

# Letting Social Rented Homes in Enfield

## Enfield's Housing Allocation Scheme

There is a severe shortage of council and housing association homes in Enfield. We have over 4,000 single people and families on our housing register. Last year, just 550 homes became available to rent. Most of those on the housing register are unlikely to be successful in finding a social rented home in the foreseeable future. To address this, we need to help prevent more people becoming homeless, continue to support tenants to find settled homes in the private rented sector and ensure efficient practice in how the small number of social rented homes in Enfield are allocated and managed.

**We need to ensure that social rented housing goes to those who need it most.**

This questionnaire asks for your views on changes we're proposing to make to our Scheme. This includes changes about:

- Eligibility for joining the housing register
- How different applicants on the register are prioritised
- How we assess the type and size of home applicants require
- The bidding process and direct offers of accommodation.

This survey summarises the main changes we are proposing to the Housing Allocation Scheme. There are more detailed procedural changes set out in the new draft Scheme. For full details, please refer to the draft of the new proposed Scheme available on the Council website [www.enfield.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/consultations).

**The closing date for responses is Friday 8th September 2017**

**Please return to:**

CREST  
Enfield Council  
Civic Centre, B-Block South, Sliver Street  
Enfield EN1 3XA

[www.enfield.gov.uk](http://www.enfield.gov.uk)



## Section 1: Eligibility for joining the housing register

### Having a local connection to be eligible to apply for social rented housing

In our existing Housing Allocation Scheme, applicants can join the register without a local connection, but are given a higher priority if they have lived in Enfield for 2 years or if they have lived in Enfield for 10 of the last 15 years. We are proposing that applicants will need a local connection of at least the previous 3 years in order to be on the register.

To demonstrate a local connection, applicants will need to show that they have:

- Lived in Enfield for the previous 3 years; **or**
- Been in permanent employment (16 hours or more per week) in Enfield for the previous 3 years; **or**
- A close family member (normally mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter) who has lived in Enfield for the previous 3 years

For applicants who do not qualify for the housing register, advice on alternative housing options will be offered.

Some people will be exempt from having to have a local connection. This is explained in Section 3.4 of the Scheme.

**Q1** What do you think the minimum time period for having a local connection should be? **PLEASE SELECT NO MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE**

Less than 2 years

3 years

5 years or more

2 years

4 years

Don't know

# Section 1: Eligibility for joining the housing register

## Household income, assets and savings

In our existing Housing Allocation Scheme, if an applicant or their partner own a property or a share in their property, or have enough assets (£50,000 savings) or income (£70,000 - household with children or £40,000 - single person or couple without children) to meet their own housing need, they will be ineligible to apply for housing.

We are reviewing what these income and assets thresholds should be.

**Q2** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only allow people to join our housing register if they have a low income and low levels of assets or savings?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

## Key Workers

In our existing Housing Allocation Scheme, being a key worker allows an applicant to join the housing register, provided they meet the local connection criteria and their immigration status, previous behaviour, or level of income, savings or assets do not make them ineligible to join.

'Key worker' refers to a public sector employee who is considered to provide an essential service, for example an NHS health worker. There is no statutory duty to give key workers priority for social rented homes and they are eligible for other affordable housing such as low cost home ownership.

**Q3** Which of the following, if any, best describes your view?  
**PLEASE SELECT NO MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE**

Key workers should be allowed to join the housing register

Key workers should not be allowed to join the housing register. Rather key workers should be given advice and information on accessing other affordable housing, such as low cost home ownership

Don't know/not sure

# Section 1: Eligibility for joining the housing register

## Minimum age required to hold a social rented tenancy

In our existing Housing Allocation Scheme, anyone aged 16 or over who meets the eligibility criteria can apply to the Council to join the Housing Register. We are proposing that instead, the minimum age required to hold a social tenancy will be 18 years, except in exceptional circumstances. Applicants in exceptional circumstances aged 16 and 17 will require a rent guarantor before being allowed to sign for the tenancy of a property.

**Q4** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the minimum age required to hold a social tenancy should be 18 years, except in exceptional circumstances?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

## Intentionally homeless applicants

Being intentionally homeless means that the applicant is homeless because they left accommodation that they could of stayed in.

