

Housing Allocation Policy



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Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL

1 | Aim of the Allocation Policy

1.1

The aim of this allocations policy is to ensure that best use is made of all affordable housing in Stafford Borough and that the Council ensures the housing needs of vulnerable applicants and those in priority need are met.

2 | Introduction

2.1

Every local authority has to have an allocation scheme which sets out how the authority will prioritise applicants for social housing. The purpose of this document is to set out how Stafford Borough Council will allocate properties, it explains who is eligible for the social housing in Stafford, how people are prioritised and the process for nominating people to properties. The aim of this policy is to ensure that affordable housing is allocated fairly and to those in greatest need, taking into account legislative requirements.

2.2

Stafford Borough Council is the strategic housing authority for the Borough, despite not owning any housing stock. The local authority has duties in accordance with Part 6 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to provide housing advice and assistance and prevent and address homelessness. The local authority works closely with all the Registered Providers who own social housing within Stafford Borough in order to discharge these duties. Each Registered Provider enters into a nomination agreement with the Local Authority that outlines the percentage of properties that will be made available to Stafford Borough Council in order to discharge the local authority's housing duty and prevent homelessness. In allocating social housing, the local authority is in fact nominating a person or household to be a tenant in a property owned by a Registered Provider.

2.3

The Local Authority nominates a household for the property in accordance with this Allocations Policy. The Registered Provider will consider the nomination against their own allocation policy. Registered Providers have a duty to cooperate with the Local Authority however they also have the right to refuse a nomination that is not acceptable in accordance with their own Allocation Policy.

2.4

The local authority works closely with Registered Providers and developers to increase the supply of all affordable housing through new developments. This includes affordable housing for rent and low cost home ownership, in particular shared ownership products. The Council will also work closely with private landlords to increase access to the private rented sector for people in need of housing where appropriate. The Council has adopted a policy for discharging its duty using the private rented sector that sets out the circumstances in which this will be used.

2.5

The housing options team ensures that everyone seeking advice on their housing situation is able to make informed choices about their options; the team will help people resolve their housing problems and prevent homelessness. The allocations policy facilitates this and in particular aims to:

- › Explain the local authority's priorities;
- › Ensure the housing needs of vulnerable applicants and those in priority need are given reasonable preference; and
- › Make best use of all available affordable housing.

2.6

This policy will be of interest to local residents and those moving into the Borough, local housing providers and organisations working with people who need housing.

2.7

This allocations policy has been prepared with regard to the local authorities Housing and Homelessness strategies (2015), the Housing Act 1996, the Localism Act 2011, Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England (2012), the Equality Act 2010 and the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.

2.8

The rest of this document will set out: the local housing context; how the housing options service in Stafford Borough works; the legislation under which Stafford Borough Council has framed its policy; and the priorities for allocating housing in Stafford Borough.

3 | The Local Housing Context

3.1

In framing an allocations policy it is important to reflect the local housing context. Stafford Borough is a predominantly rural Borough within the County of Staffordshire, it is located just to the south of Stoke-on-Trent and between the main cities of Birmingham to the south and Manchester to the north. It has excellent north south transport links with two M6 motorway junctions and a station on the West Coast Mainline.

3.2

The Borough, which is home to approximately 132,500 people has two main urban centres, the County town of Stafford and smaller market town of Stone, around a third of the population live in the smaller rural settlements. Although the Borough is relatively affluent, 4 lower super output areas, which are home to 7,100 people are in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. Stafford is home to a Ministry of Defence base at Beaconsfield Barracks which has expanded considerably in size with the relocation of troops from Germany in 2015.

3.3

There are fewer residents aged under 64 than the national average and a greater number aged over 65. In the ten years from 2015 the total population in the Borough is due to increase by 4%, with significant growth forecast for those aged 65 and over (19%) and those aged 85 and over (45%). The rate of increase in the number of older people in Stafford is faster than the England average, equating to 1,600 additional residents aged 85 and over by 2025.

