

**Housing Allocation Scheme**  
**Letting affordable and social rented homes in**  
**Enfield**

**Draft Scheme for public consultation June to**  
**September 2017**

Scope	The allocation scheme sets out who can apply for affordable and social rented housing in Enfield, how applications are assessed and how we set the priorities for who is housed. It also sets out other housing options, including private rented sector, intermediate rent and shared ownership.
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Our Housing Allocation Scheme explains who social and affordable rented council and housing association homes in Enfield are for. It sets out the eligibility and qualification criteria for joining our housing register and explains how we prioritise applicants.

There is a severe shortage of social and affordable rented homes in Enfield. This means that many of the single people and families on our housing register are unlikely to receive a social and affordable rented home in the foreseeable future.

We need to ensure that social and affordable rented housing goes to those who need it most. We will ensure efficient practice in how the small number of social and affordable rented homes in Enfield are allocated and managed. We will allocate social housing that becomes available in Enfield so that people in housing need are treated fairly, given choice and so that we can build strong communities and deliver growth and sustainability.

We allocate accommodation when we:

- select a person to be a secure, flexible or introductory tenant of accommodation held by us, as a provider of Council housing;
- nominate a person to be a secure, flexible or introductory tenant of accommodation held by another housing authority;
- nominate a person to be an assured, flexible or introductory tenant of accommodation held by a Registered Provider.

Households who became homeless after November 2012 will be made a reasonable offer of private rented sector accommodation, due to the shortage of council and housing association homes in the borough.

We aim to prevent homeless and support Enfield residents to find settled homes in the private rented sector and in intermediate affordable housing (such intermediate rent housing, which is typically let at 20% below the market rate; or shared ownership).

## 1.1 Strategic context and legal framework

We are committed to delivering high quality housing and services to our local residents now and in the future. Our [housing, homelessness and tenancy strategies](#) explain how we will prevent homelessness; increase the supply of well-managed, good quality and affordable homes; promote housing choices and build strong neighbourhoods. We have taken into account the assessment of the needs of gypsies and travellers, in accordance with the Housing Act 2004

Our tenancy strategy and policy explains the types of tenancy we grant to tenants of Enfield Council and the issues registered providers in Enfield should have regard to when formulating their tenancy policies.

Enfield Council's allocation scheme operates within a legal framework which includes the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011) and regulations issued by government relating to allocations.

We are required by law in part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 to have a housing allocation scheme, which shows how we prioritise the allocation of social housing and the procedures that we will follow. This legislation and guidance from the Government requires that certain groups are given 'reasonable preference' within the scheme so they can be given priority when they apply for Council and Housing Association homes.

The statutory reasonable preference groups include those who:

- live in unsatisfactory housing which is, for example, overcrowded or lacking facilities
- need to move due to a medical condition or disability, those who need to move for health related or welfare reasons, including care leavers and people with high level support needs
- are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- need to move to a particular locality within the local authority area where it would cause hardship if they were unable to do so.

We can also give additional preference to households in one of the reasonable preference groups listed above. By law we must give additional priority to applicants who are current or previous members of the armed forces and who are in housing need. We also give additional preference to Enfield Council and Housing Association tenants who are severely overcrowded.

We give preference to some other applicants who are not included in any of the above groups. These include our Council tenants who need to move to a smaller home due to changes in welfare benefit entitlement and where they can no longer afford to occupy their current homes, or they need to move because their home is part of an estate regeneration scheme.

Under the Localism Act 2011, local authorities can identify groups who will not qualify for an allocation of social housing, by taking into account:

- a household's ability to meet their own housing costs
- any behaviour that affects a person's ability to be a suitable tenant
- local connection between the household and the local authority.

Under the Localism Act 2011, we can also discharge our duty by an offer of suitable accommodation into the private rented sector to any household who became homeless after November 2012.

### **1.3 Equality**

Enfield is changing and growing rapidly. We value our diverse community and will seek to ensure all applicants have fair access to homes in Enfield and to the services we provide. We want to reduce inequality and help people, communities, businesses and the Council itself to make the best use of the resources available.

Applicants who need any information on how we allocate homes translated into another language or format, or need assistance with any forms or documents regarding the allocation of homes, should contact us on 020 8379 1000.

#### **1.4 How we developed our draft allocation scheme**

This is a draft of our reviewed Housing Allocation Scheme. We are carrying out a public consultation on this draft from June to September 2017.

We are completing an Equality Impact Assessment of the new Scheme which considers the impact of the proposed policy changes on groups protected by the Equality Act 2010. We will further assess the equality impact of the new scheme using the results of the consultation on the new draft scheme.

Enfield's Lead Member for Housing and Housing Regeneration first reviewed the proposed policy changes in July 2016 and subsequently the draft document is being further considered by the Lead Member with the support of Labour Group Members.

The final draft of the scheme is scheduled to be presented for approval by Cabinet in winter 2017.

There will be an on-going operational review of Enfield's Allocations Scheme during the first year of its operation following Cabinet approval. Minor amendments will be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Housing Regeneration to address practical issues revealed by the on-going review or made necessary due to further legislation or case law.

The scheme will have a full review periodically and the new Scheme following this full review will be taken to Cabinet for approval.

## **2. HOUSING CHOICES**

There is a limited supply of social and affordable housing available for letting each year in Enfield. Applicants are strongly advised to consider all options, as even applicants awarded a high priority under this allocation scheme may find their needs met more quickly through alternative options. For others, they will not be eligible for the register for social and affordable rented homes, and will need to consider other options available to them to meet their housing need.

### **2.1 Private rented homes**

Applicants may be able to find good quality private rented accommodation which is available to move into straight away. Applicants are advised to contact local lettings agencies, respond to adverts in local papers and look online to find a home for rent.

For most households, the private rented sector will be their only option, because they are not eligible for points on the register or will not be awarded sufficient points in order to successfully bid for a social or affordable rented home.

Most homeless applicants living in accommodation provided by Enfield Council owed a full homelessness duty under homelessness legislation, who became homeless after November 2012, will be made an offer of a private rented home to discharge the Council's duty.

The Fresh Start Rent Deposit Scheme can help Enfield Council tenants and households in Enfield's Temporary Accommodation to find a private rented home with the help of a rent deposit.

We will advise single people about their options, which will vary depending on their age and circumstance. For people under age 35, we will give advice and support with locating an affordable room in a shared house in the private rented sector. For people over 35, who are entitled to a higher rate of Local Housing Allowance (LHA), we will give advice and support with finding an affordable self-contained home in the private rented sector. We will also give advice and support to all people presenting as homeless on finding work or claiming benefits to help pay for the rent. People with support needs can apply for floating support services to help with keeping the tenancy going and budgeting advice.

We aim to make improvements in the quality of private rented accommodation, in order to support people to stay in their existing home. Our Private Sector Housing Enforcement Team supports tenants who may be having problems with their landlord, or where their property is in a poor state of repair. We will also support older people or people with disabilities to make adaptations to their existing home, whether it is a privately rented home or a home that they own.

### **2.2 Social and affordable rented homes**

Applicants who are successful in applying to be on our social and affordable housing register and who are awarded a sufficient level of points, can choose which available

property they would like to live in by bidding for available properties which are advertised on the Council's Choice Based Lettings system. Eligible applicants can register their interest in up to three properties per week.

As well as being advertised on the Council's Choice Based Lettings website, vacant properties may also be posted weekly to housing applicants who have requested a paper copy of the adverts.

Each advert for an available home will identify:

- key features of the property
- how big it is
- whether it is suitable for people needing accessible housing (eg level access)
- who the landlord is – whether the council or a registered provider/ housing association
- what type of tenancy is being offered - tenancies will be either lifetime secure or assured, or increasingly will be flexible or fixed term secure or assured tenancies, which offer security of tenure for a fixed time period. Depending on the landlord, an introductory or starter tenancy may be offered. These are 'probationary tenancies' which provide reduced security of tenure during their first year. If the tenancy is conducted to the landlord's satisfaction, it will automatically convert to a secure tenancy or assured tenancy after 12 months have elapsed.
- what the rent and any service charges are – homes will either be social rented, or affordable rented. Rent levels for social rented housing are determined through a national rent regime. Affordable rented housing is subject to different rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). Affordable rented housing tends to be let at higher rents than affordable rented housing.

In exceptional circumstances the Council may have to withdraw a home from the Choice Based Lettings system after it has been advertised and bids received. This will happen if the property is needed for a household in an emergency; or if it has been incorrectly advertised. If a home has been incorrectly advertised it may be withdrawn at any point prior to an applicant signing the tenancy agreement.

In some circumstances, applicants are made a direct offer of a home rather than waiting to find a home through choice based lettings. We take applicant's preferences into account as far as possible when making a direct offer of a home.

Information is published regularly on the Council and the Choice Based Lettings websites on how vacant social and affordable rented homes in the borough have been let; including where homes were located, the type of homes let, which categories of applicants were housed, how many were let by choice based lettings and how many were let by direct offer. This information will enable applicants to compare their own circumstances with those housed and understand better their own chances of being housed.



