

## Haringey's Housing Allocations Policy 2015 (SUMMARY)

This is a short summary of Haringey's Housing Allocations Policy.  
The full Policy is on the council's website: [www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk)

The Housing Allocations Policy is important because it sets out how the Housing Register will operate, who is allowed to be placed on the Housing Register, how applicants' housing needs are assessed and how council and housing association homes are let.

### **HARINGEY'S HOUSING REGISTER**

Haringey's Housing Register is a local register of housing need. Everyone applying for social housing in Haringey must apply through its Housing Register, to assess their eligibility for housing and qualification to be included on it.

Priority is given to those in greatest need who are closely connected with Haringey.

Due to the huge demand for social housing in the borough, most of the people on Haringey's Housing Register will never be offered the tenancy of a council or housing association home. With absolutely no prospect of being offered social housing, they should consider all other options, including the private rented sector.

### **CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

Most of the council and housing association homes that become available for letting in Haringey are advertised and let through its choice based lettings scheme.

Haringey's Home Connections choice based lettings scheme enables applicants to 'bid' for suitable properties in a variety of ways. Although most applicants bid through the Home Connections website, bids can also be made on the telephone, by Smartphone app, by text message and in person at one of the Council's Customer Service Centres.

Where an applicant is homeless and living in temporary accommodation, they may be subject to 'auto-bidding', with bids being made for all suitable properties, automatically on their behalf, by the Home Connections computer.

All of the properties that are let through the choice based lettings scheme will be advertised on the Home Connections website. Applicants on Haringey's Housing Register are entitled to 'bid' for up to 3 homes a week. Bids must reflect applicants' assessed needs, including the number of bedrooms and any disabled facilities.

When the deadline for the receipt of bids has expired, the Council will use the Housing Allocations Policy to draw up a shortlist of the bidders who have the highest priority and are eligible to be considered for the property.

All applicants on the shortlist will be invited to view the property, but the applicant who is in the highest Housing Needs Band and has the oldest 'effective date' will be the first applicant to be offered the tenancy of the property.

## **LETTINGS THAT ARE NOT COVERED BY THIS POLICY**

The Housing Allocations Policy does not cover all allocations of social housing. Some of the allocations not covered by the Policy are as follows:

- Temporary accommodation provided for homeless people under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). However applicants in this situation will be included on the Housing Register and take part in the choice based lettings scheme.
- Mutual exchanges between council tenants and between council tenants and housing association tenants;
- Successions following the death of a secure tenant or, if the home is larger than the successor needs, the offer of alternative accommodation;
- Secure tenancies that are the subject of a Order in which the Court determines who is to be the secure tenant under the following legislation:
  - a) the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, s24 (property adjustment orders in connection with matrimonial proceedings);
  - b) the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984, s17(1) (property adjustment orders after overseas divorce); or
  - c) the Children Act 1989, Schedule 1, paragraph 1 (orders for financial relief against parents).

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL CONNECTION**

In Haringey, the number of households applying for social housing is much higher than the number of council and housing association homes that become available for letting each year. For this reason, applicants who do not have a local connection with the borough cannot expect the same priority for housing as those applicants who do.

The Housing Allocations Policy gives preference to those applicants who have a local connection with Haringey. Applicants will meet this requirement if:

- Their principal home is situated in Haringey and they have been living in the borough continuously for at least 3 years; or
- They are a secure tenant of Haringey Council and are living in an out-of borough property; or
- They have been placed in specialised housing by Haringey Council or the Health Authority and are continuing to receive services from the Council and/or the Health Authority; or

- They are resident in a women’s refuge outside the Borough and had been living in Haringey continuously for at least 3 years prior to moving into the refuge; or
- They are temporarily residing outside Haringey in prison, hospital or residential care but have the intention of returning to Haringey and had been living in Haringey continuously for at least 3 years prior to moving into prison, hospital or residential care; or
- They are (whether or not they currently live in the borough):
  - a serving member of the regular forces or have been such a member within the 5 years preceding their application to the housing register
  - the spouse or civil partner of a deceased member of the regular forces who is no longer entitled to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation
  - serving or have served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability as a result (wholly or partly) to that service

Applicants will no longer be able to remain on the Housing register if their circumstances change and they can no longer establish a local connection with the borough.

