupying their current accommodation by one bedroom or more.	<p>No required timescale for bidding</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>
B10	Management Transfers including Decants	This applies to registered provider tenants where the registered provider has accepted the applicant requires a management transfer or decanting from their existing property	<p>No required timescale for bidding</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation</p> <p>If this allocation is</p>

			refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.
B11	Vulnerable applicants in Supported Housing ready for Move On	This applies to applicants in supported accommodation where the Move-On Panel has determined the vulnerable applicant is ready to Move-On to independent accommodation.	<p>No required timescale for bidding</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager may override the choice-based lettings bidding process to make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation</p> <p>If this allocation is refused, the priority of the case will be reviewed and may be down banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.</p>

#### 98. Band C

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
C1	Medical C	<p>The applicant's or a member of the applicant's household's medical condition, mental health, learning disability or care needs will only be prevented from worsening or achieve a gradual improvement or be met by suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>Evidence is required from a medical professional of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The medical or mental health condition, learning difficulty,</li> </ul>	No required timescale for bidding.

		<p>or unmet care need;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effect of the current accommodation</li> <li>• How suitable alternative accommodation will prevent worsening or promote an improvement</li> </ul>	
C2	Threatened with homelessness (Prevention)	RBWM applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, who are likely to lose their accommodation through no fault of their own, for which there is no legal redress, in the next 12 weeks, who are assessed by the council's housing options team as not likely to be in priority need and who are receiving and acting upon housing advice from the council to prevent homelessness	<p>No required timescale for bidding.</p> <p>Housing Register Team may make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable alternative accommodation.</p> <p>This may include an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, which will discharge RBWM 's duty.</p>
C3	Rough sleeping or sofa surfing	Applicants with no identified priority need who have been verified by the council as having no settled accommodation and are 'rough sleeping' or 'sofa surfing'. The procedure guide will provide the checklist for sofa surfing approval.	No required timescale for bidding.
C4	Lacking 1 bedroom	Households lacking one bedroom.	No required timescale for bidding.
C5	Management transfer	Applicants living in registered provider accommodation requiring a transfer to properties of the same size and type for significant reasons, as agreed by the registered provider	No required timescale for bidding.
C6	Medium Priority due to the applicant being significantly and adversely affected by their current accommodation	Where the applicant or member of their household is being significantly and adversely affected by their current accommodation and there is a need to move for welfare reasons. Priority on welfare grounds will be assessed by the Housing Register Team Leader or Housing Services manager.	No required timescale for bidding.

		Each case will be assessed by looking at whether the situation is serious and enduring, whether it is directly affected by the applicant's present housing and whether it would improve if the applicant were re-housed.	
C7	Housing for Older People	Applicants for housing for older people over 60 where there is no higher housing need.	No required timescale for bidding
C8	Social Housing Tenants living in a Bedsit or Studio Flat	When assessing applicants living in a bedsit or studio property they will be assessed as having a bedroom and assessed accordingly.  Single and joint applicants will be assessed as having a bedroom.  Depending on the circumstances of the case it may be appropriate to assess under welfare grounds.	No required timescale for bidding.
C9	Social housing tenants living in two-bedroom flats that have two children		No required timescale for bidding.
C10	Existing social housing tenants accepted in accordance with the Right to Move Regulations or living in a Market Rent		No required timescale for bidding.