It is not always possible to meet all the preferences of applicants. There is a severe shortage of Council and housing association homes in Enfield and most social and affordable rented homes are concentrated in the east of the borough. For this reason, although an applicant may want to live in a particular area of the borough, they may need to choose to bid for homes in an area where the type of property they would like is available. We expect applicants to be flexible, consider compromising and decide what is most important when making decisions about their preferences for a social or affordable rented home: this will involve applicants balancing different considerations, including the geographical area, type of housing and the preferred landlord.

The consequences for refusing offers are clearly set out in this Scheme. For example, applicants who think they may be able to hold out for a house rather than a flat in their area of their choice may find their housing application is cancelled if they refuse offers of accommodation the Council believes are reasonable and meet the needs of the applicant's household.

It is particularly unlikely that we will be able to fulfil every aspect of applicants' preferences:

- where an existing Council or housing association tenant needs to be moved urgently
- where the applicant needs accommodation which rarely becomes available, for example, wheelchair-adapted accommodation or homes with 4 or more bedrooms
- where an applicant has not engaged with the choice based lettings system and the Council has decided to make them a direct offer.

All applicants should consider other options available to them, including options in the private rented sector, where a home which meets their needs may become available much more quickly than waiting for a social or affordable rented home.

### **2.3 Intermediate or other low cost rental options**

In addition to Council and housing association homes which are let at significantly lower than market rents, the Council's Choice Based Lettings system also advertises some housing association and Enfield Council Housing properties with higher rents up to 80 per cent of local market rents. These homes will be clearly marked as 'Affordable Housing' when advertised online. Affordable housing rents usually include service charges that tenants will need to pay for the home.

All applicants with enough priority can bid for homes advertised as Affordable Rent homes in exactly the same way as for other advertised properties. If an applicant is successful the housing association may want to check they have enough income to pay the higher rent, whether working or on benefits.

### **2.4 Low cost home ownership**

Shared Ownership offers people the chance to buy a share of their home (between 25% and 75% of the home's value) and pay rent on the remaining share. Later on,

residents can buy bigger shares when they can afford to. Detail of available properties across London can be found on the First Steps website at [shareto-buy.com](http://shareto-buy.com)

## **2.5 Support with moving out of the area**

There are a range of options available to people who would like to move out of the Enfield area or who cannot afford to live in Enfield. We will advise applicants on the various options available to them if they are interested in moving to another area, including options of renting privately in another part of the country if this presents the best option.

Existing Council or housing association tenants looking to move to another part of London can find more information on [housingmoves.org.uk](http://housingmoves.org.uk), London's pan-London mobility scheme, which advertises lettings available to tenants transferring from other boroughs. Existing tenants of Enfield Council and Enfield housing association tenants can make transfer applications through housingmoves to be considered for vacancies in other London local authority areas.

We will also provide information on the process for tenants to swap homes, with their landlord's consent, available through [homeswapper.co.uk](http://homeswapper.co.uk). Tenants aged 60 and over who are interested in moving out of London, will be given information on the seaside and country homes scheme [homeconnections.org.uk](http://homeconnections.org.uk).

## **2.6 Supported housing**

The Council is committed to working with partner agencies to promote housing options for single young people, and other single people with specific needs. There are a number of supported housing schemes that may be suitable for applicants funded throughout the borough's Supported People initiative. We will advise applicants of their options, depending on their needs.

Extra care housing is specialist assisted living designed for people aged over 65. These schemes have a dedicated care and support team available 24 hours a day for help with personal care and housing support. To qualify, in addition to the qualification criteria set out in this Scheme generally, applicants must be aged 65 or over; have substantial or critical community care needs; and be assessed by adult social care as needing of the extra care services provided by the scheme. We will advise applicants of this option, depending on their needs.

## **2.7 Sheltered housing**

Sheltered housing provides a supportive environment which promotes independent living for older people in purpose-built properties with the services of a sheltered housing manager/ officer and linked to a 24-hour community alarm service. Residents must meet certain criteria to be eligible for this type of housing, as set out in section 6.6 of this scheme.

### **3 ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION FOR THE SOCIAL HOUSING REGISTER**

There are restrictions on who can be on our housing register. Restrictions are based on an applicant's income, savings and assets, unacceptable behaviour, whether they have a local connection to the borough and whether they can legally hold a tenancy. For applicants who do not qualify to join our housing register, we will notify them in writing of our decision and the grounds for that decision. We will offer advice on alternative housing options.

#### **3.1 People subject to immigration control**

Applicants will not be eligible to join the housing register if they are not entitled to access to public funds due to their immigration status. This includes households who, by law:

- are subject to immigration control
- only have a right to reside in the UK because they (or a member of their household) are a jobseeker
- are not habitually resident in the UK
- are not eligible if they are subject to immigration **control** or they are a person from abroad which the Secretary of State has prescribed is ineligible.

These include people from abroad who are subject to immigration control under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, and people prescribed as ineligible for an allocation in any regulations made by the Secretary of State unless they are:

- already a secure or introductory tenant of the Council or an assured tenant of housing allocated to them by a Council; or
- in a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State.

#### **3.2 Behaviour**

Applicants will not qualify for the register for a prescribed period of time if they, or any member of their household, have been involved in unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them an unsuitable tenant of the Council or other housing provider. This includes:

- applicants who have supplied false or misleading information on their housing application
- applicants who have paid money to obtain a tenancy with either the Council or a housing association operating within the Borough
- applicants whose partner or other member of their household have been convicted of, or had legal action taken against them for violence, racial harassment, threatening behaviour, any physical or verbal abuse towards staff and residents in the applicant's neighbourhood. Legal action here includes unspent convictions, serving of injunctions, notice of intention to seek possession, court order, or revocation of licence to occupy. Applicants who suffer from a mental illness who have either been convicted or had legal action taken against them as defined above shall not be ineligible if the conduct in question was directly attributable to their mental illness. In these

circumstances the Council will usually require medical evidence to help determine the applicant's eligibility.

Applications from people excluded due to the above behaviours will need to demonstrate a change in their behaviour and their applications will be usually reconsidered

- after 12 months if they supplied false or misleading information on their housing application
- after five years in the other circumstances, provided there has been no repeat occurrence during this time period;
- or once a conviction becomes spent.

Earlier reviews may be considered on a case by case basis.

### **3.3 Household income, assets and savings**

Applicants will not qualify for the housing register if their income is considered high enough for them to be able to afford alternative housing in the private sector. The threshold is £x (to be determined following outcome of public consultation) for a household without children; and £x (to be determined following outcome of public consultation) for a household with children. A household's income is assessed by taking into account the income of the two highest earners in the household.

Similarly, anyone with assets or savings over £x (to be determined following outcome of public consultation) will not be able to join the register. Assets include property or an interest in a property in the UK or elsewhere. If an applicant recently owned a home, they will be asked for evidence of the sale and details of any capital gained from the sale to help decide whether they qualify to be placed on the housing register

The following people will be exempt from the income, assets and savings threshold criteria all together. These people include:

- households lawfully in receipt of housing benefit, universal tax credit, tax credits, and disability living allowance
- Care leavers
- Service and ex-service personnel who fall within the statutory reasonable preference categories. This includes people serving in the regular forces and suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service; people formerly serving in the regular forces; people who have recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or people serving or who have served in the reserve forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service.

The following people will also be exempt, because it is in the interests of the Council to ensure these households are moved to other accommodation regardless of whether they have an income or assets over the income threshold.

- Applicants assessed and recommended for housing by Enfield's Fostering or Adoption Panels as an approved Foster Parent, an approved family or friend's foster carer or an approved adoptive parent
- under occupiers (people living in social housing with more bedrooms than they need, who we are working with to support them to move to a smaller property)
- households who are on the register because they need to move because the Council home they are currently living in is affected by estate regeneration work.

### **3.4 A local connection to Enfield**

Applicants will need to demonstrate they have a local connection in order to be eligible to be included on the register. They will need to do this by proving that they:

- Have lived in Enfield for the previous 3 years; or
- Have been in permanent employment (16 hours or more per week) in Enfield for the previous 3 years; or
- Have a close family member (normally mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter) who has lived in Enfield for the previous 3 years; or
- Need to move to Enfield to give care or support to someone who has lived in Enfield for the previous 3 years; or to receive care or support from someone who has lived in Enfield for the previous 3 years.