This will happen, for example, if since applying to join the Housing register, they have moved out of the borough and no longer meet any other local connection conditions. It will also happen where an applicant had a local connection because Haringey Council had a rehousing duty to them under the homelessness legislation but that rehousing duty has since been discharged.

## **PEOPLE WHO CAN JOIN THE HOUSING REGISTER**

To join the Housing Register, applicants must both be eligible for housing and qualify for inclusion on the Register.

To be considered for inclusion on the Housing Register, applicants are encouraged to first, complete the Council’s on-line Housing Options Assessment. This will determine the housing options suitable for the applicant and only where the minimum banding threshold has been identified (Band C) will the applicant be able to complete a Housing Register application.

Only applicants aged 16 or over who have been assessed as meeting the threshold conditions for inclusion on the Housing Register will be permitted to complete a full application. Some landlords, however, may only offer tenancies to applicants under the age of 18 if they have a guarantor.

An applicant can only include in their application people who normally live with them (or might reasonably be expected to reside with them) as a member of their household. If the applicant is eligible and qualifies for housing, their application will be assessed and placed in the appropriate Housing Needs Band (A, B, or C) based on the information they have provided. (See **Appendix A** for the details).

When the Council has assessed their application, the applicant will receive a letter confirming the outcome, including details of the Housing Needs Band into which the applicant has been

placed into, their 'effective date' and the size (and, if appropriate, the type) of property for which they are eligible.

## PEOPLE WHO ARE INELIGIBLE FOR HOUSING

Section 160A of the Housing Act 1996 sets out who is ineligible to receive an allocation of housing. These are as follows:

- Certain persons who are subject to immigration control, unless they are re-included by order of the Secretary of State or are exempt because they are already a secure tenant
- Other persons from abroad whom the Secretary of State deems to be ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by a local housing authority or are exempt because they are already a secure tenant

## PRIORITISING HOUSING APPLICANTS

All applicants will be placed in the appropriate Housing Needs Band (A, B or C) based on an assessment of their needs. (See **Appendix A** for the details)

Haringey's Housing Allocations Policy gives reasonable preference to five groups of applicants as set out in the housing legislation. These include applicants who are homeless, applicants who are occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or are otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions, and applicants who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.

Where an applicant with reasonable preference has an assessed need, consideration may be given (in accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy) to giving reduced preference in situations where, for example:

- The applicant is a tenant of the Council or a housing association and has property-related debts (such as rent arrears, council tax arrears or a Housing Benefit overpayment); or
- The applicant is a tenant of a private landlord and has property-related debts (such as rent arrears, council tax arrears or a Housing Benefit overpayment); or
- The applicant is a tenant who has breached the terms of a postponed possession order within the last five years; or
- The applicant (or someone they have included as part of their household) has committed acts of anti social behaviour that have caused, or are likely to cause, a serious nuisance or annoyance to their neighbours or others where they live or have previously lived; or
- The applicant has been convicted of assaulting or harassing an employee or agent of Haringey Council, Homes for Haringey or a housing association (including those with whom the Council does not have nomination arrangements); or
- The applicant (or someone they have included as part of their household) has deliberately damaged a property that they are renting, or were previously renting, from Homes for Haringey, a housing association, a local authority or a private landlord.

Where an applicant with reasonable preference has sufficient financial resources to buy or lease a suitable home applies to join the Housing Register, their needs will be assessed as usual, but they will be given reduced preference due to their resources.

When assessing applicants, Haringey Council will consider whether an applicant has deliberately made their housing situation worse in order to increase their housing need and improve their chances of being rehoused through the Housing Register.

If the Council decides that the applicant has deliberately made their housing situation worse, the applicant will remain (or be placed) in the Housing Needs Band that reflects their housing need before they deliberately made their situation worse.

## **BEDROOM ENTITLEMENT**

When reaching a decision on the number of bedrooms to which an applicant is entitled, the Council will take into account the age, gender and number of children and young people under the age of 25 in the household, together with whether or not there is a need for a live-in carer.

Single people aged 25 or over (together with couples) are entitled to a bedroom of their own. Children and young people aged 10 or over will not be required to share a bedroom with someone of the opposite sex.