#### 99. Band D

Band code	Criteria	Definition	Bidding requirement
D1	Reduced priority – no bids in six months	The decision to exclude applicants who are not bidding in any Band will be made on the basis that they will be demoted to Band D for a period of 6 months unless there is a	Applicants in Bands A and B have 6 months from the date of assessment to place a bid. If they do not place a bid on

		<p>significant change in circumstances. Exceptions may be considered depending on the availability of suitable accommodation and personal circumstances of the applicant. At the end of the 6-month period applicants can request their application is reassessed. An application will only be re-instated if in accordance with the assessment process above. Applicants can appeal a decision to reassess.</p>	<p>properties which will meet their needs during that time, they will be reassessed to Band D for six months unless they continue to qualify in Band C. This will not apply to applicants owed a homelessness duty.</p>
D2	Keyworkers	<p>Priority for <b>keyworker accommodation</b> applicants must be working in a permanent position in one of the following sectors: education, health, police, fire, social services and some other key public and voluntary services and public sector agencies (including some covid key worker definitions)</p>	<p>No required timescale for bidding.</p>
D3	Traveller Sites	<p>Allocations to pitches will be made to those who fall within the following definition: "Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependents' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such." (Planning Policy for Travelers Sites)</p>	<p>See Property Qualification 4 below</p>
D4	Temporary Accommodation	<p>All homeless households will require an assessment of needs to determine the minimum size of accommodation and bedroom requirements and applicants will then be matched to available properties.</p> <p>The Council always seeks to place homeless households in</p>	<p>See Property Qualification Criteria 5 below</p>

		<p>temporary accommodation within the district but as a non-stockholding authority this is not always possible.</p> <p>Due to the shortage of available properties within the district, it is not always possible to accommodate larger pets with homeless households, though the Council will endeavour to allocate properties where pets are allowed to households in need of such a property.</p> <p>Where there is concern that a household may be at risk, due to violence or threat of violence, including domestic abuse, the Council may determine that an out-of-area placement is necessary in order to minimize the risk to that household.</p>	
D5	All other homeless households including those not in priority need or intentionally homeless	Clear reasonable preference to people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 including those found to be intentionally homeless, or homeless but not in priority need) and people who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3)?	
D6	Additional priority for ex Armed Forces personnel	<p>The following categories will be awarded one Band higher priority than their assessed need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the Armed Forces and former service personnel where the application for housing is made within 5 years of discharge.</li> <li>• Serving or former members</li> </ul>	<p>No required timescale for bidding.</p> <p>This is a floating band – therefore le. Once the banding has been determined around wider need – this category will then enable the household to increase their</p>

		<p>of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of serious injury, medical conditions or disability which is wholly or partially attributable to their service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bereaved spouses or civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their service spouse or partner and the death was wholly or partially attributable to their service.</li> </ul>	banding to one higher than their assessed need.
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## Priority within Bands

100. The subcategories in each Band do not reflect priority within the Band. Priority between applicants within Bands is determined by:

### Band Registration date

101. Priority date will be the sole consideration when prioritising between applicants in the same Band unless one of the Local Priorities Property Qualification Criteria's below applies. The priority date is either the date of registration or the date RBWM is notified of a change of circumstances which results in moving up a Band, or in the case of homeless applicants to whom a full duty is accepted, it is the date RBWM accepts a duty to accommodate, if this is earlier.

102. Applicants moving down a Band will retain the earliest qualifying date either in the current Band or a higher Band.

### Specific qualification criteria

103. Some advertised properties may have specific qualification criteria:

[Property Qualification Criteria 1 – Property for people aged 55+ and 60+](#)

[Property Qualification Criteria 2 - Property for people with mobility needs will be advertised as suitable for applicants with the following three categories:](#)

- Properties suitable for wheelchair user indoors and outdoors



- Properties suitable for people who cannot manage steps or stairs and may use a wheelchair some of the time
- Properties suitable for people who are independent but can only manage one or two steps