The following people will be exempt from the local connection criteria:

- Care leavers (who may have been placed in care outside the borough)
- People who are resident in a women's refuge outside of Enfield and had been living in Enfield continuously for at least 3 years immediately prior to moving into the refuge
- People receiving care who have been referred by the borough into a hospital or residential care home outside of Enfield
- People who have been placed in supported housing by Enfield Council or the Health Authority, are continuing to receive services from the Council and/or the Health Authority and who have been assessed as ready to move on to independent housing
- People with an exceptional reason for needing to live in Enfield, because they need medical treatment which is vital to the long-term health of the applicant and this is only available in Enfield (as determined by the Council's Medical Assessment Officer as part of a health and wellbeing assessment)

- People serving in the regular forces and suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service; people formerly serving in the regular forces; people who have recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or people serving or who have served in the reserve forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service
- People needing to move from a different locality into Enfield in order to give or receive care, to access specialised medical treatment, or to take up a particular employment, education or training opportunity
- Applicants assessed and recommended for housing by Enfield's Fostering or Adoption Panels as an approved Foster Parent, an approved family or friend's foster carer or an approved adoptive parent
- Under occupiers (existing tenants in Enfield Council housing with more bedrooms than they need, who we are working with the Council to move to a smaller property)
- Existing Council tenants needing to move because the home they are currently living in is affected by estate regeneration work.

### **3.5 Young people**

The minimum age required to hold a social tenancy is 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.

## **4 APPLYING TO JOIN THE SOCIAL HOUSING REGISTER**

### **4.1 Registering online**

Applicants who have completed a homelessness application with Enfield Council and for whom we have accepted a duty to house because they are homeless are automatically placed on the housing register. These households provide information on their circumstances through their homelessness application, and so do not need to also complete a separate application for housing register.

All other applicants need to complete an application online. This means they can apply for housing at a time that suits them, can receive a faster assessment of their application, and be provided with information and advice online on the full range of housing options available. We provide quick guides which show applicants how to bid online, over the phone or via text message.

We know that not everyone has access to a computer and the internet. There are a number of places across the borough that people can go to in order to access the internet for free or at a low cost. All libraries offer training introductory sessions on how to access the internet. Internet access and computer hire in Enfield's libraries is

available on the Council website on the pages explaining library services: [Internet access and computer hire Enfield Council](#)

Our website has been built to be accessible to those who are hard of hearing or visually impaired. It is compatible with popular screen readers and can be navigated easily using a series of keyboard shortcuts. For those who have difficulty reading, have limited vision or for those for whom English is not a first language, Enfield's website has text-to speech technology, a function for translating into one of 65 languages; and a function for changing colour schemes to make pages easier to view.

## **4.2 Providing full and accurate information**

Every application for housing is considered and decided in accordance with this Allocations Scheme. We are not able to register any applicants who have not completed their application form: this includes forms which are only part completed. We expect applicants to be honest about their circumstances so that we can fairly assess their housing need and ensure they receive the right housing advice to suit them.

We will keep applicants informed of the progress of their application and will explain any decisions we make, including how we made them. In some cases, an applicant may seem to be eligible for the Scheme, but there may be a delay in activating their application so that they can start bidding for a home. This may happen if:

- we require further information to assess their application, for example medical reports; or
- their case is under investigation for any other reason.

Applicants must provide us with full and accurate information when they apply to qualify for the register. They are expected to provide all information requested that is, or may be, relevant to their application for rehousing. Applicants are also expected to inform us of any changes in circumstances. This includes, but is not restricted to:

- any changes to their address or changes of tenure
- the removal of someone from their application
- the addition of someone to their application, including following the birth of a child
- changes in their income, assets or savings.

In applying for housing, the applicant gives the Council permission to share information with third parties and make further enquiries to verify the information they have supplied us with. If we discover that an applicant or someone acting on their behalf has wilfully supplied false information or have failed to provide us with information that is relevant to their application in order to gain a social or affordable rented home we will immediately cancel their application.

To verify the information provided, we will contact individuals or organisations whose details have been provided on the application, as well as any other relevant parties whose details come to light during our enquiries.

This may include:

- cross checking the information given by the applicant against the full Register of Electors of the London Borough of Enfield or any other Council;
- cross checking the information given by the applicant with teams within the Council, including teams dealing with Housing Benefit, Council Tax or other Council or benefits agencies;
- contacting current and previous landlords;
- sharing information with partner housing associations (registered providers)
- cross checking with data matching companies, such as Experian or other credit reference agencies, who will record details of any search made whether or not the application proceeds;
- any other third parties considered relevant to the application.

Applicants may also be asked to provide further evidence in order to verify the information given to us. This includes but is not restricted to;

- photographic proof of ID (passport or driving licence);
- proof of any welfare benefits claimed;
- birth certificates for each household member included on the application;
- National Insurance Numbers;
- proof of current and/or previous addresses (utility bill, bank statement, Council Tax payment book)
- proof of income, including pay slips for four weeks if paid weekly or last two months if paid monthly), a letter from the applicant's employer confirming their annual salary, and tax returns / business accounts to evidence income if self-employed
- passport size photo
- immigration documents
- information regarding property ownership.

If the applicant has obtained a social or affordable rented home through the housing register and it is discovered that they or someone acting on their behalf has supplied false information or failed to provide us with information that would have been relevant to the applicant's ability to secure that social or affordable rented home we will work with their landlord to end the tenancy. It is an offence to obtain, or attempt to obtain, a tenancy by deception.

S.171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to knowingly or recklessly provide or withhold information when applying for housing and subsequently if circumstances change. Anyone suspected of giving false information or withholding relevant information is liable to be prosecuted and fined up to £5000.

### **4.3 Who applicants can include on their application**

We will only consider applications to house the applicant, their partner, their immediate family, and anyone else with an exceptional need to live with them who are considered to be the 'eligible household' for purpose of this scheme. We have a severe shortage of larger properties, and therefore we advise families to consider



whether other people living in their household could move into smaller properties of their own.

Anyone included on the application must not have a legal interest in any other property. The applicant or any member of their household cannot be included on more than one live housing register application at any one time.

**Partner** means someone who lives with the applicant as a partner, or who would live with them if they were able to. This includes mixed-gender and same-sex couples, whether or not they are married or in a civil partnership.

If the applicant and partner are **separating**, they must provide us with evidence of who is legally allowed to remain in the property, such as a court property order detailing to whom the property is assigned.

**Immediate family** means the applicant's children or their partner's children, who live (or would live) with the applicant all of the time, or for four or more nights every week. Anyone who is part of the immediate family can be included in the application, even if they do not currently live with the applicant. If members of the immediate family live abroad, they can be included on the application, but the Council will not award priority for them until the family have the right to reside in the UK. If members of the immediate family currently live elsewhere in the UK, they can be included on the application, but we encourage families to consider applying to be rehoused where they live, especially if the demand for housing is lower there.

Accommodation for children will be allowed for only one parent, on whom the children are dependent. Children of a shared residence order can only be included on one application, with the parent who is the main care provider. This means that the children live with the applicant for more than half the week (four nights or more). We will require evidence of this, such as a court order. Any consideration of a larger home in the context of a shared residence order will also take account of affordability. Where the applicant claims welfare benefits, welfare benefit regulations enable only one of the parents, the designated 'main carer', to receive additional benefit for the extra bedrooms required.

If the applicant has priority for housing and is assessed as requiring a one bedroom or studio home and have children who visit on a regular basis, they will be assessed as requiring a one-bedroom property rather than a studio.

Immediate family does **not** include the applicant's (or their partner's) parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, friends or lodgers– unless they can demonstrate an exceptional need to live with the applicant as part of the household in order **to give or receive care and support**. Someone not in the immediate family may be accepted on the applicant in one of the following circumstances:

- An eligible member of the household needs permanent and substantial full-time care, no one in their immediate family is able to provide this, and another person has been identified as their carer. This could include assistance with personal activities of daily living, such as bathing, washing, toileting, dressing, feeding, or transfer from bed/chairs/sofas/baths if the applicant is wheelchair or bed bound, or palliative care from a medical professional. The applicant will need to provide relevant social care and/or medical reports, including an occupational therapy report, nursing and community care reports, or a child's

Continuing Health Care assessment as applicable, to support this request for an additional bedroom; or

- An eligible member of the household is the recognised carer of someone who is not in their immediate family. The person receiving the care needs permanent and substantial fulltime care; is no longer able to live independently; and alternative supported or sheltered accommodation is not considered to be appropriate. The applicant will need to provide relevant social care and/or medical reports to support the request for an additional bedroom, as above.

If the person coming to live with the applicant is moving from abroad, we will require evidence that they have recourse to public funds or a sufficient sponsorship undertaking in place.

Where a household qualifies for our housing register because they are **homeless**, the application can include anyone who we accepted as part of the original homelessness application. For families with children aged 22 or older, we will encourage them to seek alternative independent housing if possible, in order for the household to be able to bid for a smaller properties, and so increase the chance of the applicant being rehoused in a reasonable timeframe.

#### **4.4 What are the options for people who cannot be included on the applicant's application?**

We base our assessment of what size property the household needs based on the number of eligible people on the application. The applicant may decide that the additional person will live with them anyway, despite making their home overcrowded. However, the Council will not take the additional person into account when assessing whether or not they are overcrowded. Tenants who make themselves overcrowded in this way may be in breach of their tenancy conditions.