3.4

In 2016 there were 7,660 social rented properties in the Borough. Stafford and Rural Homes, the largest housing provider owned nearly 6,000 of these. Total affordable housing stock in the Borough has fluctuated between years, but remains relatively stable. The 2012 Strategic Housing Market Assessment estimated a net shortfall of 210 affordable homes for local people every year through the life of the local plan, against an overall target of 500. The majority of the affordable homes are needed for rent with a smaller proportion for low cost home ownership. By averaging the delivery over the last 3 years from when the Local Plan for Stafford was adopted in June 2014 this target has been exceeded (2014/15: 258 affordable homes; 2015/16: 159 affordable homes; and 2016/17: 343 affordable homes). The delivery of these affordable homes has been focussed in the urban areas in line with the local plan, but equally there has been a significant number provided in the rural areas to meet that local need; over the three-year period, 79% of new affordable housing was provided in the urban areas of Stafford and Stone and 21% or 162 affordable homes were provided in the rural areas.

3.5

The provision of affordable homes to rent and to buy is a priority for the Borough, with home ownership being out of reach for many residents. In terms of relative affordability based on lower quartile house prices, Stafford is the least affordable district in Staffordshire with a lower quartile house price to income ratio of 7.3 (i.e. lower quartile house prices are 7.3 times lower quartile gross earnings). Stafford is the third least affordable district in Staffordshire based on the median house price to income ratio (6.3). Housing affordability does vary throughout the Borough with the rural areas tending to be the least affordable.

3.6

The annual number of social lettings over the past 4 years has been between 524 and 758, this represents a turnover rate that varies from less than 7% to nearly 10%. The national figure for lettings as a proportion of total stock is 8%. As set out in paragraph 2.4, Stafford has a very healthy supply of new affordable housing, arguably stronger than comparative areas; if this were to reduce, and assuming demand remains constant, this will impact on access to the social housing sector and potentially impact on the ability to respond quickly to emerging housing need.

YEAR	NUMBER OF LETTINGS
2013/14	565
2014/15	524
2015/16	689
2016/17	758

Source: SARH

3.7

In recent years' homeless acceptances have increased in Stafford Borough, in line with national trends; approximately 65% to 70% of these acceptances in Stafford are families. There were 76 acceptances in 2016/17, 71% were families. The main reasons for homeless acceptances in Stafford are termination of a shorthold tenancy, domestic abuse and loss of rented or tied accommodation.

3.8

Prevention of homelessness is a priority for Stafford Borough Council and levels have been consistently high; in the last four years, over 2200 households have been prevented from becoming homeless due to the work of the Housing Options team and partners in the Borough.

3.9

The private rented sector in Stafford Borough is increasing and between 2001 and 2011 doubled in size to a level comparable with the social housing sector. In 2016 the Stafford campus of the University of Staffordshire relocated to Stoke-on-Trent; this reduced significantly the market for student accommodation and the local authority has been working closely with landlords who have been affected by this change.

3.10

Long term empty homes in the Borough are comparable with national and regional averages and equate to approximately 1% of the dwelling stock.

3.11

Stafford Borough has a small number of residents living in short term supported accommodation, including Eagle House, for individuals who are at risk of homelessness and ForWard House, for women and their families who have experienced domestic abuse. The supply of supported accommodation is limited; therefore, the local authority aims to facilitate move on as quickly as possible for those residents who are ready to move into general needs accommodation.



4 | Housing Options and Allocations in Stafford Borough

4.1

When Stafford Borough Council transferred its housing stock in 2006 to create Stafford and Rural Homes (SARH), the management of the housing register was transferred to this new organisation. The housing register is the list of people who want social housing in the Borough; many are already in social housing and want to move properties, others want to get into the sector. Stafford Borough Council and SARH had a joint allocations policy, which in recent years has been operating through a choice based lettings system. Most Registered Providers with stock in the Borough advertised their properties on this system. In 2016 Stafford Borough Council made the decision to bring this agreement to an end. Local authorities don't have a duty to maintain a housing register, or waiting list for social housing. What they do need is an allocations policy for determining priority between applicants and a procedure for allocating accommodation.

4.2

The new approach which is set out in this policy enables the local authority to provide greater housing related support for those residents most in need, many of whom are vulnerable. The housing options team works intensively with those households and helps to get them in a position to be able to take on a tenancy; this could involve advice on income and expenditure, signposting to training and employment opportunities, referrals to support agencies and help with activities such as setting up a bank account or advice on moving on from supported accommodation.

4.3

For those people who even with this support would not be in a position to take on a tenancy, the Council will consider providing the household with initial tenancy related support to get the tenancy started on a stable footing and increase the likelihood of a Registered Provider accepting the nomination. The level of support and length of time the support will be provided for will be agreed with the Registered Provider, or Private Sector Landlord when agreeing the tenancy unless the housing provider can provide the support themselves.

