

## Proposed Changes to the Allocation Policy

Section Change	Overview	Reason
<p>Section 4 Nominations and Section 8: Suitability and Offers of Accommodation</p> <p><b>Direct Nomination</b></p>	<p>Applicants will be directly nominated (put forward) for properties and will no longer be able to bid via Choice Based Lettings. The Policy will be updated to reflect the changes made by Homes Plus to close the waiting list and move to direct let.</p> <p>Applicants will apply for social housing by contacting Stafford Borough Council who will assess housing need in line with this Policy. Eligible households will be put forward (nominated) for suitable properties. These changes will ensure that those in most need for housing are allocated suitable properties.</p>	<p>On 1 September 2025, Homes Plus closed their waiting list and no longer offer Choice Based Lettings. The Council is required to update our policy to reflect these changes.</p>
<p>Section 6: Eligibility for the Housing Register</p> <p><b>Local Connection Eligibility Criteria - 2 Years</b></p>	<p>The current Allocation Policy allows those who have lived in the Borough for the last two years, or who have lived in the Borough for the last three out of five years to apply for the housing register.</p> <p>The changes proposed would allow only those who have lived in the Borough for the last two years to apply for the housing register.</p>	<p>There is increasing demand for social housing, compared to the amount of housing available. We need to have an Allocation Policy that is fair and prioritises residents who live within the Borough.</p>

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	<p>There are some circumstances where this rule would not apply, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exceptional circumstances, for example, for safety or to receive essential support from close family;</li> <li>• Those owed a homeless duty;</li> <li>• Eligible persons leaving care;</li> <li>• Eligible members of the armed forces;</li> <li>• Those who satisfy 'Right to Move' Rules.</li> </ul>	
<p>Section 9 - Banding System Applications from existing Housing Association tenants.</p>	<p>Applications from existing Housing Association tenants will only be eligible for priority banding where they have an urgent need to move (Band A). All other applicants will be awarded Band C only. The primary responsibility to provide suitable accommodation to existing Housing Association tenants lies with that Housing Association. The exception is where 100% nomination rights have been given to the Council.</p>	<p>To provide clarity on the process for existing Housing Association residents who have a need to move and recognise the duty Housing Associations have to provide safe and suitable accommodations to their residents.</p>
<p>Section 9 - Banding System <b>Changes to Priority Banding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace separate bandings for 'harassment, domestic abuse, disaster or emergency' with 'exceptional need to move'.</li> </ul>	<p>The law says we must give some groups reasonable preference on our Housing Register and we do this by awarding a banding priority. These groups are not affected by these changes.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove overcrowding by one bedroom from Band C. Acute overcrowding where an applicant requires 2 or more bedrooms remains in Band B.</li> <li>• Remove banding for those under-occupying a property.</li> <li>• Move 'Supported Accommodation Move On' to Band A</li> <li>• Remove banding for transfer applicants residing in social housing that are releasing a property with major adaptations.</li> <li>• Remove banding for those who are sharing facilities, including a kitchen or a bathroom and who would benefit from self-contained accommodation.</li> <li>• Remove banding for applicants who need to move to give or receive care and support</li> <li>• Remove banding for those who need to move due to affordability</li> <li>• Remove banding for those who need to move due to taking up employment. This does not impact those with a 'Right to Move.'</li> </ul>	<p>In addition, we provide additional preference for those with an urgent housing need, this includes those who need to move because of a life threatening illness or disability, families in severe overcrowding, and members of the armed forces (including former members and bereaved spouses and civil partners).</p> <p>Alongside this, we have awarded local priorities that we do not need to award. These are to applicants who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are downsizing</li> <li>• are overcrowding by one bedroom only;</li> <li>• are transfer applicants releasing adapted properties;</li> <li>• are living in houses of multiple occupation;</li> <li>• are moving to give non-essential care or support;</li> <li>• are moving to take up employment;</li> <li>• are moving due to affordability;</li> <li>• are not in a housing need.</li> </ul>

Section Change	Overview	Reason
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove Band D for those who want to move and who have no reasonable preference which includes non- violent relationship breakdown and those who have been found intentionally homeless.</li> </ul>	<p>We propose to reduce the number of local priorities we award to those on the Council's waiting list. This change will enable those with an urgent or high housing need to be assisted in a more timely way. It would help minimise the time applicants spend in unsuitable housing or without a home, including families placed in emergency accommodation or domestic abuse refuges, and those waiting to be discharged from hospital.</p> <p>The changes proposed will provide an Allocation Policy that is clear, concise and accessible for members of the public and stakeholders.</p> <p>It is proposed that move on from supported accommodation is recognised as an urgent housing need. There is considerable demand for single person supported accommodation, with limited move on options for those who are ready to live independently. Prioritising those who are ready to move on from supported accommodation improves the availability of bedspaces and reduces pressures on costly emergency accommodation.</p>

Section Change	Overview	Reason
<p>Appendix D - How we will assess the unacceptable behaviour qualification rule</p>	<p>Additional information on how we will assess unacceptable behaviour. This includes confirming the time frame that we will use to assess unacceptable behaviour is five years.</p> <p>The assessing Officer will use a framework to when assessing whether an applicant should not qualify based on previous unacceptable behaviour that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether there is a reasonable ground that the behaviour may continue,</li> <li>• the seriousness of the applicants behaviour,</li> <li>• the duration of the behaviour and length of time that has elapsed since the behaviour took place;</li> <li>• any vulnerabilities and support needs of the applicant;</li> <li>• whether there have been a change in circumstances, for example the applicant has engaged with relevant support programmes;</li> <li>• whether the council would accept a voluntary acceptable behaviour contract.</li> </ul>	<p>To improve clarity on how we will assess unacceptable behaviour, by including specific examples within the Allocation Policy. This includes those who have committed anti-social behaviour and/ or have been convicted of certain offences.</p> <p>Stafford Borough Council recognises the need to balance safe communities whilst reducing homelessness. Where possible, Housing Options Officers will develop a personalised housing plan with applicants who are owed a homeless and may be excluded from the housing register due to previous unacceptable behaviour. Applicants who adhere to the steps of their personalised housing plan may be eligible for the housing register, depending on the individual circumstances.</p>

Section Change	Overview	Reason
Appendix E - Examples of when an applicant may be awarded priority band A or B on the basis of a medical or disability need	Additional information on medical priority including clarifying the assessment process and providing examples of when an award for medical priority may or may not be given. Full details can be found in Appendix E of the proposed Allocation Policy.	To improve clarity on how medical need is assessed that will make the process simpler for Housing Options Officer to implement and improve transparency for members of the public and stakeholders.
Appendix F - How we will assess extra bedroom requests	When considering requests for additional bedrooms for those with learning difficulties, sensory impairments, mental or physical health problems, Officers will consider the nature and severity of the disability, the nature and frequency of any care required during the night and the extent and regularity of the disturbance of sleep of the child who would normally be required to share a bedroom. The Officer may request medical evidence as part of the assessment. Examples of when an extra bedroom would or would not be allocated are included. Full details can be found in Appendix F of the Allocation Policy.	To improve clarity on how bedroom entitlement is assessed that will make the process simpler for Housing Options Officers to implement and improve transparency for the public and stakeholders.

**Other changes**

- Background and context has been updated to reflect local and national change since the previous Allocation Policy.
- Any references to Stafford and Rural Homes have been updated to Homes Plus

The Allocation Policy has been drafted in a more accessible, user-friendly format that explains the process clearly for members of the public and wider stakeholders.