If an applicant moves in with a council or housing association tenant and the property becomes overcrowded, the applicant can apply for the housing register in their own right. In such cases overcrowding priority may not be awarded and alternative housing options should be considered.

If we agree to house a council or housing association tenant and we agree to rehouse immediate family but not everyone else who is currently living in the property, the tenant is responsible for ensuring none of the remaining occupants continue to live in the property after they have moved out.

Council and housing association applicants who live with family or friends who are not part of their immediate family may be rehoused separately from them – for example, if the applicant and their partner or children live with the applicant's parents in their home.

#### **4.5 Keeping information up to date**

Applicants must keep the information on their housing application up to date. This includes informing us of changes in household composition, a change of address, or a change of income. This applies whether the applicant completes the application themselves or someone else does this for them.

## **5. HOW WE ASSESS THE NEEDS OF THE HOUSEHOLD**

### **5.1 Points**

We have a points based allocation scheme which gives applicants points according to their household's housing circumstances and any additional support needs. When applicants apply for housing, their needs are assessed, they are placed in one of five demand group and given points which reflect the level of priority they have for being housed. Section 6 sets out the five groups and the points awarded in different circumstances.

### **5.2 How we assess the size of property a household needs**

We work out the size of home suitable for the applicant and eligible members of their household. This is regardless of how the applicant uses their current home.

We have a bedroom standard for our Council-owned homes. Housing associations (registered providers) may operate their own bedroom standard which will be clearly stated on the advert when a home is advertised for letting.

A notional number of bedrooms will be allocated based on the age, sex, marital status and relationships between family members, as follows:

- A married or cohabiting couple or single parent will be entitled to one bedroom.
- Pairs of adolescents from their 10<sup>th</sup> birthday and above of the same sex will be expected to share a bedroom.
- Pairs of children of either sex aged up to their 10th birthday will be expected to share a bedroom.
- Where we have accepted that nieces, nephews, step children or grandchildren have an exceptional reason for living with the main applicant, they will be expected to share a bedroom with the applicant's children as per the age criteria set out above (unless there are safeguarding issues)
- Children of the main applicant who are aged over 21 will be expected to share a bedroom with a same sex sibling who is younger, including where that younger sibling is under the age of 10 (unless there are safeguarding issues).
- Where Enfield has accepted that an older relative, such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle aged over 60, has an exceptional reason for living with the main applicant, they will be entitled to a bedroom of their own.

The table below shows how we will calculate the size of home needed by different sized households, which is in accordance with the statutory definition of overcrowding set out in the Housing Act 1985.

It should be noted that lettings of social or affordable rented homes with 4 or more bedrooms are very rare. Based on previous years, less the 2% of lettings had 4 or more bedrooms.

Household Composition	Eligible No. of Bedrooms	Indicative size of home in terms of number of bedrooms (B) and number of persons (P)
Single person	1	Studio or 1B/1P
Couple without children	1	Studio or 1B/2P
<b>Single parent or couple with children: Household includes</b>		
1 girl or boy - any age	2	2B/3P
2 girls or boys - any age	2	2B/4P
1 girl and 1 boy - if both under 10	2	2B/4P
1 girl under 10 and 1 boy over 10	3	3B/4P 3B/5P
1 boy under 10 and 1 girl over 10	3	3B/4P 3B/5P
1 girl and 1 boy - if both over 10	3	3B/5P
3 children	3	3B/5P 3B/6P
2 girls and 2 boys	3	3B/5P 3B/6P
3 boys, 1 girl	4	4B/6P 4B/7P
3 girls, 1 boy	4	4B/6P 4B/7P
5 children	4	4B/7P 4B/8P
4 boys , 2 girls	4	4B/7P 4B/8P
4 girls 2 boys	4	4B/7P 4B/8P
5 boys 1 girl	5	5B/9P
5 girls,1 boy	5	5B/10P
7 children	5	5B/10P
6 boys, 2 girls	5	5B/10P
6 girls, 2 boys	5	5B/10P
4 boys, 4 girls	5	5B/10P
7 boys, 1 girl	6	6B/11P
7 girls, 1 boy	6	6B/11P
5 boys, 3 girls	6	6B/11P
5 girls, 3 boys	6	6B/11P
<b>Additional members of a household</b>		
<b>In exceptional circumstances an additional bedroom may be allowed (see below)</b>		
A relative who is not in the immediate family, who has an exceptional reason for living with the main applicant (see section 4.3)	Where applicable, add 1 bedroom to relevant household composition	
A full-time carer who is not part of the immediate family (see section 4.3)		
An extra bedroom for a member of the household who cannot be expected to share a		

Household Composition	Eligible No. of Bedrooms	Indicative size of home in terms of number of bedrooms (B) and number of persons (P)
room, but would usually be expected to share (see below).	outlined above	
Significant medical equipment is required (see below)		

An extra bedroom may be considered in the following circumstances:

- The applicant has been approved as a foster parent, or family or friend’s foster carer and needs an extra room for their caring requirements.
- The applicant, or a member of their household, need major medical equipment for the long term, such as home dialysis, oxygen cylinders, long term large assistive equipment or bulky medical supplies which cannot be stored elsewhere.
- The applicant, or a member of their household, is unable to share a room because they have a severe or profound learning difficulty, with a presentation of behavioural or emotional difficulties, or they have a severe behavioural disorder. They exhibit inappropriate behaviour of a serious nature and have a limited understanding of the impact of this on others. This will need to be certified by a consultant psychiatrist for people aged 18 and over, or by a teacher, social worker or other health professional who is well known to the child and family for children aged 17 or under.
- The applicant, or a member of their household, is unable to share a room because they need substantial psychological support due to a major psychiatric illness certified by a consultant psychiatrist (for example, progressive dementia, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, severe learning difficulties, severe and longstanding neurosis which is poorly controlled by medical treatments). They are assessed as being incapable of living independently in the community by a medical professional, and alternative housing options are not suitable.

Council and housing association tenants under-occupying their home, who would normally qualify for one bedroom and are giving up a 3, 4 or 5 bedroom house or a 4 or 5 bedroom flat, may be offered a 2 bedroom home suitable for 3 people but not a two bedroom home suitable for 4 people.

Applicants awarded an additional room for reasons outlined above must be able to demonstrate to the Council they can afford the rent from earned income and/or benefits.

## **Applicants who request homes with one bedroom less than the household needs**

The Council will agree to making an offer of a social or affordable rented home which is one bedroom smaller than their household needs, if this is requested by the applicant. The Council will not make offers of homes where the household would be severely overcrowded (that is, two or more bedrooms short).

An applicant who chooses to move into a home with one bedroom less than they need will not be awarded points for being overcrowded in order to get a transfer at a later date, except in exceptional circumstances.

### **5.3 How we assess health and wellbeing needs**

Health and wellbeing priority will be considered where the applicant, or a qualifying member of their household, has a long-term health and wellbeing issue which is being negatively impacted by the applicant's current housing condition. Health and wellbeing priority will **not** be considered where the applicant, or a member of their household, has a temporary health and wellbeing issue, such as pregnancy; a common cold; flu; cough; or a broken leg.

Applicants wishing to be assessed for health and wellbeing points are required to complete a health and wellbeing self-assessment. We will review the information in the self-assessment. This will be done by either the Council's Medical Assessment Officer, or we will arrange for an approved medical professional to review the information. We may request supporting evidence from the applicant's GP, hospital consultant, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, social worker or other relevant professional identified by the applicant. Applicants should not ask their GP or anyone else to write to us. We will use the information provided by relevant professionals as part of our holistic assessment. The Medical Officer will make the final recommendation on the applicant's health and wellbeing priority for housing allocation and the final decision will be made by the Allocation and Assessment Manager, or another manager within the Assessment and Allocations Service at the same grade.

We will reassess health and wellbeing needs if the applicant's circumstances have changed significantly since they were last assessed, for example if the applicant has been diagnosed with a new health problem, or their independence has reduced.

#### **5.3.1 Detail considered as part of a health and wellbeing assessment**

During the assessment, the Medical Assessment Officer will consider:

- how and to what extent the applicant's current living conditions affect their illness, disability or wellbeing;
- the applicant's housing need;
- how the health or wellbeing issue affects the applicant or member of the household;
- the severity of the health or wellbeing issue and how long it has lasted;
- the cumulative effect on the whole household where there is more than one person in the applicant's household with a severe illness or disability;

- past health issues and the extent to which the applicant's symptoms have been controlled or improved by treatment;
- the availability of 'in-situ' solutions such as aids and adaptations to enable the applicant to continue living in their present home;
- how long the condition is likely to last, and the longer term outcome. The applicant may need to wait for the outcome of a medical condition if it is unclear how they will be affected in the long term, before we reach a decision as to whether they are to be given health and wellbeing priority;
- the applicant's financial and other resources, including whether they are entitled to disability benefits. This is just one of the points of consideration, and applicants will not receive an automatic award of health and wellbeing priority if they are receiving disability benefits.