4.4

For those able to help themselves the local authority will provide a wide range of ways in which they can receive housing advice. As well as the information and advice provided on the website, through the daily drop in service, on printed literature and through the housing assistance telephone lines, the local authority will provide a web based housing options tool. With the inputting of a households housing situation and family details, the tool will provide personalised current advice. For those it identifies in immediate housing need and requiring further assistance, a phone call from the housing options team will follow to provide additional support.

4.5

The Council will work closely with all Registered Providers and providers of short term Supported Housing in finding social housing for individuals and households in Stafford. A list of the Registered Providers with stock in Stafford Borough is set out at Annex B along with information on providers of Supported Housing.



4.6

There are two ways in which nominations under this policy will be made; one for SARH and another for the other Registered Providers. SARH own approximately 80% of the social housing stock in the Borough and therefore have the majority of the vacancies. Those households and individuals who the Council have found to have priority under this allocations scheme will be supported to register on SARH's housing register and will be considered for priority in line with SARH's allocations criteria. Those getting a priority will receive priority when bidding for properties in accordance with SARH's policy. When the other Registered Providers owning stock in the Borough have homes that become vacant (either through new build or turnover), they will offer them to the Council in line with their existing nomination agreements. The Council will then provide the Registered Provider with the details of the households that are eligible for the property in line with this allocations policy.

4.7

Section 170 of the Housing Act 1996 places a duty on Registered Providers to cooperate with the local housing authority to offer accommodation to people with priority under its allocation scheme and section 213 states that where the Registered Provider has been requested by a housing authority to assist them in the discharge of their homelessness functions under Part 7, it must cooperate to the same extent. Working to this legislation Registered Providers have their own allocation policies and applicants will be offered a property if they meet the Registered Providers eligibility criteria. The Council will monitor the outcome of nominations and who is placed in accommodation.



5 | Legislative Framework for Housing Allocations

5.1

The Housing Act 1996 sets the framework for the allocation of social housing, it has been amended substantially, firstly in 2003 by the Homelessness Act 2002 and then in 2011 by the Localism Act. This requires local housing authorities to:

- › Have a housing allocation policy that complies with relevant legislation and regulations;
- › Set out how social rented homes in their area will be let;
- › Make allocations in accordance with their policy; and
- › Publish a copy of the allocation policy and make it available free of charge on request.

5.2

Local housing authorities are only able to allocate social housing to applicants who are eligible for social housing, this is defined in section 160ZA of the 1996 Housing Act. Those who are not eligible for social housing, or homelessness assistance are those who are subject to immigration control who are not re-included by Regulations and, those persons from abroad prescribed by Regulations to be ineligible.

5.3

Allocation policies must give reasonable preference to applicants with certain housing needs, these are:

- › Applicants who are homeless (under part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act), including those who are intentionally homeless and those not in priority need;
- › People who are owed a duty under the homelessness legislation;
- › Applicants occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing;
- › Applicants who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds related to disability; and
- › Applicants who need to move to a particular locality of the local authority where failure to do so would cause hardship.

5.4

Allocation policies can be framed to give additional preference to particular descriptions of people within these categories and local authorities are able to take account of additional factors when determining priority for housing between applicants in the reasonable preference categories.

5.5

The “Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England” 2012 is the latest code of guidance on housing allocations and includes the changes brought about by the Localism Act 2011. The Localism Act 2011 gives local authorities the ability to disqualify certain types of applicants, this includes:

- › Those with no local connection to the Borough;
- › Those with no housing need that are not in one of the reasonable preference groups;
- › Owner occupiers (excluding those who can't afford to meet their housing costs);
- › People who have been found guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour, those who have a history of severe tenancy breaches, or anti-social behaviour;
- › People who have worsened their own housing circumstances; or,
- › Those who have refused offers of housing or who have not engaged in looking for or applying for properties.

5.6

The Localism Act 2011 introduced the requirement for every local housing authority to have and publish a Tenancy Strategy. This sets out the matters to which Registered Providers have to have regard when formulating their own policies on tenancies. Stafford Borough Council's allocations policy has to be framed by both the Boroughs Tenancy Strategy and Homelessness Strategy.