### Property Qualification Criteria 3 – Property subject to a Local Lettings Plan

- 103.1. A Local Lettings Plan is an agreement made in exceptional circumstances between Housing Services and a Housing Provider. It sets out how properties will be allocated in exceptional circumstances to meet areas specific issues. This is done to tackle a specific issue or problem that has been identified locally at block, street, estate or neighbourhood level, or to achieve a sustainable community on a new development.
- 103.2. Local lettings plans allows our registered provider partners to deliver better outcomes and improve life chances for current tenants and future residents.
- 103.3. Local lettings plans will be used to ensure, where possible, that there is a mixed and balanced community. Local letting policies for some existing properties and initial lettings on new build schemes may specify different priorities for allocating properties. Properties subject to such a policy will be clearly labelled in the property advert.
- 103.4. Local lettings plans may be applied in addition to any local planning restrictions (contained in agreements made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) which may be in place but will not override them. These local lettings plans will be agreed by the respective Registered Provider and the Head of Housing for The Royal Borough.
- 103.5. Recommendations for local lettings plans may include:
- Individual lettings plans will be agreed with the registered provider for each development at the time of first letting only.
  - Establishing and sustaining a mixed, stable and sustainable community on a new the development to foster a sense of ownership and community;
  - Setting a maximum or minimum age limit for certain properties, where evidence can determine a specific need;
  - Preference to other household types who would not normally be eligible under the Allocations Scheme – e.g. this could be couples without children, where there is a high density already in the area of families with children;

- Preference to people who are under occupying or who are overcrowded in their current home in the local vicinity;
- Sensitivity around the letting of homes to vulnerable people;
- Once adopted, a local lettings plan will override the Allocations Scheme. Any properties subject to a plan will be clearly labelled when advertised for lettings.

#### Property Qualification Criteria 4 – Traveller Sties

- 103.6. Applications will be placed in a priority depending on assessed housing need. Once housing need is assessed, we prioritise people according to who has been waiting the longest.
- 103.7. **Emergency decants:** people that need to move to enable development of their site/pitch or major repair. Applicants who are currently homeless within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended and there is no suitable temporary accommodation available (cannot accept bricks and mortar).
- 103.8. **Urgent:** Serious harassment, urgent medical needs, currently overcrowded, accepted homeless cases in temporary accommodation who, because of their lifestyle, want to move to a pitch as their offer of accommodation in discharge of the homeless duty. People in exceptional circumstances approved by the Head of Housing Needs.
- 103.9. All other homeless households, homeless prevention, social/welfare need, insanitary housing/accommodation in disrepair, need to move to give or receive support from a pitch resident.
- 103.10. With a housing need but does not meet the residence qualification or any other eligible applicant.

#### Property Qualification Criteria 5 – Temporary Accommodation

- 103.11. Where there is more than one homeless household requiring a specific size of temporary accommodation within the district, RBWM will prioritise households as follows:
- 103.12. Households with a disabled household member who requires access to services, care or support within the Borough. Disabled applicants will take priority over all other applicants for allocations of disabled adapted accommodation.

- 103.13. Households where at least one member of the household is in employment within the Borough and placing outside of the Borough would put undue stress onto the household.
- 103.14. Households with dependent children in school years 11,12 and 13 who are preparing for, or who are in the process of, taking examinations.
- 103.15. All other households with school-aged children.
- 103.16. All other homeless households.

## **Bidding and selection**

### **Direct Allocations**

104. Where the Housing Services Manager has determined that an applicant's housing needs are immediate as well as exceptional, the Head of Service may approve a request to offer an applicant accommodation ahead of other people on the Housing Register.
105. There will be occasions where allocations will need to be made outside the choice-based lettings scheme. Examples include but are not limited to:
- A registered provider partner needs to make an urgent management move
  - The requirement to make a direct offer to deal with an emergency case
  - The requirement to make a direct offer to meet the needs of a disabled applicant
106. The scheme prioritises the need to reduce and eliminate homelessness whilst also supporting the promotion of social and economic mobility by ensuring the best use of social housing stock and providing social housing tenants greater opportunity to move. Applicants will be encouraged to consider whether a property is suitable before they place a bid for example transport, education, employment and support needs or commitments.
107. RBWM is committed to extending choice of housing to those applicants who are accepted as homeless under the RBWM's statutory duties, ensuring effective use of our resources and the provision of temporary accommodation.
108. Applicants accepted as being owed a prevention or relief duty will be expected to bid on each suitable property that becomes available otherwise

RBWM may take action that includes making a direct offer of accommodation or reducing prioritisation by lowering the applicant's Band.