The Medical Assessment Officer may recommend a particular type of home that is suitable for the applicant based on the assessment.

We will inform the applicant of the outcome of their health and wellbeing assessment in writing. If no health and wellbeing points are awarded, we will inform the applicant of other housing options available to them.

### **5.3.2 Poor quality homes and disrepair**

Where possible, we encourage tenants and occupiers to stay in their existing home. Where there is disrepair and the applicant states that the health and wellbeing issue is related to the poor state of repair of the property then we will expect the property owner, landlord or Agent to remedy the disrepair.

We are committed to improving poor quality housing, whatever the tenure. Our Private Sector Housing Team can arrange property inspections, and can offer advice and support to owners and landlords on how to make homes safer. Where necessary, we will take enforcement action. This may include issuing a statutory notice ordering the landlord to undertake the work to repair the home. Where the landlord does not carry out the repairs, we may carry out the works in default or take action to prosecute the landlord.

### **5.3.3 Applicants who move into unsuitable housing and request housing assistance from Enfield Council**

Applicants with a pre-existing medical condition who move from suitable housing into accommodation that does not meet their needs will be expected to find their own longer term housing solution, including in the private rented sector. The provision in this Allocations Scheme is designed to prevent applicants from deliberately worsening their housing conditions to take advantage of the health and wellbeing criteria to enhance their housing priority. In these cases, no health and wellbeing priority will be awarded. We will provide advice and assistance to help the applicant find somewhere else to live.

### **5.3.4 Level of health and wellbeing priority**

Where we assess that the applicant does have a health and wellbeing need, we will award either high, medium or low health and wellbeing priority, depending on their circumstances.

<b>Priority Level</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>High</b>	<p>This is where the applicant has an urgent need to move, because current living conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• put the applicant's life at risk if they do not move, or</li> <li>• cause the applicant to be completely housebound and they would regain substantial independence if an alternative property were made available, including needing a wheelchair-adapted home because the applicant is a wheelchair user.</li> </ul> <p>In some circumstances, applicants will also be awarded a high level of points if medical treatment vital to the long-term or life-long health of the applicant is only available in Enfield.</p>
<b>Medium</b>	An applicant's need to move is less urgent and not life threatening but their living conditions are unsuitable and if left unresolved, their quality of life will deteriorate
<b>Low</b>	The applicant's living conditions cause them difficulty in carrying out their daily activities but this is neither life threatening nor would greater harm or progression of the illness be caused if they did not move.
<b>No health and wellbeing priority awarded</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant's current housing situation has no adverse impact on the health issues presented, or</li> <li>• a move would offer no improvement; or a solution other than moving into a social or affordable rented home is available, such as the adaptation of their current home, or a move to an appropriate private rented home.</li> </ul>

#### **5.4 Assessing levels of overcrowding**

We will assess the number of bedrooms a household needs (see section 5.2) and we will compare this with the number of rooms that are currently available for the sole use of the household and which could be used as bedrooms in their existing accommodation. We will count any rooms other than bathrooms, toilets, kitchens and utility rooms as a bedroom. For Council tenants, this will exclude one living room per property. This means any additional rooms such as a dining room or living room in the private rented sector, or second living room/ dining room in Council accommodation, will be counted as a bedroom. We use this information to determine whether the household is overcrowded, and the level of overcrowding. The Council reserves the right to decide how households can make best use of the rooms available to them and to change their application accordingly.

#### **5.5 Enfield's Definition of employment/ working households**

We want to raise levels of aspiration and ambition in the borough and to encourage people to work where they are able to do so. In some circumstances, applicants will be awarded a higher level of points if they, or their partner, is in employment. For the purposes of this Allocations Scheme, employment is described as having a permanent contract, working as a temporary member of staff or being self-employed. Applicants will only qualify if the worker has been employed for 6 out of the last 12



months, for a minimum of 16 hours per week. We will verify an applicant's employment status by reviewing:

- payslips (pay slips for the last four weeks if paid weekly or the last two months if paid monthly or a letter from their employer confirming their annual salary);
- the most recent P60
- the last 3 months of bank statements
- Most recent tax returns and business accounts to evidence self-employed work, if this applies

## **5.6 Dealing with exceptional cases**

### **Exceptions and Special Applications Housing Panel (ESAHP)**

There may be exceptional circumstances giving rise to a housing need not described or anticipated by this scheme. The Exceptions and Special Applications Housing Panel (ESAHP) will consider these cases. The panel is chaired by a senior officer in the Council's Assessment Hub graded PO2 or above. The Assistant Director for Gateway and Council Assessment Services will hear appeals against Panel decisions.

### **Council Transfers for Exceptional and Emergency Reasons**

Council tenants may be considered for an Exceptional or Emergency Transfer (known internally as 'Management Transfers') in the following circumstances:

- Child abuse from within the family or within the neighbourhood
- Threat of violence or actual violence
- Rape or assault within the home or immediate locality
- Unnatural death (suicide or murder within the home)
- Irretrievable breakdown in the relationship with neighbours
- Threat of or actual gang violence where this is confirmed after a full investigation with police reports and all available legal remedies have been exhausted.

Urgent moves in these circumstances will be considered and agreed the Housing Options Transfer Panel, chaired by the Head of Housing Operations in Enfield Council Homes. The decision will be based on an investigation undertaken by housing management staff to gather evidence of the reason for needing to move urgently and any health and well-being assessment available.

We will only make one offer of a similar type of home to that currently occupied to applicants approved for a transfer for an exceptional or emergency reason. For example, a tenant who is living in a high rise flat will be offered an alternative high rise flat. The senior officer agreeing the move may use their discretion to alleviate severe overcrowding at the same time.

## **5.7 Reducing an applicant's level of housing priority**

Applicants on the housing register may have their priority for housing reduced to zero points if they have rent arrears and owe more than eight times the weekly accommodation charge; or they have not maintained a repayment agreement for 6

months. Their application will become inactive until the arrears are cleared or an agreement to repay them has been maintained for 6 months.

Exceptions to this will be considered on a case by case basis, for example where the case for housing is urgent or it is in the Council's interest for the applicant to move from their current home (for example, households whose Council home they are currently living in is affected by estate regeneration work or household under-occupying their existing Enfield Council home who are moving to a smaller property) or where an applicant has suffered unavoidable debt, such as having to pay for funeral costs. This decision will be taken by the Exceptions and Special Applications Housing Panel (ESAP)

## **5.8 Removing applicants from the housing register**

We will remove an applicant from the housing register if:

- the applicant has been housed in a council or housing association property since making their application;
- the applicant had been a homeless applicant who became homeless after November 2012 and has been made an offer of a private rented home;
- the applicant's circumstances have changed and a new application needs to be completed;
- the applicant no longer wants to be housed;
- the applicant has died;
- the applicant has had a change in their immigration status and is no longer eligible to be on the housing register;
- the applicant has been involved in proven antisocial behaviour or evicted for anti-social behaviour after they apply to the housing register;
- the applicant's income, assets or savings have increased since making their application and they are no longer eligible;
- the applicant is not eligible because they are a person prescribed by the Secretary of State in regulations as ineligible, as set out in section 2.2.

## **6. HOW APPLICANTS ARE PRIORITISED**

We use a points system for assessing applications for council and housing association homes. Applicants who qualify for our housing register will be placed into one of five demand groups and awarded points to measure their housing priority by their circumstance:

- Group 1: Existing Enfield Council or housing association tenants, homeless households and private rented sector tenants in insanitary, unsuitable or overcrowded accommodation
- Group 2: Enfield Council's estate regeneration applicants with decant status
- Group 3: Applicants in particular circumstances with assessed needs
- Group 4: Applicants requiring wheelchair adapted homes
- Group 5: Sheltered housing applicants.

Given the acute shortage of social and affordable rented homes becoming available in comparison to high levels of demand, applicants will need a minimum number of points to be able to bid for a home. This is so that we can better manage the limited supply of social and affordable rented homes and better manage the expectations of applicants. The level of the threshold will be agreed by the Lead Member for Housing and Housing Regeneration and this will be published on the Council's website. The level set will be based on an assessment of levels of supply of social and affordable rented homes and of demand for those homes. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken as part of this assessment. The level will be reviewed periodically as local circumstances change.

## **6.1 Group 1: Existing Enfield Council and housing association tenants, homeless applicants and private rented sector tenants in insanitary, unsuitable or overcrowded accommodation**

These applicants are existing tenants of Enfield Council or of a housing association/ registered provider in Enfield who need to move; applicants who are legally homeless; or applicants living in unsuitable accommodation in the private rented sector. When determining whether a private rented sector accommodation is unsuitable, we will use the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and Part X Housing Act 1985 when assessing eligibility for this priority. We will consider whether the private rented sector property could be made suitable through repairs or adaptations, and whether or not the household could afford alternative suitable accommodation in the private rented sector.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced changes to the way councils can provide accommodation for homeless people. This means we can discharge our duty by an offer of suitable accommodation into the private rented sector to any household who became homeless after November 2012.