6 | Stafford Borough Council's Priorities for Allocating Housing

6.1

This section of the allocations policy sets out what the local authority priorities are for allocating social housing. The policy makes use of a banding system: Band A, those who need to move as an emergency; Band B, those who have an urgent need to move; Band C, those who have a high housing need; and Band D those who have low, or no housing need. Applicants are prioritised within their band by the date of their application; those who have been in the band the longest will receive the greatest priority. These bands take into account the applicants who are given 'reasonable preference' and 'additional preference'. The local authority will also use this banding when offering assistance and support to secure housing in the private rented sector.

6.2

This allocations policy gives reasonable preference to those groups set out in paragraph 4.3 in line with the Housing Act 1996. Additional preference is also given to the following groups:

- › Armed Forces personnel, in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces)(England) Regulations 2012;
- › Those who could be prevented from becoming homeless through a planned move;
- › Those who are being supported by the local authorities homelessness prevention initiatives;
- › Those whose health will deteriorate significantly if they were unable to move;
- › Those people moving on from supported or specialist accommodation;
- › Those people living in adapted properties, who no longer require the adaptations where the property is needed for other households requiring adaptations;
- › Those needing to move where failure to do so would mean they couldn't take up employment;
- › Foster carers or those approved to adopt who need to move to facilitate the placement of a child;
- › Households under occupying their home, which could be used to house a larger family.

6.3

As set out in section 4 of this policy, the local authority has been given flexibilities under the Localism Act 2011 to disqualify certain types of applicant from its scheme or give them lower priority. Stafford Borough will adopt the following flexibilities.

A Local Connection

6.4

Priority for social housing will be given to local people. This includes local residents living in the Borough, or those who have a strong local connection with the Borough, including a significant period of previous residence, local employment or close family links. The definition of a local connection is set out in Annex C.

6.5

Applicants fleeing domestic abuse, or those placed in Stafford Borough for witness protection purposes will not be required to have a local connection to be allocated social housing.

6.6

Armed forces personnel currently serving in the regular forces, or who were serving in the regular forces in the last 5 years will have the right to a local connection. In the event of a family separation where one partner is a serving member of the armed forces and the spouse or partner and family have no other established local connection, the family will have the right to a local connection.

6.7

As set out in paragraph 2.5, the majority of social housing is provided in the main urban settlements, in particular in Stafford. If social housing becomes available in the key service villages and other rural locations, preference will be given within the banding to residents with a local connection to that particular village who have expressed a preference to be housed there.

Owner occupiers

6.8

Applicants who own their own homes will not be allocated social housing other than in exceptional circumstances, for example where they can't afford to remain in owner occupation, or where they require sheltered housing and are no longer able to stay in their own home.

People with a history of tenancy breaches

6.9

If the local authority has accepted a household as homeless, it will not disqualify an applicant from accessing social housing on the basis of previous tenancy breaches, such as rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. The local authority will provide the Registered Providers with all relevant information on the household they are nominating to a property. The final decision on whether to offer a tenancy sits with the Registered Provider.

People who have worsened their own housing situation

6.10

Where a household or individual has deliberately worsened their housing circumstances they may be placed in the lowest priority band (no / low housing need). The local authority will however take into account the applicant's particular circumstances.

No housing need

6.11

Applicants with no identified housing need will not get priority for an allocation of housing unless there are exceptional circumstances related to supply and demand in the Borough.

Applicants who have refused offers of properties, failed to attend viewings or failed to bid on properties via recognised Choice Based Lettings Schemes

6.12

Stafford Borough Council will be working closely with Registered Providers to ensure households who need housing are able to access it as quickly as possible. If an applicant, who has been nominated to a property by the local authority under this allocations policy refuses the offer of the property which is made to them by the Registered Provider they will lose their priority for housing unless there are exceptional circumstances. In the case of the applicant being statutorily homeless, and the offer being deemed suitable, the homeless duty will be discharged. The same applies for those applicants who fail to attend viewings of properties to which they have been nominated, unless they can demonstrate acceptable reasons for their non-attendance.



6.13

Table 1 sets out how the banding system in Stafford Borough will work; this takes the information in this section and sets it out in an easy to understand format while applying priority to the various criteria.