## **DECIDING THE 'EFFECTIVE DATE'**

All applicants will be placed in the appropriate Housing Needs Band (A, B or C) following an assessment of their needs, where the minimum threshold for Band C has been met.

Priority within Housing Needs Bands is determined by an applicant's 'effective date'. This is usually the date the Council receives their completed housing application.

However, where an applicant is moved from one Housing Needs Band to another, the new 'effective date' will be the date from which the applicant's Band is changed.

## **DISCRETIONARY POWERS**

The Housing Allocations Policy cannot cover every eventuality.

The Decisions Panel has discretionary power to award additional priority and approve offers of housing.

## **ANNUAL RENEWAL OF HOUSING APPLICATIONS**

Applicants are required to renew their housing application at least once a year, in order to confirm that they still want to be considered for housing.

Applicants will be notified of the arrangements for completing this renewal and must do so within the specified time period.

## **CANCELLATION OF HOUSING APPLICATIONS**

A housing application will be cancelled and removed from the Housing Register if the applicant requests it or if they become ineligible for housing, fail to maintain their housing application (through the renewal process), move home and fail to provide the Council with a contact address, or fail to respond to a request for further information within the specified time period.

## **SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

To join Haringey's Supported Housing Register, applicants must be assessed by a Supported Housing Assessment Officer and complete a supported housing application form. The Local Connection provisions apply to this assessment.

The provisions relating to owner occupiers set out in the Housing Allocations Policy also apply to the allocation of supported housing.

Following the housing needs assessment and based on the applicant's circumstances, the Supported Housing Assessment Officer will determine the type of supported housing each applicant is eligible for and place them (in date order) in the appropriate Priority Band 1-5.

## **RIGHT OF REVIEW**

Applicants have the right to ask for a review of certain decisions that the Council has made about their application for housing. For example, a decision to exclude an applicant from the Housing Register, remove them from the Register or where they dispute a fact that is taken into account when deciding whether or not to make an allocation of accommodation.

## **DECISIONS RELATING TO THE HOUSING NEEDS BANDS**

All applicants will be placed in the appropriate Housing Needs Band (A, B or C) based on an assessment of their needs. (See **Appendix A** for the details).

Haringey's Housing Allocations Policy and banding system reflect the borough's priorities: tackling homelessness and overcrowding, making best use of the social housing stock, supporting move-on and assisting independence. As well as giving priority to applicants who have a local connection, they will ensure that applicants are rehoused quickly where this is in the overriding interests of the Council.

Although the following paragraphs and Appendix A summarise some of the key elements of the banding system, more comprehensive information on the provision of each Housing Needs Band is contained in the full Housing Allocations Policy.

## **Emergency management transfers**

In exceptional circumstances (and with the approval of the multi disciplinary Decision's Panel), tenants of Haringey Council and tenants of certain housing associations (where Haringey Council has nomination rights or has entered into a reciprocal arrangement with another Council) will be placed in Band 'A' and made a 'direct offer' of alternative accommodation on a like-for-like basis.

## **Making best use of the social housing stock**

Tenants of Haringey Council and tenants of certain housing associations (which are offering the Council tenancy nomination rights) who are 'under-occupying' a large family home or a specially adapted home and are willing to transfer to a home that is more appropriate to their needs will be placed in Band 'A'.

## **Transfers that will release a property that is needed**

In exceptional circumstances, council tenants and tenants of certain housing associations (which are offering the Council tenancy nomination rights) will be placed in Band 'A' where their transfer to alternative accommodation will either avoid the need for expensive adaptations to their own home or enable the Council to meet the urgent housing needs of another household on the Housing Register whose needs would not otherwise have been met within a reasonable time.

## **Providing move-on from specialist or supported accommodation**

Most of the applicants living in a supported housing scheme will be placed in Band 'C' if they have a local connection with Haringey.

However, applicants who are nominated for move-on accommodation by named agencies (in accordance with the Move-On Strategy and an approved nominations agreement that includes a commitment to provide rehousing for an agreed number of residents) will be placed in Band 'A' for six months.

## **Applicants who have negotiated the surrender of their former council tenancy**

At the Council's discretion, former tenants of Haringey Council may be placed in Band 'A' where they have negotiated the surrender of their tenancy on the understanding that they will be offered accommodation upon their release from prison, hospital, rehabilitation or residential care.