Households who became homeless prior to November 2012 can also accept a private rented accommodation property in order to find settled accommodation more quickly, but we cannot discharge our duty to these households if they refuse such an offer. For this reason, households who became homeless prior to November 2012 are awarded a higher level of points.

An additional 50 points will be awarded to any applicant in Group 1 who is either:

- a former member of the regular armed forces;
- a member of the regular or reserve forces who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability related to their service; or
- a bereaved spouse or civil partner who has to leave forces accommodation following their partner's death in service.

**Points for Group 1: Existing Enfield Council and housing association tenants; homeless applicants; and private rented sector tenants in insanitary, unsuitable or overcrowded accommodation**

**Tie breaker mechanism (where two or more bidders with the same level of points bid for the same property): The applicant who has been on the housing register for the longest period.**

<b>Circumstance of applicant</b>	<b>Points</b>
Applicant has a high health and well-being need to move	1000
Council tenant has an exceptional or emergency reason for needing to move (management transfers) These applicants are given a direct offer of accommodation.	1000
Applicant's current home is too big for them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3+ bedrooms too big</li> <li>• 2 bedrooms too big</li> <li>• 1 bedroom too big</li> </ul> Additional points awarded if they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium health and wellbeing need</li> <li>• Low health and wellbeing need.</li> </ul>	800 700 550  150 50
Applicant has a legal right to succeed to an Enfield-owned social or affordable rented home which is larger than required; or has no legal right but we would owe them a full homelessness duty if they were evicted. We require the applicant to move to smaller accommodation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant is releasing a home with 3 or more bedrooms</li> <li>• Applicant is releasing a 2 bedroom home</li> <li>• applicant is living in a home with 1 bedroom more than they require.</li> </ul> Additional points if also assessed as having <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Health and Well-being</li> </ul>	800 700 550  150

<p>Need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low Health and Wellbeing need</li> </ul>	50
<p>Homeless applicant living in accommodation provided by Enfield Council owed a full homelessness duty who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• became homeless prior to November 2012; and</li> <li>• is in employment; and</li> <li>• has been assessed as having an income from work which is not enough to make rent payments.</li> </ul>	700
<p>Homeless applicant living in accommodation provided by Enfield Council owed a full homelessness duty who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• became homeless prior to November 2012; and</li> <li>• is not working; and</li> <li>• has had their welfare benefits reduced by Government; and</li> <li>• has been assessed as having an income which is not enough to make rent payments; and</li> <li>• has been assessed by the Assessment and Allocations Manager as not in a position to find work.</li> </ul> <p>Applicants will only be awarded these points in exceptional circumstances.</p>	650
<p>Applicant is an existing Council or housing association tenant and their current home is too small for them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3+ bedrooms lacking</li> <li>• 2 bedrooms lacking</li> <li>• 1 bedroom lacking</li> </ul> <p>Additional points awarded if they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium health and wellbeing need</li> <li>• Low health and wellbeing need.</li> </ul>	<p>600</p> <p>550</p> <p>200</p> <p>150</p> <p>50</p>
<p>Homeless applicant living in accommodation provided by Enfield Council owed a full homelessness duty under homelessness legislation, who became homeless prior to November</p>	300

2012.	
<p>Applicant is living in the private rented sector or with family or friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacking 3+ bedrooms</li> <li>• Lacking 2 bedrooms</li> <li>• Lacking 1 bedroom</li> </ul> <p>Additional points awarded if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessed as having a medium health and wellbeing need</li> <li>• Assessed as having a low health and wellbeing need</li> <li>• Applicant is in employment</li> <li>• Exceptional reason for needing to live in Enfield</li> </ul>	<p>250</p> <p>150</p> <p>50</p> <p>150</p> <p>50</p> <p>50</p> <p>50</p>
Homeless applicant living in accommodation provided by Enfield Council owed a full homelessness duty under homelessness legislation, who became homeless after November 2012 and is living in temporary accommodation, pending being made an offer of a private rented home to discharge the Council's duty.	200
<p>Applicant has a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• medium health and well-being priority; or</li> <li>• low health and well-being priority</li> </ul> <p>Additional points awarded if applicant is living in the private rented sector or with family and friends and is overcrowded by lacking one bedroom.</p>	<p>100</p> <p>50</p> <p>50</p>
<p>Applicant who was threatened with unintentional homelessness, has priority need for accommodation and has become homeless despite the Council taking reasonable steps to try to prevent the homelessness.</p> <p>Additional points awarded if applicant fully cooperated with the Council while trying to prevent their homelessness. Cooperation may include attending interviews with the council and/or mediation with the landlord, disclosure of</p>	<p>100</p> <p>100</p>

documents, agreeing re-payment plans, dealing fully with HB claims, or reaching agreements with landlords to stop anti-social behaviour.	
Applicant is intentionally homeless but in priority need and the Council is providing temporary accommodation for a set period to give the applicant a reasonable opportunity of securing alternative accommodation.  Applicant is removed from the register at the end of that time period.	50
Non-priority homeless applicants	50
Homeless applicants who are owed a homelessness duty by another borough but who have been placed in temporary accommodation in Enfield.	50

## 6.2 Group 2: Enfield Council's estate regeneration applicants with decant status

These are existing tenants of Enfield Council whose existing home is affected by building development work on their estate. Priority will be given in line with the Council's requirements to deliver vacant possession as required by the Council's development programme.

Applicants will need to have been given 'decant status' to qualify for inclusion in this group. The terms of any moves, including priorities for moving, will be set out in a separate offer to affected tenants. Tenants required to move will be supported to find alternative accommodation and where necessary direct offers will be made. Further information is available on the decant process in Enfield Council's Decant Framework.

The Council has plans for regenerating Council housing estates in the borough and enough social rented homes will be set aside each year to be made available to all tenants who need to be moved as a result of this.

Tenants of Enfield Council who live in a home that is due to be redeveloped in the future as part of a regeneration programme, but have not yet been awarded decant status, will have their application assessed under the Group 1 criteria.

An additional 50 points will be awarded to any applicant in Group 2 who is either:

- a former member of the regular armed forces;
- a member of the regular or reserve forces who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability related to their service; or
- a bereaved spouse or civil partner who has to leave forces accommodation following their partner's death in service.

## Points for Group 2 : Enfield's Estate Regeneration Applicants with Decant Status

**Tie breaker mechanism (where two or more bidders with the same level of points bid for the same property): The applicant who has lived concurrently for the longest period of time in the estate designated for regeneration.**

Circumstance of applicant	Points
Applicants who are tenants of Enfield Council whose homes are part of an agreed estate regeneration scheme who have been awarded a high priority health and wellbeing need	1000
Applicants who are tenants of Enfield Council whose homes are part of an agreed estate regeneration scheme who are severely overcrowded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 bedrooms lacking</li> <li>• 2 bedrooms lacking</li> </ul>	600 550
Applicants who are tenants of Enfield Council whose homes are part of an agreed estate regeneration scheme who are under occupying and financially disadvantaged	500
Applicants who are tenants of Enfield Council whose homes are part of an agreed estate regeneration scheme who are overcrowded because they are 1 bedroom lacking	450
Applicants who are tenants of Enfield Council whose homes are part of an agreed estate regeneration scheme who have been awarded Decant Status, but no other circumstances apply.	400

### 6.3 Group 3: Applicants in particular circumstances

This group includes applicants in various circumstances who have a particular and identified housing need.

An additional 50 points will be awarded to any applicant in Group 3 who is either:

- a former member of the regular armed forces;
- a member of the regular or reserve forces who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability related to their service; or
- a bereaved spouse or civil partner who has to leave forces accommodation following their partner's death in service.



