

Consultation
Summary of
Royal Borough of
Greenwich Housing
Allocations Scheme
Proposed changes



Introduction

The Housing Allocations Scheme sets out how the Royal Borough of Greenwich allocates Council and Housing Association properties in the borough.

Royal Greenwich is an area of very high demand for housing and the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) has to prioritise who it can help. The Allocation Scheme has been reviewed and the table below describes the key changes that are being proposed.

Description of proposed change	Why is the change needed?
<p>Band B is to be split into B1 and B2.</p>	<p>This will enable the Housing Service to prioritise and more effectively manage demand from the different groups.</p> <p>B1 will include all the existing Band B priority groups and the additional groups that are recommended for priority.</p> <p>B2 will attract a lower degree of priority and will include the other groups recommended for priority.</p>
<p>Currently Council tenants who under-occupy by two or more bedrooms are placed in Band A.</p> <p>It is proposed that Council tenants who under occupy their property by one bedroom and are affected by the Under Occupancy Cap should be awarded Band B1 priority.</p>	<p>This revision to the policy will help to minimise the adverse impact of the Under – Occupancy Cap for both tenants and the Council. Under Occupying of Council properties is a concern in the context of the high level of demand, whilst the Under Occupancy Cap is likely to lead to increased rent arrears</p>
<p>B1 priority should be awarded to foster carers who are providing long term foster care, which has been agreed by Children’s Services.</p>	<p>This proposal will support families and promote the welfare of children, especially vulnerable children and young people.</p>
<p>B1 priority should be awarded to households placed by RBG into either leased or private rented sector properties, in order to prevent homelessness, where these households are subsequently faced with homelessness through no fault of their own.</p>	<p>This policy change will assist in the prevention of homelessness.</p>
<p>B1 or B2 priority should be awarded to Ex-Armed Forces personnel (depending on</p>	<p>This revision to the policy recognises the specific needs of Ex-Armed Forces</p>

<p>their connection with the Royal Borough), who are in housing need following their discharge.</p>	<p>Personnel, takes account of legislative change and ensures they are not disadvantaged in their ability to access social housing.</p>
<p>B2 priority should be awarded to residents who are significantly affected by the Total Benefit Cap and can demonstrate that they are actively working with the Royal Borough of Greenwich to secure employment but are not currently 'job ready'.</p>	<p>These revisions to the policy will prevent homelessness, which causes hardship for families and pressures including financial on the Royal Borough.</p>
<p>It is proposed that increased priority should be awarded to Council tenants who have succeeded to a property, but are required to move to a smaller property. This group would move from Band B to Band A</p>	<p>This proposal will assist the Royal Borough to maximise the use of its housing stock.</p>
<p>It is proposed that increased priority should be awarded to Council tenants in hospital, who cannot return to their existing home, because it is unsuitable and delays in their discharge will incur a financial penalty for the authority. This group would move from Band B to Band A.</p>	<p>This proposal is being made to ensure that suitable alternative accommodation is provided, as soon as possible and to prevent the Royal Borough incurring costs.</p>
<p>Based on an assessment, it is proposed that the Royal Borough will exclude applicants where they have committed criminal or anti-social acts that put others at risk or make them unsuitable to be a tenant. It would be a ground for exclusion, if an applicant had previously tried to gain social housing through fraudulent activity and it would be a relevant consideration, as to whether applicants have demonstrated a meaningful period of addressing such behaviour. It would also include behaviour leading to anti-social behaviour orders, injunctions or other evidence of activity that would cause risk to others.</p>	<p>To promote responsible behaviour and consideration for neighbours and minimise the risk of incidents of anti- social behaviour.</p>
<p>Based on an assessment of housing need, it is proposed that applicants will be excluded</p>	<p>To minimise the loss of income to the Royal Borough and encourage the regular payment</p>

<p>from the Housing Register: if they have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evicted due to rent arrears within the last 2 years ➤ They have a current or former rent arrear of three months or more for Council, housing association or private sector tenancies, where the wilful actions of the occupier have caused the arrears to accumulate 	<p>of rent.</p>
<p>It is proposed that the Royal Borough will exclude homeowners from the Housing register unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ they have been assessed as requiring specific adapted accommodation and are unable to afford suitable alternative accommodation, including in the private rented sector ➤ the household is in mortgage arrears where homelessness cannot be prevented <p>It is proposed that this policy will apply to existing applicants, which would mean that 85 homeowners would be removed from the Housing Register.</p>	<p>To ensure that housing is only provided to those in the greatest need who have no other housing options.</p>
<p>It is proposed that the Royal Borough will suspend existing and future applicants on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is any level of arrear (former or current) at the point of an offer, until the arrears are cleared <p>Proposed exemptions on the arrears policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council tenants who are being decanted • Under-occupiers who are downsizing 	<p>To minimise the loss of income to the Royal Borough and encourage the regular payment of rent.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants at high risk of violence • Applicants with serious medical conditions • Other priority applicants who have made attempts to reduce their current or former arrears, through an agreed regular pattern of payment for at least three months • Households affected by the Total Benefit Cap, assessed as living in unaffordable accommodation <p>➤ If an applicant does not attend an invitation to view a property without reasonable notice and justification; they will be suspended for three months</p> <p>➤ Existing applicants who have committed criminal or anti-social acts that put others at risk or make them unsuitable to be a tenant. The suspension will remain in place, until there is evidence to suggest that they have demonstrated a meaningful period of addressing such behaviour and they no longer pose a risk to others</p>	<p>To encourage applicants to view suitable accommodation and reduce void times and loss of rental income to the Royal Borough.</p> <p>To minimise the risk of incidents of anti-social behaviour and encourage acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>Where an applicant is suspended, they will not accrue waiting time during the time of the suspension. This will prevent these applicants from gaining waiting time ahead of those who have complied with the Royal Borough's policy.</p>
<p>It is proposed that incentive payments will only be made to tenants who are under occupying and are not affected by the benefit changes; that is, do not need to move for financial reasons.</p>	<p>To make best use of financial resources and reduce budgetary pressure.</p>
<p>It is proposed that the allocations size criteria (number of people in a household and the size of property suitable for them) will be changed to fall in line with the Housing Benefit size criteria. This will be applied to applicants in all Bands and for those wanting to move via mutual exchange.</p>	<p>To ensure consistency between Allocations Policy and Housing Benefit regulations, in order to ensure benefit payments cover rental charges.</p>
<p>It is proposed that Band C applicants who are homeless but not in priority need, or</p>	<p>The Royal Borough is facing increasing demands and these groups are not in the</p>

<p>whose relationship has broken down, will no longer have their applications backdated.</p>	<p>greatest housing need.</p>
<p>There is currently an inter- estate policy which gives priority to existing residents. It is proposed that that all voids at Barnfield, Walpole and River Heights estates be advertised in line with the Royal Borough's Choice Based Lettings Scheme.</p>	<p>To make best use of the housing stock and increase supply for those in housing need.</p>