In our existing Housing Allocation Scheme, applicants who are intentionally homeless can remain on the housing register after we cease to owe them any legal duty to provide accommodation.

We are now proposing that these applicants will be removed from the register after our legal duty to provide accommodation has ended.

**Q5** To what extent do you agree or disagree that intentionally homeless applicants will be removed from the register after our legal duty to provide accommodation has ended?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

# Section 1: Eligibility for joining the housing register

## New Generation Scheme

Currently, single people and couples without children living with their parents in an Enfield Council home are eligible to bid for their own studio or one bedroom home if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Are aged between 25 and 60
- Have lived with parent(s) continuously for at least three years
- The parent(s) has lived in a Council property owned by Enfield for at least three years
- The applicant is in employment

In addition to the above, we are proposing that they must also be living in overcrowded accommodation in order to be eligible to bid for their own home.

**Q6** To what extent do you agree or disagree that single people and couples without children living with their parents in an Enfield Council home should be eligible to bid for their own studio or one bedroom home if they meet the criteria above?

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tend to agree  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tend to disagree           | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know        |

**Q7** To what extent do you agree or disagree that applicants in these circumstances will need to be living in overcrowded accommodation in order to be able to bid for their own home?

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tend to agree  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tend to disagree           | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know        |

**Q8** At what age do you think applicants in these circumstances should be able to bid for their own home? **PLEASE SELECT NO MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between 25 and 60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Between 35 and 60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between 30 and 60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know        |

## Section 2: How different applicants on the register are prioritised

### The minimum number of hours an applicant should work to be considered a priority

In some circumstances, applicants are awarded a higher level of points if they, or their partner, are in employment. In our existing Housing Allocation Scheme, we consider someone to be in employment if they have a permanent contract; work as a temporary member of staff; or if they are self-employed. Applicants will only qualify if the worker has been employed for 6 out of the last 12 months. In addition to this, we are now proposing that the worker must also work for a minimum number of hours each week.

**Q9** To what extent do you agree or disagree that to be awarded additional priority for being in employment, the applicant or their partner must work for a minimum of 16 hours per week?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

### Prioritising applicants in different circumstances

We are proposing to make some changes to how we prioritise applicants on the housing register. This will mean some people will have a higher priority in the future than they do now, and some people will have a lower priority.

**Q10** To what extent do you agree or disagree that applicants living in an Enfield Council home that is too big for them, but who are willing to move to a smaller home, should be given high priority?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

## Section 2: How different applicants on the register are prioritised

### Prioritising applicants in different circumstances - continued

**Q11** To what extent do you agree that tenants living in a private rented home should be given the same level of priority as council or housing association tenants in the following circumstances:

The applicant needs to move because their current living conditions:

- put their life at risk if they do not move, or
- cause them to be completely housebound and a new home would allow them to regain their independence.

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

**Q12** To what extent do you agree or disagree that eligible homeless applicants, who became homeless before November 2012, should be given a higher priority if they are working and have been assessed by the Council as having an income from work which is not enough to make rent payments?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

**Q13** To what extent do you agree or disagree that young people leaving local authority care should be given a high priority?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

**Q14** To what extent do you agree or disagree that in **exceptional circumstances**, homeless applicants should be given higher priority if they do not have enough income to pay their current rent as a result of having their benefits reduced, and they are unable to work?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

## Section 2: How different applicants on the register are prioritised

### Prioritising applicants in different circumstances - continued

**Q15** To what extent do you agree or disagree that applicants should be given a high priority if they have been diagnosed with either a mental health illness; learning disability; physical disability, sensory impairment or long term illness/condition and they:

- receive support from adult social care; or
- could be in need of adult social care services without settled accommodation; and
- have a significant need for a social tenancy because their current accommodation is having a severe negative impact on their health and wellbeing?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

### Allocating points to homeless applicants who became homeless after November 2012

The Localism Act 2011 introduced changes to the way councils can provide accommodation for homeless people. This means we can offer suitable accommodation into the private rented sector to any household who became homeless after November 2012. In our current scheme, we state that households in these circumstances who have been assessed as unsuitable for a private rented tenancy will be given higher priority than other households in the same circumstances. We are proposing to no longer award higher priority to these households.