**Points for Group 3: Applicants in particular circumstances with assessed needs**

**Tie breaker mechanism (where two or more bidders with the same level of points bid for the same property): The applicant who has been on the housing register for the longest period.**

Circumstance of applicant	Points
<p>Applicant has an emergency and exceptional priority and requires an urgent move. This could include households under the National Witness Mobility Scheme; Enfield child protection cases; or households fleeing domestic violence who have been referred by Enfield MARRAC as being at the highest levels of risk, who are assessed as having an exceptional reason for requiring a social or affordable rented home and no other housing solutions are available.</p>	1000
<p>Applicant is a single person under 25 leaving Enfield Council's care</p>	800
<p>Applicant is approved by Enfield's Fostering and Adoption Panel to be a foster parent, family or friend's foster carer or adoptive parent (<b>for a home of 3 or more bedrooms</b>)</p>	800
<p>Applicant has been diagnosed with either a mental health illness; learning disability; physical disability, sensory impairment or long term condition. The applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will receive support from adult social care services; or</li> <li>• could be in need of adult social care services in the absence of settled accommodation; and</li> <li>• has a significant need for a social tenancy because their current housing circumstances are having a severe negative impact on their health condition and wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p>These are applicants for one bed or studio accommodation.</p>	<p>750</p> <p>700</p>
<p>Enfield Council employee whose social or affordable rented home goes with their job and the Council has agreed to move them to an alternative social or affordable rented home because of ill health or retirement</p>	

**Points for Group 3: Applicants in particular circumstances with assessed needs**

**Tie breaker mechanism (where two or more bidders with the same level of points bid for the same property): The applicant who has been on the housing register for the longest period.**

Circumstance of applicant	Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if releasing a 3 bedroom home or home occupied is needed for another employee</li> <li>• otherwise</li> </ul> <p>Additional points if also assessed as having</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Health and Well-being Need</li> <li>• Low Health and Wellbeing need</li> </ul>	<p>750 650</p> <p>150 50</p>
<p>Residents with support needs currently living in supported accommodation who have been assessed as needing an independent home.</p>	<p>650</p>
<p>Applicants referred through Enfield's established Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)</p>	<p>650</p>
<p>New Generation Scheme applicants for studio or one bedroom homes: Single people and couples without children living with their parents in an Enfield Council home meeting the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aged between 25 and 60</li> <li>• have lived with parent(s) continuously for at least 3 years and</li> <li>• the parent(s) has lived in a council property owned by Enfield for at least 3 years</li> <li>• the applicant is in employment</li> <li>• the accommodation in which the applicant is living is overcrowded.</li> </ul> <p>Additional points if also assessed as having</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Health and Well-being Need</li> <li>• Low Health and Wellbeing need</li> </ul>	<p>450</p> <p>150 50</p>

## **6.4 Group 4: Applicants who require a wheelchair adapted property**

This group is for applicants who have been assessed as requiring a wheelchair adapted home and have been awarded a high health and wellbeing need to move.

The homes we reserve for this group are specifically those which have been adapted to cater for a tenant who requires a wheelchair.

Applicants in this group include:

- existing social or affordable rented tenants (including those with decant status) who need to transfer to an adapted home because they, or a member of their eligible household, are a wheelchair-user and their current home is not suitable
- tenants in the private rented sector who need to move to an adapted home because they, or a member of their eligible household, are a wheelchair-user, their current home is not suitable and the health and wellbeing assessment has concluded that a social or affordable rented home is the best option for the household
- Applicants in accommodation provided by Enfield Council owed a full housing duty under the homelessness law and who are a wheelchair-user or another member of their eligible household is a wheelchair user.

We will carry out a health and wellbeing assessment, which includes an assessment by an Occupational Therapist, to confirm the need for a wheelchair adapted home.

Post 2012 homeless households in this group can have their needs met through a suitable offer of accommodation in the private rented sector, and the Council can discharge our duty through a reasonable private rented sector offer. We will support these households into appropriate private rented sector homes, as this is often the quickest way into appropriate settled accommodation. An adapted home in the private rented sector may also be the best option for existing private rented sector tenants who require a wheelchair adapted home and whose current home is not suitable.

All homes to people in this group are allocated by making a direct offer. When an adapted property becomes available, we will consider whether it is appropriate for applicants in the following order of preference:

1. Former Armed Services or Reserved Services personnel who have a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service and need a home which is wheelchair adapted
2. Existing social or affordable rented tenants who need a transfer or need to be housed because they are currently living on an estate which is to be rebuilt/regenerated and who are a wheelchair-user
3. All other applicants assessed as having a health and wellbeing need to move and requiring a wheelchair –adapted home.

Within each of these three categories, the applicant with the earliest health and wellbeing assessment which concluded a wheelchair-adapted home was needed will be given highest priority and first considered for the direct offer. The applicant with the highest level of priority will not always be the applicant offered the property that

has become available, as an adapted property will only be offered to an applicant for whom the property meets their particular requirements.

### 6.5 Group 5: Applicants seeking a home for older people

This group is for people aged 60 years and over who require sheltered housing. The process of assessing applications and prioritising homes for these applicants includes an assessment of both their housing need and also their need for housing-related support. The latter includes an assessment of health and well-being needs.

All homes to people in this group are allocated by making a direct offer.

#### Measuring housing needs

To measure Housing need, an applicant for sheltered housing should be able to say 'Yes' to one or more of the following types of circumstances.

Depending on which circumstance applies, the applicant will be classified as having a high, medium or low housing need.

<b>Assessing housing need for Group 5 applicants</b>	
<b>Circumstances</b>	<b>Classification of these circumstances</b>
<p>The applicant has an urgent need to move. This is where the applicant's current living conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• put the applicant's life at risk if they do not move, or</li> <li>• cause the applicant to be completely housebound and they would regain substantial independence if an alternative property were made available.</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>
The applicant's current Council or housing association home is too big for them	<b>High</b>
Due to age, frailty or infirmity the applicant is unable to mobilise with ease and manage stairs in their current home and would benefit from a supported housing environment to promote independence and well-being and there are no other suitable options for meeting their needs.	<b>High</b>
The applicant has urgent and exceptional circumstances agreed by the Exceptions and Special Applications	<b>High</b>

<b>Assessing housing need for Group 5 applicants</b>	
<b>Circumstances</b>	<b>Classification of these circumstances</b>
Housing Panel	
The applicant satisfies the local connection hardship criteria	<b>High</b>
An applicant's living conditions are unsuitable but their need to move is less urgent and not life threatening but if left unresolved, their quality of life will deteriorate	<b>Medium</b>
The applicant is working with the council to prevent becoming homeless	<b>Medium</b>
The applicant is a homeless applicant in temporary accommodation provided by Enfield Council	<b>Medium</b>
An applicant's living conditions cause them difficulty in carrying out their daily activities but this is neither life threatening nor would greater harm or progression of the illness be caused if they did not move. An applicant's daily activities would be made easier if an alternative property was offered.	<b>Medium</b>

Where an applicant's housing circumstances are reflected in more than one of categories shown above, the one with the highest classification will be used to determine whether the applicant receive high or medium classification.

### **Measuring housing-related support needs**

An applicant's housing support needs for sheltered housing is assessed against five types of housing support needs in sheltered housing. There will also be an assessment of health and well-being needs.

The table below shows the five types of housing support needs in sheltered housing and the type of activity that would address them. An applicant will be assessed against each of the five types of housing support need and will be awarded a corresponding level of points.

<b>Assessing housing-related support needs for Group 5 applicants</b>	
<b>Groups of Housing Support needs in Sheltered Housing and activities that would address them</b>	<b>Score if applicant would benefit from any activity in each group</b>
<p><b>Support Need 1: Being financially better off</b></p> <p>The applicant needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support with maximising their income including help to apply and obtain the right benefits</li> <li>• help with budgeting to reduce their debts</li> <li>• help with obtaining paid work or keeping their job going.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes = 1 No = 0</p>
<p><b>Support Need 2: Enjoy and get more out of life</b></p> <p>The applicant will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep or improve their quality of life</li> <li>• feel less isolated</li> <li>• get involved in the leisure/cultural/faith/informal learning activities you enjoy</li> <li>• achieve meaningful personal goals</li> <li>• Establish contact with external services/family/friends</li> </ul>	<p>Yes = 1 No = 0</p>
<p><b>Support Need 3: Be healthy</b></p> <p>The applicant will be able to better manage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their physical health</li> <li>• their mental health issues</li> <li>• their substance misuse</li> <li>• Being able to live independently with the right help, aids and adaptations</li> </ul>	<p>Yes = 1 No = 0</p>
<p><b>Support Need 4: Staying safe</b></p> <p>The applicant will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be safe from fearing or being a victim of assault, burglary or anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Feel safe to leave their home</li> <li>• Know how to protect themselves and deal with the risk of harm</li> </ul>	<p>Yes = 1 No = 0</p>
<p><b>Support Need 5: Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater choice and/or involvement and/or control at service level and within the wider community</li> <li>• Service users will acquire skills and confidence to manage their own affairs</li> </ul>	<p>Yes = 1 No = 0</p>

A health and wellbeing assessment is also completed. There are four possible health and wellbeing priorities and each one is worth the points shown in the table below.