BAND	CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF NEED
Band A	Emergency priority	<p>Statutory Homeless applicants owed a full housing duty, to include those in temporary accommodation</p> <p>Medical Emergency</p> <p>Households unable to remain in their current property due to domestic abuse where a move within / to Stafford Borough would resolve their safety issues</p> <p>Households unable to remain in their current property due to fire or flood</p>
Band B	Urgent need to move	<p>Applicants who have been accepted through the Move-On Protocol (from supported accommodation)</p> <p>Those who require re-housing on medical grounds including grounds relating to disability</p> <p>Those currently living in accommodation where conditions are assessed as a category 1 hazard or hazards by an EHO or Housing Standards Officer appointed by the Council, in accordance with the Housing Act 2004, that would be an imminent risk of serious injury or harm to the occupant</p> <p>Those overcrowded who are short of 2 or more bedrooms</p> <p>Those under occupying their home by 2 or more bedrooms</p> <p>Injured members of the forces or their bereaved spouses, such injury incurred through active service</p> <p>Those who have been threatened with homelessness within 56 days (including former partners and families of serving military personnel, who have to leave military accommodation)</p>
Band C	High housing need	<p>Those needing to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship</p> <p>Those overcrowded and short of 1 bedroom</p> <p>Those under occupying their home by 1 bedroom</p> <p>Applicants approved as foster or adoptive parents who need to move to facilitate the placement of a child / children</p> <p>Those needing to move to free up an adapted property they no longer require</p>
Band D	No / low housing need	<p>Relationship breakdown (no domestic abuse)</p> <p>Those who have no identifiable housing need</p> <p>Those who have outstanding debts to a landlord (s) and who have not entered into or are adhering to a payment plan</p> <p>Those who have deliberately worsened their housing situation</p>

Supported Housing

6.14

This allocations policy does not apply to any of the supported accommodation within the Borough.

6.15

With the exception of ForWard House, short term supported housing will be accessed either via a referral from the local authority, or through self-referral. The Borough will refer people to the appropriate supported accommodation at the earliest opportunity and the accommodation provider will put the applicant on a waiting list if they are eligible for accommodation.

6.16

ForWard House is part of the national network of refuges and as well as direct referrals for refuge space from the local authority and self-referrals they get referrals through the national network mechanisms. Staffordshire Women's Aid are responsible for allocating accommodation at ForWard House.



7 | Right to Request a Review

7.1

Applicants can request a review of their allocation decision. This should be made in writing to the Housing Options Team Leader within 21 days. The review will be carried out by a Senior Officer who has not had any involvement in the case; the reviewing Officer will request any further information to support the review and will make a decision within 56 days.

8.2

This policy will initially be reviewed six months after it is adopted to ensure that the stated aim of ensuring affordable housing is allocated fairly and to those in greatest need is being achieved. It will then be reviewed on a two yearly basis, or earlier if there are significant changes to related policy or legislation, or, if local circumstances change in such a way to deem this policy out of date.

8 | Monitoring and Review of the Allocations Policy

8.1

This policy will be monitored by the Health and Housing Team at Stafford Borough Council to ensure it is achieving its aim of allocating social housing fairly to those in greatest need. This will be aligned with the monitoring of the nomination agreements with the Registered Providers.

References

Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England (2012) DCLG

Homelessness Strategy (2015) Stafford Borough Council

Homeless Reduction Act, 2017

Housing Strategy (2015) Stafford Borough Council

The Equalities Act, 2010

The Housing Act, 1996

The Localism Act, 2011

Providing social housing for local people, Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England, December 2013, DCLG

Stafford: Locality Profile, Insight, Planning and Performance Team, Staffordshire County Council, October 2016

"Social Housing Lettings: April 2015 to March 2016"
DCLG Housing Statistical Release, 10 November 2016

Table 115, Private Registered Provider Stock by District from 1997, DCLG <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

Wilson, W. and Barton, C (2016) Allocating social housing (England), Briefing Paper. Housing of Commons Library



Annex A

Stafford Borough Council's Housing Options Service

Anyone needing advice or assistance with their housing situation can contact Stafford Borough Council's Housing Options Service. The Council will work proactively to prevent homelessness if at all possible. A Housing Options Officer can provide information on a range of matters including:

- › Applying for social housing;
- › Finding accommodation in the private rented sector;
- › What to do if a person or household is homeless or facing eviction; and
- › Applying for shared ownership housing.