109. Applicants accepted as being owed a full statutory housing duty under Part VII Housing Act 1996 (as amended) will have bids placed on their behalf for each available property.
110. Applicants who have bids placed on their behalf because they are owed a homeless duty should not remove these bids. If bids are removed by the applicant, they will be replaced.
111. If a homeless applicant who is subject to Section 193(2) Housing Act 1996 refuses an offer of suitable accommodation, RBWM's duty is discharged.
112. In cases where Housing Register Team need to make decisions outside the policy there will be delegated authority determined by the Head of Service to decide. These cases include but are not limited to the refusal of an offer of suitable accommodation.

## **Sensitive Lettings**

113. There may be occasions when a Registered Provider requests that a vacant property is advertised as a sensitive letting; for example, where a previous tenant has caused anti-social behaviour and it is important to get the right mix of tenants in the area, having regard to the needs of existing vulnerable or elderly tenants. The landlord and the local authority may agree that the applicant in prime position for nomination/allocation is not suitable to be offered the property and instead agree to offer the property to a more suitable applicant.

## **Bidding Timescales**

114. The bidding requirements, which apply to each Band criteria, are set out within the Priority Bands. These requirements reflect the urgency of the housing need; the availability of temporary accommodation; ensuring the best use of housing stock; minimising costs.
115. Some priority criteria will allow applicants the opportunity to bid for suitable properties on choice-based lettings. Applicants are expected to maximize their opportunities for rehousing by bidding on all available properties of the right size in RBWM.
116. Applicants are entitled to two reasonable offers of accommodation. An offer is deemed reasonable where it is of the correct bed and person size based upon

the housing application and within an area selected by the applicant. If two reasonable offers are refused, the application will be removed from the register.

117. Any applicant who has been placed in Band A will receive one offer of suitable affordable accommodation in any area which will address their housing need. If the first reasonable offer of accommodation is refused and the applicant is in Band A the applicant will be entitled to a second offer, but the application will be moved to Band B.
118. A statutorily homeless applicant will be entitled to only one suitable offer of accommodation anywhere in the Borough. Where that offer is refused the Council will consider it to have discharged its statutory duty and where applicable, the provision of temporary accommodation will be withdrawn.
119. If an applicant refuses any offer, they will be asked to explain the reason in writing or by contacting Registered Provider Allocations team within 24 hours following the agreed procedure. If the reason is due to exceptional or unusual circumstances the offer may be deemed to be unreasonable, and not counted.
120. The offer will not be deemed unreasonable if the Council was not made aware of certain facts and requirements prior to offer.
121. If the offer is held to be reasonable, the applicant will be given 48 hours to reconsider.
122. Applications will be removed from the Housing Needs Register if it is found that it has never been or it has ceased to be an eligible application.
123. Applicants are required to re-register every other year. Applications will be removed if the applicant fails to re-register or if the Council considers there are good reasons for removal.
124. Applicants in Bands A and B have 6 months from the date of assessment to place a bid. If they do not place a bid on properties which will meet their needs during that time, they will be reassessed to Band D for six months unless they continue to qualify in Band C. This will not apply to applicants owed a homelessness duty.
125. The decision to exclude applicants who are not bidding in any Band will be made on the basis that they will be demoted to Band D for a period of 6 months unless there is a significant change in circumstances. Exceptions may be considered depending on the availability of suitable accommodation and personal circumstances of the applicant. At the end of the 6-month period applicants can request their application is reassessed. An application will only be re-instated if in accordance with the assessment process above. Applicants can appeal a decision to reassess.