**Q16** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should no longer award higher priority to homeless applicants who are assessed as unsuitable for a private rented tenancy?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

## Section 3: How we assess the type and size of home applicants require

### Allocating an additional bedroom for full time carers

In the existing Housing Allocation Scheme, an additional room is agreed if someone in the household needs a full-time carer and, in exceptional circumstances, if someone needs an **occasional** carer to stay overnight. Given the severe shortage of larger homes, we are proposing that the requirement for an additional room will only be agreed if permanent and substantial overnight care is needed.

**Q17** To what extent do you agree or disagree that an additional room should only be agreed for a carer, if the carer is needed full time for permanent and substantial overnight care?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

### Assessing overcrowding

There is an acute shortage of larger social rented homes in Enfield. In our existing Scheme, we do not specify how we assess levels of overcrowding in private rented sector homes. We are proposing to clarify in the new Scheme that any rooms other than bathrooms, toilets, kitchens and utility rooms will be counted as bedrooms when deciding whether an applicant in the private rented sector is living in an overcrowded home.

**Q18** To what extent do you agree or disagree that any room other than the bathroom, toilet, self-contained kitchen and utility room should be counted as a bedroom for tenants living in the private sector?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

## Section 3: How we assess the type and size of home applicants require

### How we allocate wheelchair adapted homes

We want to help people with disabilities access a home that is suitable for their particular needs. In our existing Allocation Scheme, we describe these applicants as 'Mobility Applicants'. However, the homes we reserve for this group are specifically wheelchair adapted homes. We therefore propose to clarify how we describe this group, from 'Mobility Group' to 'Applicants requiring wheelchair adapted homes.' We will only place people in this group if they require a wheelchair adapted property.

Applicants with mobility needs as a result of a disability but who are not wheelchair users, will be able to bid on level access homes or properties all on one level which are made available to their group. They may also be awarded health and wellbeing points, depending on their specific needs.

**Q19** To what extent do you agree or disagree that wheelchair adapted homes should be reserved for wheelchair users only?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

### Bidding for homes with gardens

In our existing Allocation Scheme, only families with children under 15 years old can bid for properties with gardens. This prevents other large households who do not have children under 15 from bidding on the small number of larger homes that become available, which tend to have gardens. We are therefore removing this condition.

**Q20** If you have any comments on this change, let us know.

**PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW**

## Section 4: The bidding process and direct offers of accommodation

### Needing a minimum level of points in order to bid

Like many councils, our homes are allocated through a choice based lettings system. This means that applicants on our housing register are required to make 'bids' on properties that they are eligible for.

In our existing Housing Allocation Scheme, all applicants on the register can bid for a home. We are proposing that instead, households with lower levels of housing needs, with the lowest level of points, will not be able to bid for a home. This is so we can better manage the limited supply of social rented homes and better manage the expectations of applicants. Demand for social rented homes greatly exceeds the number of homes available in Enfield. Households with lower levels of priority are unlikely to be successful in bidding for a social rented home.

**Q21** To what extent do you agree or disagree that only people with higher levels of housing needs should be able to bid for a social rented home?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

## Section 4: The bidding process and direct offers of accommodation

### How we work with applicants who do not make bids

Like many councils, our homes are allocated through a choice based lettings system. This means that applicants on our housing register are required to make 'bids' on properties that they are eligible for. With our existing Housing Allocation Scheme, applicants remain on the housing register even if they are not actively bidding for a home. Instead, we are proposing to remove applicants from the housing register if they do not bid for a home over a 12 month period. We are proposing to place homeless applicants on an 'auto-bidding' system if they do not make any bids over a three month period. This means our choice based lettings online system will generate suitable offers for homeless applicants who are not bidding.

This is because we need to minimise the amount of time households spend in temporary accommodation and minimise the cost of this to the Council.

Applicants will be sent two letters and contacted by phone to inform them that action will be taken if they do not bid.

**Q22** Do you agree that applicants, excluding exceptional cases, should be removed from the register if they do not make any bids over a 12 month period and do not respond to Council communications?