Stafford Borough Council's Housing Options Service offers free, independent housing advice on a range of housing options to everyone regardless of whether they own their own house, rent from a housing association or from a private landlord or lodge with someone else. Other sources of housing advice are available from other agencies, for example the Citizens Advice Bureau and Shelter.

The Service will:

- › Provide housing advice to an individual or household based on their circumstances, this will include understanding the household composition, assessing their financial circumstances so as many alternative housing options can be suggested, recognising the households preferences and needs (such as schools, support networks etc.);
- › Determine if the individual or household has a housing need and assess this need in relation to the Council's Housing Allocation Policy;
- › Identify if the individual or household needs help to retain their home or if moving home is the only option;
- › Establish when alternative accommodation will be needed where the individual is facing eviction or homelessness; and
- › Identify if the Council is likely to have any homeless duty to the person.

The outcome for each individual or household will depend on the specific circumstances of the case, but the focus will be on trying to prevent homelessness and ensure that an individual is housed appropriately. Outcomes may include:

- › Support to access social housing with a local Registered Provider;
- › Support to access privately rented housing;
- › Negotiations with landlords to prevent homelessness and enable people to remain in their current home; or
- › Provision of advice and assistance to access services which will support individuals in their homes and enable them to remain in their tenancy (for example budgeting advice, social services etc.).

The Housing Options Service at Stafford Borough Council sits within the Health and Housing Team. This enables officers to address all aspects of a household's health and housing situation. If a person approaches the service asking for advice on housing options due to disrepair in their property, the housing standards team would visit and assess the conditions of the property and advise the tenant or require improvements from the landlord accordingly and enforcing the improvements if a landlord is non-compliant. The Housing Standards team are also able to investigate incidents of alleged harassment and actions that would constitute illegal eviction by 'rogue' landlords towards tenants. Housing Standards have a number of sanction options against 'rogue' landlords and letting agents from imposing financial penalties to court prosecutions. Housing standards are also able to give advice and guidance on tenancy sustainment.

Annex B

Registered Providers with General Needs Housing in Stafford Borough

ORGANISATION	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Stafford and Rural Homes	08001 114 554	www.sarh.co.uk
Accord Housing Group	03001 117 000	www.accordgroup.org.uk
Affinity Sutton	03001 000 303	www.affinitysutton.com
Aspire Housing	01782 635 200	www.aspirehousing.co.uk
Bromford	03301 234 034	www.bromford.co.uk
Midland Heart	03456 020 540	www.midlandheart.org.uk
Sanctuary	08001 313 348 03001 233 511	www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk
Staffordshire Housing	01782 744 533	www.staffshousing.org.uk
South Staffordshire Housing Association	01785 312 000	www.ssha.co.uk
Walsall Housing Group	0300 555 6666	www.whg.uk.com
Wrekin Housing Trust	01952 217 100	www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk

Supported Accommodation in Stafford Borough

ORGANISATION <i>Accommodation</i>	WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION
Midland Heart <i>Eagle House</i>	www.midlandheart.org.uk	32 units of supported accommodation for people aged 18-64 with low level support needs
Staffordshire Women's Aid <i>ForWard House</i>	www.staffordshirewomensaid.org	12 self-contained apartments of Refuge accommodation for women and families fleeing domestic abuse
Rethink	www.rethink.org	11 units of accommodation for people with enduring mental health issues.
Staffordshire League of Friends	www.staffordandcannocklof.org	Low level supported accommodation for people with enduring mental health issues
Deventio Housing Association	www.derventiohousing.com	Shared accommodation at various locations in Stafford for people with low level support needs

Annex C

Local Connection

For the purpose of this allocations policy, a local connection will be considered to be when applicant has:

- › Lived in the Borough for the last two years;
- › Has been employed in the Borough for the last two years;
- › Has a firm offer of permanent employment in the Borough, where failure to move into the Borough would mean that employment could not be accepted;
- › Previously lived in the Borough for at least three years;
- › Close family in the Borough who have lived there for at least three years;
- › Close family in the Borough who they need to care for, or receive care from; or
- › Other specific circumstances that the local authority would wish to consider under a local connection criteria.

On occasion, affordable housing is delivered as a planning obligation through a section 106 agreement where there is a local connection criteria. This limits occupation of the affordable housing to a particular location within the Borough (usually a specific village), on these occasions the section 106 agreement takes precedence.



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