126. Where identified in the Priority Bands in the tables above, the Housing Register Team will override the choice-based lettings system and make a reasonable direct allocation of suitable accommodation, particularly when there is an urgent need to rehouse.
127. For homeless applicants this reasonable direct allocation will discharge the RBWM 's homelessness duty. If a homeless applicant disagrees with the offer or the discharge of duty, they have the right to request a review of the suitability of the accommodation offered and/or the Discharge of the Homelessness duty, under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017). The allocated property will not remain available to the applicant pending the outcome of the review process.
128. Where the priority criteria allow applicants to bid for suitable properties within a designated period of time, Housing Register Team will review the application at the end of that time and determine whether the bidding period will be extended; whether a reasonable direct allocation of suitable accommodation is required; or whether the priority no longer applies to the application, and it will be down-banded or removed from the Housing Needs Register.

### **Advertising vacant properties**

129. Vacant properties will be advertised on the Choice Based Lettings website. Eligibility criteria will be included in the advertisement such as:
- Type of property – flat, house, bungalow
  - Location of property
  - Size of household
  - Size of property and number of reception rooms
  - Whether the property is suitable for children
  - Age limitations
  - The mobility group, if applicable
  - The level of care and support available
  - Whether pets are allowed
  - Whether it is sheltered accommodation
  - Who owns the property i.e. council or registered provider
  - The weekly rent including any other charges
  - An estimate of the date the property will be ready for occupation
  - Whether a local lettings policy applies
130. The property advert will state the rent charge, service charge and any related costs Applicants may exercise choice regarding the properties for which they bid. However, if the applicant is subject to bidding time limits, they will be expected to bid for both social and affordable rented homes as both will be considered suitable.

131. Housing Register Team needs to ensure that all properties are used as effectively as possible and will advertise and allocate properties with a bedroom entitlement for each of the following:

- Every adult, married or cohabiting couple
- Every person aged 21 years or more
- Two dependents aged 10-20 years of the same gender (sharing a room)
- Two children aged under 10 years regardless of gender (sharing a room)

132. Bedroom entitlement is further clarified by:

- Housing Register Team may allocate properties outside these size criteria to larger households, or where a bedroom is too small for more than one occupant.
- Unborn children will not be considered for assessment purposes until they are born, and a copy of the birth certificate has been received.
- Non dependants over the age of 21 will not be included as part of an applicant's household, except where there are care needs supported by medical evidence.
- Couples with an unborn child living in a social housing one bedroom property will not qualify to be registered until the baby is born and a copy of the birth certificate has been received, unless an applicant has a housing need under health or welfare grounds.
- Where there is evidence of a need for a member of the household to have a separate bedroom (for example, for medical reasons, or because of behavioural issues), then an additional bedroom need can be allowed once medical evidence of need has been received.
- A child must live at the address as their main home in order for them to be classed as a permanent resident. Usually, the care giver at this address will be the person in receipt of child benefit or Universal Credit. Exceptions will be considered, for example in circumstances where the child resides away from the applicant on a temporary basis, but their permanent home is with the applicant.
- Where an applicant has care or support needs that require overnight assistance on a permanent or casual basis, then the need for an additional bedroom can be awarded to permit this. This can include prospective foster carers, on evidence that Children's Social Care will approve the Applicant as a foster carer subject to availability of suitable size accommodation.
- Applicants awarded priority on the basis of having a bedroom shortage may be by-passed if they bid successfully on a like-for-like property. For example,

if an applicant lives in a 3-bed house but only requires a 2-bed house and bids successfully on another 3-bed house, they will be bypassed on the shortlist for that property.

- Large families (i.e. those with five or more children) may be given additional priority over smaller households for properties with four or more bedrooms.
- Accommodation where there is a separate dining space or reception room in addition to the main reception area will be classed as a bedroom and will be available for households to bid on that basis
- Where an applicant requires a different property to their assessed need we reserve the right to make an alternative sized accommodation offer

133. Applicants will be allowed to bid for the size and type of property as shown in Appendix 1. In some circumstances the opportunity may be given to bid for larger properties where they are in low demand.