## **Social housing tenants who are severely overcrowded**

Tenants of Haringey Council and tenants of certain housing associations (which are offering the Council tenancy nomination rights) who have at least two bedrooms fewer than their assessed needs will be placed in Band 'B'.

When assessing overcrowding, the Council will only take into account those people who are part of the applicant's household.

## **Applicants who are homeless**

Where Haringey Council has accepted a rehousing duty towards them under the homelessness legislation, the applicant will be placed in Band 'B'. In exceptional circumstances (where such a household has been assessed by the Council as being in 'severe need'), the applicant will be placed in Band 'A'.

Where Haringey Council has not accepted a rehousing duty towards them under the homelessness legislation (because, for example, they are deemed not to be in priority need

or they have become homeless intentionally), the applicant is entitled to 'reasonable preference' and will be placed in Band 'C' if they have a local connection with Haringey.

### **Assessment of medical needs**

Where an applicant's current housing is detrimental to their health, or a move to more suitable accommodation would have a positive effect on their health, they may ask to be awarded medical priority.

The applicant will be awarded one of four medical priority categories; very serious, serious, moderate or low.

### **Assessment of welfare needs / hardship**

Where at least one member of the applicant's household is deemed vulnerable and less able to find settled or suitable accommodation, they may ask to be awarded priority on the grounds of welfare or hardship.

Although applicants will need to move, they may not have been awarded medical priority because their current housing may be suitable for their needs.

Applicants will be awarded 1 of 3 vulnerability categories; high, medium or low.

### **Disrepair, poor design and lack of facilities**

Any complaint about disrepair in homes managed by the Council or a registered provider must be reported to the Repairs Service of the applicant's landlord.

The Council's Housing Improvement Team (Private Sector) will assess the situation of applicants living in private sector accommodation in poor condition and seek to provide a resolution to enable the tenant to remain in the property.

If an applicant's home lacks permanent facilities (such as cooking facilities, washing facilities, toilet facilities or heating) they will be placed in Band 'C'.

### **Applicants who are sharing with another household**

Applicants will be placed in Band 'C' if they share a living room, kitchen/food preparation facilities, bathing and washing facilities and/or an inside toilet with someone (including friends or relatives) who is not part of their housing application.

### **Applicants who are living in mobile homes, houseboats or caravans**

Applicants who are living in a caravan, mobile home or houseboat will not qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register, if there is no other housing need.



## APPENDIX A – HOUSING NEEDS BANDS

### ❖ HOUSING NEEDS BAND ‘A’

1. Applicants who need to move urgently because of a critical medical or welfare need, including emergencies.
2. Applicants who, at the discretion of the Council, need to move urgently because there are critical safeguarding circumstances.
3. Tenants of the Council or of partner housing associations who have been approved for an emergency management transfer because of harassment, domestic violence or hate crime, including cases agreed through reciprocal arrangements with other local authorities.
4. Haringey Council tenants and partner housing association tenants living in Haringey who are under-occupying a family home (with three or more bedrooms) and are willing to transfer to a home that has at least two fewer bedrooms.
5. Haringey Council tenants and partner housing association tenants living in Haringey who are under-occupying a two-bedroom family home and are willing to transfer to a bedsit or one-bedroom home.
6. Haringey Council tenants and partner housing association tenants living in Haringey who are occupying a specially-adapted home and are willing to transfer to a home that is more appropriate to their needs.
7. Applicants who have a right of succession to a Council tenancy or where the Council has exercised its discretion to those not entitled to succeed but are under-occupying their accommodation (or occupying a specially-adapted home) and are required to move to somewhere smaller and/or more appropriate to their needs.
8. Haringey Council tenants and partner housing association tenants living in Haringey who require extensive disabled facilities that can be provided more appropriately in alternative accommodation.
9. Applicants who are in severe need and have been accepted for rehousing, by Haringey Council, under the homelessness legislation.
10. Haringey Council tenants and partner housing association tenants living in Haringey who need to be permanently decanted in order to enable essential repairs or redevelopment to be carried out, or as part of a regeneration scheme in Haringey.
11. Applicants who are required to leave their homes as a result of a prohibition order served by the Council or the Fire Service in relation to the premises.
12. Applicants (including young care leavers and people leaving hospital, residential care and supported housing) who are nominated for move-on accommodation by named agencies in accordance with an agreed nominations agreement that includes specific quotas.
13. Retiring service tenants who are living in Council accommodation and for whom Haringey Council has a contractual obligation to provide accommodation.
14. Situations where it is in the overriding interests of the Council to prioritise an allocation of housing to a particular household and/or it is necessary to fulfil an urgent statutory or legal duty.
15. Applicants (except homeless households for whom the Council has accepted a rehousing duty) who have two or more needs in Band B.
16. Where a transfer of council and Registered Partner tenants to alternative accommodation will avoid the need for expensive alterations to the property or meet urgent housing needs of another household on the register.