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Don't know

**Q23** After what time period do you think we should introduce 'auto-bidding' for homeless households living in temporary accommodation, if they haven't made any bids for a home? **PLEASE SELECT NO MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE**

3 Months

6 Months

9 Months

12 Months

Don't know

**Q24** If we cancel an application because the applicant has not been bidding, or because they have refused an offer of a home, how long do you think they should be prevented from making a **new application** for the housing register? **PLEASE SELECT NO MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE**

2 years

5 years

10 years

Don't know

Other

If 'Other', please specify

## Section 4: The bidding process and direct offers of accommodation

### Decreasing the number of direct offers made to succession cases before applying for a possession order

If someone inherits a tenancy of a social rented home and the home is too large for their needs, we will take steps to provide alternative accommodation. In our existing Housing Allocation Scheme, we make two direct offers of accommodation before a third and final offer is made to these types of applicants. If all three offers are turned down, we then apply for a possession order. In order to free up much-needed larger Council properties more quickly, we are proposing to reduce the number of direct offers made in these circumstances from a total of three offers, down to two.

**Q25** If someone inherits a tenancy for a home that is bigger than they need, how many offers of an alternative home do you think they should be given, before the Council applies for a possession order? **PLEASE SELECT NO MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE**

1 offer of accommodation

3 offers of accommodation

2 offers of accommodation

Don't know

### Any other comments or feedback on the allocation of homes in Enfield

**Q26** If you have any comments or proposals on how the Council should allocate housing or on how information on the allocation of homes in Enfield could be made clearer, let us know. **PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW**

# Future conversations on housing in Enfield

Over the coming months, we will be talking to people across the borough about the challenges and opportunities of meeting the needs of a growing population in Enfield.

**Would you be willing to be contacted by the Council to take part in housing events, surveys and other engagement activities?**

Yes

No

**Please note your personal information would be held in the strictest confidence.**

**The information you provide will only be used for the purpose stated.**

To enable us to contact you please provide your name and contact details:

Your name:

Your email:

Your home address (if email cannot be provided)

## Section 5: About you

To help us further analyse and understand the data, please answer the following questions. This information will not be used to identify individuals. All data we collect will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Do you receive either Council Tax Support and/or Housing Benefit?

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I receive both                | <input type="checkbox"/> I receive Housing Benefit | <input type="checkbox"/> None - I do not receive either |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I receive Council Tax Support |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say              |

Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed full-time                | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and available for work  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed part-time                | <input type="checkbox"/> On a government supported training programme (e.g. Modern Apprenticeship/ Training for Work) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed (full or part time) | <input type="checkbox"/> Permanently sick/disabled  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fully retired                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Looking after the home   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partially retired                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Doing something else   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say  |

How old are you?

- |  |                                  |   |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 years of age | <input type="checkbox"/> 35 - 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 61- 64               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 - 24               | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 54 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 65 years of age |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 34               | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 - 60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say    |

Are you male or female?

- |                                 |  |  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender             | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to self-describe |  |

If you prefer to self-describe, please provide details below

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

- |   |  |                             |  |
|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, limited a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, limited a little | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
|---|--|-----------------------------|--|

## How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English / Welsh /<br>Scottish / Northern Irish /<br>British | <input type="checkbox"/> Kurdish                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irish   | <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Irish Traveller      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lankan        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek   | <input type="checkbox"/> Romany                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek Cypriot   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Eastern European       | <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish   | <input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African      | <input type="checkbox"/> Ghanaian          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish Cypriot   | <input type="checkbox"/> White and Black<br>Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Somali            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian   | <input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian              | <input type="checkbox"/> Nigerian          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Russian   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed European               | <input type="checkbox"/> Arab              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polish  | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani                    |  |

If 'Other', please specify

## What is your religion?

- |   |                                   |  |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No religion  | <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist | <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian (including Church of<br>England, Catholic, Protestant<br>and all other Christian<br>denominations) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh              |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

If 'Other', please specify

## How would you describe your sexuality?

- |                                       |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heterosexual | <input type="checkbox"/> Gay woman / lesbian | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gay man      | <input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual            |  |

## How did you hear about this survey?

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advert on computer,<br>tablet or phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing News<br>newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaflet                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social media                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Our Enfield magazine       | <input type="checkbox"/> Enfield Council website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local newspaper                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Poster                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter/email            |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth           |

If 'Other', please specify

**Thank you for taking the time to tell us your views**