134. Housing Register Team may allocate properties outside these size criteria for households who are threatened with homelessness (to whom the RBWM owes a 'Prevention' duty); or homeless (to whom RBWM owes a 'Relief' duty); or those to whom RBWM owes the main duty; and where it has been assessed that the property is reasonable for the household's needs. This offer of suitable accommodation will discharge the RBWM's duty under Part VII Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

135. Housing Register Team may allocate up to one additional bedroom above the size criteria for each qualifying person where there is an overriding, proven medical need to support the request. The need will need to be evidenced in accordance with the procedures described above.

136. Our registered provider partners have their own size criteria for their properties, which may vary from the criteria stated above. This will be made clear in their advertisements.

137. Adapted properties will be advertised with a mobility classification as below, with additional information if there is the potential for further adaptation:

- Suitable for wheelchair- user indoors and outdoors.
- Suitable for people who cannot manage steps or stairs and may use a wheelchair some of the time.
- Suitable for people who are independent but can only manage one or two steps.



138. Where an age restriction applies and there are no eligible bidders, applicants without children may be considered subject to an affordability assessment.
139. Details of recent allocations, the number of bidders for each property and the Band and priority date of the successful applicant are published on the RBWM website.

## **Bidding**

140. Housing Register Team will advertise empty properties. Eligible applicants can make bids for properties by bidding online via the choice-based lettings website. Full details of how to bid are set out on the website.
141. Housing Register Team is aware that some vulnerable applicants may need assistance in order to complete the bidding process. Housing Register Team seeks to address this issue in the following ways:
- By providing regular training and awareness events for agencies who support vulnerable people to help them guide their clients through the process of registration and bidding.
  - By giving direct advice and assistance to applicants, support staff and agencies during office hours either in person or by phone and by providing information on the RBWM website.
  - By providing information in a variety of formats and languages on request.
142. Where necessary, bids can be made by Housing Register Team staff on behalf of applicants, proxy bidding by support staff, friends or family of a vulnerable person is also possible on request.
143. All bids for property will be checked against the eligibility criteria. Ineligible bids are excluded from consideration. Housing Register Team will contact and advise applicants who regularly bid for properties for which they are not eligible.
144. The applicant has the choice to refuse an offer of accommodation if it has been allocated via the choice-based lettings system on the understanding two refusals will result in removal from the register. The applicant may bid for other properties in subsequent choice-based lettings adverts.
145. Refusals of properties offered by a direct allocation may lead to a discharge of homelessness duty, or to a review of the priority banding, with the possibility of down-banding or removal from the Housing Needs Register. Details of the bidding and direct allocation requirements are listed against each Priority Band criteria.

## Selection

146. Qualifying bids for each property are placed in priority order. Priority is decided by specific qualification criteria where one applies then by Band and then by date within the band.
147. If there are no eligible bidders for a property Housing Register Team may decide to make a direct allocation or to re-advertise the property.
148. Offers will normally be made to the applicant at the top of the shortlist subject to verification checks and acceptance of a nomination.
149. RBWM and our registered provider partners will require applicants to provide further verification of their housing circumstances and/or carry out a property inspection of the applicant's current home prior to making the offer. Registered providers may reject an applicant for a particular property if accepting the applicant would conflict with their own policies and procedures.
150. Before offering a tenancy, our registered provider partners will undertake:
- Vulnerability risk assessment – we will risk assess all applicants to identify any support needs. Where we identify a need, we will need to be satisfied that adequate support is in place.
  - Affordability assessment – applicants will be asked to complete an affordability assessment including proof of income and expenditure and full details of any debts. We will also seek permission to carry out credit checks. Where applicants have housing-related debts, they will need to demonstrate that they have arrangements in place to repay them. If it is evident that the applicant cannot afford the tenancy, an offer of a tenancy may be withdrawn.
  - References – we may seek references for all applicants to ensure they are able to maintain a tenancy, including condition of property, acceptable behaviour and rent payments. If there is evidence of previous significant tenancy breaches, we may withdraw an offer.
151. Our registered provider partners will not normally make an offer of a tenancy where the applicant:
- Has breached the terms of a previous tenancy where, if action had been taken possession would have been mandatory. This includes rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and tenancy fraud and is subject to the same criteria as qualification to join the Housing Needs Register.
  - Has behaved unacceptably toward Council staff or partner agencies. This includes verbal abuse, harassment and intimidation, threatening behaviour or abusive language.