17. Where the Council has exercised its discretion to offer a tenancy to those not entitled to succeed but who are under-occupying their accommodation or occupying a specially adapted home and are required to move to a smaller property and/or more appropriate to their needs.
18. Where council tenants have negotiated the surrender of their former council tenancy and the Council has given them an undertaking to make them one offer of social housing upon their release from prison, hospital, rehabilitation or residential care.
19. Certain categories of agricultural workers provided with accommodation as a condition of employment and the Agricultural Dwelling Housing Advisory Committee (ADHAC) decides that they must leave the accommodation.

#### ❖ HOUSING NEEDS BAND 'B'

1. Applicants who need to move because they have been assessed as having a serious medical or welfare need.
2. Haringey Council tenants and partner housing association tenants living in Haringey who are severely overcrowded and have at least two rooms less than the number of rooms to which they would be entitled to under Haringey's Housing Allocations Policy. This includes reception rooms that could reasonably be used as bedrooms.
3. Adult (aged over 25) members of the households of Council and partner housing association tenants living in Haringey who require single person accommodation, and where the household is severely overcrowded and has at least two rooms less than the number of rooms to which they would be entitled under Haringey's Allocations Policy. This includes reception rooms that could reasonably be used as bedrooms.
4. Applicants for whom Haringey Council has accepted a full rehousing duty under the homelessness legislation.
5. Applicants who need to move to a particular locality in the Borough, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or to others.
6. Applicants living in accommodation for which an improvement notice has been served, or is about to be served, by Haringey Council in relation to the applicant's dwelling and the Council has determined that the dwelling must be vacated because the remedies that are needed to reduce the hazard will require the property to be vacated for a significant period of time or will make the property unsuitable for occupation by the applicant.
7. Applicants with 4 or more needs in Housing Needs Band C.
8. Applicants who, at the discretion of the Council, need to move urgently because there are serious safeguarding circumstances.

#### ❖ HOUSING NEEDS BAND 'C'

1. Applicants who need to move because they have been assessed as having a moderate medical or welfare need.
2. Haringey Council tenants and partner housing association tenants living in Haringey who are overcrowded because they have one bedroom less than the number of bedrooms to which they would normally be entitled under Haringey's Housing Allocations Policy.
3. Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness but have been assessed by the Council within the previous 12 months as having no right to rehousing under the homelessness legislation because they are not in priority need.

4. Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness but have been assessed within the previous 12 months by the Council as having no right to rehousing under the homelessness legislation because they are considered to have become homeless intentionally, and have not been resident in settled accommodation.
5. Applicants who have no fixed abode.
6. Applicants who the Council has placed in specialist or supported accommodation, or applicants (including young care leavers and people leaving hospital, residential care and supported housing), and require move-on from that accommodation.
7. Protected tenants and tenants of tied accommodation who have been served with a valid notice to quit and the Council is satisfied that they have little or no prospect of successfully defending the possession proceedings.
8. Applicants who are overcrowded and living in private rented (including non-partner housing association) accommodation in Haringey.
9. Applicants living in accommodation for which a hazard awareness notice has been served, by Haringey Council in relation to a Category 1 or 2 hazard in the applicant's dwelling and the remedies needed to reduce the hazard will require the property to be vacated for a significant period of time or will make the property unsuitable for occupation by the applicant.
10. Council tenants and partner housing association tenants in Haringey who are under-occupying a family home (with three or more bedrooms) and are willing to transfer to a home that has at least one fewer bedroom.
11. Applicants living in accommodation lacking permanent facilities or sharing facilities with others not included on their application.