- Was evicted from a previous tenancy or failed a probationary tenancy subject to the same criteria as qualification to join the Housing Needs Register.
  - Has knowingly given false or misleading information or has refused to provide information requested in
  - Has housing-related debts and cannot evidence that they have either repaid or significantly reduced the debt over a sustained period of time.
  - Has recently been subject to an anti-social behaviour injunction, an anti-social behaviour order, an injunction, a demotion order, a closure order or a community protection warning/notice.
  - Has been identified as unable to sustain the tenancy without additional support and there is no evidence that a support or care package is in place.
  - Has been identified as needing adaptations that cannot be provided and that would put them at risk if not in place.
152. Our registered provider partners want to promote responsible pet ownership. RBWM will not disadvantage owners of assistance dogs; emotional assistance dogs and lifetime pets owned by people living alone at the point of offer for its own accommodation where pets would not normally be allowed. The decision will depend on the type and number of pets and the likelihood for nuisance and annoyance to neighbours and will be made in accordance with registered provider partners' Tenancy Policies.
153. Our registered provider partners will arrange accompanied viewings, advise on any non-essential repairs to be completed after the tenancy start date and give a target date for the completion of these repairs.
154. RBWM will offer the successful applicant the option to accept the offer of a property and arrange for them to sign for the tenancy agreement. If an applicant refuses the offer the Housing Register Team will re-shortlist the existing bidders to allow an offer to be made to the next highest priority applicant.
155. Non-homeless applicants will not normally be penalised for refusing offers however persistent and unreasonable refusals will result in enquiries being made and a review of the application with the option for the applicant being excluded from the Housing Needs Register.
156. The decision to offer a Traveller Site pitch will be made by a panel of the local authority allocations team and the managing agent for the site. The Panel will identify the applicant in the highest band who has been waiting the longest within that band. They will then consider the current situation regarding illegal encampments in the Borough and the strength of the applicant's connection to the Borough
157. The Panel will then consider if there are any other circumstances that need to be considered to ensure the safe and secure running of the site so that residents can have quiet enjoyment of their pitch and the site. The Panel will aim to create

a shortlist of 3 applicants, who can be ranked for offer and contacted in turn. The Panel will authorise the offer to the selected applicant from the waiting list who will be contacted about the offer. Where an offer has been made and refused no further offer will be made and the application will be removed from the list.

## Review and Appeal

158. In certain circumstances an applicant may request a review of the Housing Register Team decision concerning their housing application. A first appeal will be to a Senior Allocations Officer. A final appeal will be to the Housing Performance Lead.
159. Homelessness decisions are subject to the right of review under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017). The allocated property will not remain available to the applicant pending the outcome of the review process unless the property has been accepted and a review of suitability is requested.
160. Applicants may request a review in the following circumstances:
- Applicant disagrees with the decision to change their joint application to a sole application
  - Applicant disagrees with the decision to exclude, suspend or remove their application
  - Applicant disagrees with the assessment of their housing need, local priority and local connection
  - Applicant disagrees with the assessment of need following a change in their housing circumstances
  - Applicant disagrees with Housing Register Team direct allocation to them
  - Applicant disagrees with a decision to reassess to a lower Band
  - Applicant disagrees with the decision relating to eligibility
  - Applicant disagrees with the review of suitability if a Pt VI offer in respect of a Pt VII case
161. A request for a review must be made within 21 days from the day on which the applicant received notification of the decision. Housing Register Team has the discretion to extend the time limit if it considered that this would be reasonable.
162. Requests for a review must be made in writing by email or letter. Applicants will be asked to explain why they consider the Housing Register Team decision to be unreasonable, and to provide any additional evidence as required.
163. The review will be considered by the Housing Performance Lead who will carry out the review and respond to the applicant within 8 weeks of the review

request being received. Applicants will be advised if the decision is going to be delayed for any reason.

164. Any request for a review must be on the basis that the Allocation Scheme has not been applied correctly to the household's circumstances. If the applicant wishes to challenge the Allocations Scheme itself, they are advised to seek independent legal advice.

165. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision, they will be advised that they have the right to refer their case to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

## **Performance and monitoring**

### **Consultation, Implementation and Review**

166. RBWM recognises the importance of involving, consulting and raising awareness with local communities about the housing register to reach agreement about an allocation scheme that balances housing needs from both national and local perspectives.

167. Consultation arrangements include a full 12 weeks' consultation through our social media channels and forums/focus groups.

168. This Scheme will come into effect in June 2023 with changes being made and implemented up to and including March 2025.

169. All applicants currently on the Housing needs Register and Registered Provider Transfer Registers with a local connection to RBWM will need to re-register to be reassessed under the new Housing Allocations Policy.

170. The Allocation Scheme will be subject to review a minimum of five years from its implementation and on publication of any significant change in legislation, Codes of guidance or the Regulatory Standards.

### **Service Standards**

171. RBWM has service standards for the allocations scheme. These are included in the housing service standards agreed for and with RBWM tenants. RBWM will review and publicise its performance against these standards annually.

172. RBWM will aim to:

- Register applications within 28 days

- Process changes in circumstances within 28 days
- Reply to letters within 10 working days
- Answer phone calls within 30 seconds
- Provide advice to applicants to help them with bidding choices by phone, e-mail and in person
- Wear ID at all times including when visiting
- Deal with all enquiries in a fair and sensitive manner
- Advertise vacant properties for a minimum of 5 days
- Provide reliable information on when a property will be available to let
- Advise you of your right to request a review of a decision in accordance with the details contained within

173. An applicant is required to:

- Keep the Housing Register Team informed of any changes of circumstances
- Ensure the Housing Register Team have an up-to-date address
- Reply to requests for information as quickly as possible
- Treat RBWM staff with courtesy
- Give accurate information regarding personal circumstances

## **Monitoring**

174. RBWM will publish waiting list numbers and lettings outcomes on its website at quarterly intervals:

- Percentage split of housing needs register and transfer list for our registered provider partners
- Percentage split of direct lets and choice-based lettings allocations
- Average waiting times per band and accommodation size
- Numbers of applicants on the register including percentage split of housing needs register and transfer list

## Appendix 1 – Bedroom entitlement

	Single Person	Single Person with access to children (1)	Couple	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 1 Other	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 2 others	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 3 Others	Couple or Lone Parent Plus 4 or More Others
Studio	✓	✓					
1 Bedroom Flat	✓	✓	✓				
1 Bedroom House	✓	✓	✓				
1 Bedroom Bungalow	✓	✓	✓				
2 Bedroom Flat			✓	✓	✓		
2 Bedroom House				✓	✓		
2 Bedroom Bungalow	✓ (2)		✓	✓	✓ (2)		
3 Bedroom House					✓	✓	✓
3 Bedroom Flat or Maisonette					✓	✓	✓
3 Bedroom Parlour House					✓	✓	✓
4 Bedroom House						✓	✓
5 Bedroom or More House							✓

(1) Single person with children who do not live with them on a permanent basis.

(2) Depending on medical, mental health, mobility or care needs