Priority Level	Definition
<b>A</b>	<p>Urgent need to move</p> <p>This is where the applicant’s current living conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• put the applicant’s life at risk if they do not move, or</li> <li>• are so unsuitable that the applicant cannot be discharged from hospital, or</li> <li>• cause the applicant to be completely housebound and they would regain substantial independence if an alternative property were made available.</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	An applicant’s living conditions are unsuitable but their need to move is less urgent and not life threatening but if left unresolved, their quality of life will deteriorate.
<b>C</b>	The applicant’s living conditions cause them difficulty in carrying out their daily activities but this is neither life threatening nor would greater harm or progression of the illness be caused if they did not move. An applicant’s daily activities would be made easier if an alternative property was offered.
<b>Zero</b>	<p>One of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants current housing situation has no adverse impact on the health issues presented</li> <li>• A move would offer no improvement; <u>or</u> a solution other than moving into a social or affordable rented home is available e.g. adaptation of the current home, a move to a private rented home.</li> </ul>

Health and Well-being Priority Level	Score
A	4
B	3
C	2
Zero	1

Calculating whether an applicant has low, medium or high housing related support needs comes from multiplying the score from the Housing-related Needs for Sheltered Housing with the score for the health and wellbeing assessment

**That is:**

Housing-related Needs Score x Health and Well-being Assessment Score = Housing-related Support Score

Housing Related Support Score	Level of Housing Related Support Needs
15-20	High
6-14	Medium
1-5	Low

### Bringing Housing Need and Housing Related Support scores together for Group 6 applicants

The matrix below summarises how applicants' housing need and housing-related support scores will be prioritised.

		Housing-related Support Needs		
		H	M	L
Housing Needs	H			
	M			
	L			

Scoring an H for Housing Needs plus an H for Housing-related Support Needs means an applicant would have high priority for sheltered housing. Conversely, scoring an L for Housing Needs plus an L for Housing-related Support means an applicant would have low priority for sheltered housing.

The colour red indicates high need; amber indicates medium need and green indicates low need. Another way of illustrating this is in the following table:

Housing Need	Housing Related Support	Coded as
High	High	HH
High	Medium	HM
High	Low	HL
Medium	High	MH
Medium	Medium	MM
Medium	Low	ML
Low	High	LH
Low	Medium	LM
Low	Low	LL

### Prioritising between Group 5 applicants – final step

A sheltered housing applicant assessed as having a housing need will be prioritised by:

- Housing will be allocated based on the applicant's level of their housing related support need (high, medium or low) which is supportable at the time by a sheltered scheme, and where these are equal by date of application, and where these are equal, by length of residence in Enfield.



- The local lettings plan for the sheltered scheme and the level of housing-related support currently being catered for. For example, if there are already tenants in a sheltered scheme with high levels of housing-related need, adding an additional person may stretch resources too far. If that would be the case, then applicants with lower housing-related support needs would be looked at.

### **Some worked examples on working out sheltered housing application scores**

#### **Ms X**

On Housing Support needs for sheltered housing Ms X would benefit from 4 out of the 5 types of housing-related support needs shown. Her score for this is therefore 4.

On Health and Well-being, Ms X has been awarded priority level C. Her score for this is therefore 2.

Multiplying these two scores together:  $4 \times 2 = 8$

A score of 8 equates with a Medium level of support needs

Ms X's Housing-related Support level is Medium (M).

Ms X's Housing Need is scored as High (H)

Her overall prioritisation for sheltered housing would be MH.

#### **Mr Y**

On Housing-related Support needs for Sheltered Housing Mr Y would benefit from 5 out of the 5 outcomes shown. His score for this is therefore 5.

On health and well-being, Mr Y has been awarded priority level B. His score for this is therefore 3.

Multiplying these two scores together:  $5 \times 3 = 15$

Mr Y's Housing-related Support level is High (H).

Mr Y's Housing Need is scored as H.

His overall prioritisation for sheltered housing would be HH

Matching both the above cases against the matrix above, both applicants have a high priority for sheltered housing.

If a home became available for which they were both suitable, they would be prioritised by first looking at existing housing-related support needs in the sheltered scheme(s) they had expressed a preference for and a decision made on whether their housing-related support needs could be catered for. If they could, then in the example of prioritising these two applicants for a sheltered home, Mr Y's circumstances would be given priority because his housing supported needs are higher than Mr X's.

## **7. THE BIDDING PROCESS**

### **7.1 How to bid for a property**

Bidding means applying for a property, by expressing an interest in a home that is advertised on our Choice Based Lettings website.

Once an applicant has successfully completed their online application for registering on the housing register, they will be given their own unique ID and password. Applicants must keep their User ID and password safe and are not allowed to share their own User ID or password with anyone else or use anyone else's User ID or password to make a bid for a home that is advertised on the Council's Choice Based Lettings website. Using this user ID and password, applicants can bid for a home using the Council's Choice Based Lettings website or by phone.

The Choice Based Lettings website can be accessed through Enfield council's website at [www.enfield.gov.uk/](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/), then entering 'choice based lettings' in the Search box and clicking on the link provided. Bids can also be placed by phone on 0845 402 7882 and then by following the instructions.

The Choice Based Lettings System is not a first come, first served service. Applicants can bid between Wednesday and Sunday each week. The advert for each home will show a closing date for bids.

### **7.2 What is an eligible bid?**

Applicants will only be considered for homes they have bid on for which they are eligible. Applicants are eligible to bid for an advertised home if:

- their eligible household is the right size for the home (see section 2.3.4 for more information on how we determine eligible household)
- they meet any additional criteria set out in the advert for the home.

If an applicant bids for a property and their circumstances do not meet the criteria for the advertised home, their bid will not be accepted.

### **7.3 Help with bidding**

Applicants can get help with bidding from any of the following:

- Friends and family
- Their Social Worker
- Their housing advice worker
- Their Key Worker if living in supported housing
- A local library can provide training on how to access the internet.

### **7.4 Bidding for the right home**

Applicants may bid for a maximum of 3 properties each week. If an applicant places more than 3 bids, only the first 3 bids made will be considered.

By placing a bid, an applicant is saying to the Council that they would like to receive a formal offer of the home if their bid is successful. All applicants must only bid for a social or affordable rented home they have considered they can reasonably afford and are prepared to move into. If an applicant bids for a home and receives a formal written offer for the property, the consequences of refusing the offer of the chosen home can be serious. The consequences of refusing an offer are set out in Section 9.

When bidding for a home, applicants are advised to consider:

- any medical and/or disability needs of the applicant or someone in their household and the recommendations made by the Council following a Health and wellbeing assessment;
- ease of access to school for any children in the household;
- ease of access to any care or support needed by the applicant or someone in their household;
- ease of access to work;
- access to local transport including buses and trains; and
- the applicant's ability to afford the rent using their earned income and/or benefits. Enfield Council reserves the right to refuse a bid for an available social or affordable rented home from a housing applicant whom we believe will not be able to afford the rent.

Applicants wishing to place a bid on a property are strongly advised to visit the area where the vacant social or affordable rented home is situated to help decide if it is suitable for their needs. We also encourage applicants to speak to their family, friends or other professionals supporting them about the home they are thinking of bidding for.

## **7.5 Applicants who are not bidding**

We expect all households on our housing register who have been given priority to bid, are making bids for a home where suitable homes become available. We will contact applicants who have not placed any bids within prescribed time limits to find out why then have not been bidding. We will contact applicants after 3 months if they are eligible for 1 or 2 bed homes but are not bidding, and after 6 months if they're eligible for homes with 3 or more bedrooms but are not bidding. These time limits reflect the availability of homes for let in Enfield; homes with 3 bedrooms or more are available for letting less often than smaller properties.

Applicants who are not bidding will be offered help and support by the Council's Assessment Hub which includes:

- help with finding out whether a home being advertised is suitable for their needs
- help with placing a bid
- understanding their expectations about the kind of council or housing association home they are looking for and the availability of these homes
- advice on alternative housing options

Following this, we will remove any applicant from the register and cancel their application if they do not make any appropriate bids on properties they are eligible for

over a 12 month period, with the exception of households owed a homeless duty (they will be placed on an auto-bidding system instead after 3 months of not bidding, as explained below) or emergency and exceptional priority cases such as National Witness Mobility Scheme or households where there are safeguarding concerns regarding a child in the house. In advance of the 12 month period ending, applicants will be sent two letters and contacted by phone to inform them that this action will be taken if they do not bid. This action will be documented by staff.

For homeless applicants living in temporary accommodation, we are proposing to take action sooner if they do not bid. This is because we need to minimise the amount of time households spend in temporary accommodation and minimise the cost of temporary accommodation to the Council. Where these applicants are in a position to make a successful bid for a home through the choice based lettings system but they have not made any bids over a three month period, the applicant will be placed on an 'auto-bid system', or in exceptional circumstances, will be made a direct offer of accommodation by the Council. Auto-bidding is a tool on our choice based lettings online system which will generate suitable offers for applicants. We will decide whether to place an applicant on the auto-bid system on a case by case basis to ensure there is no extenuating circumstance which explains why the applicant has not been bidding for themselves.

If we cancel an application because an applicant has not been bidding, they will be unable to apply again for a set time period (to be determined following outcome of consultation).

## **7.6 Short listing, verifying applications and making an offer**

The Housing Allocations Team will start short listing successful bidders after the deadline for bidding has closed. The deadline for bidding is usually midnight on Sunday.

We will contact the bidder for each property who has the highest level of points in the preferred Group the property was advertised for, to invite them to view the vacant property. Where two or more applicants bid who have the same level of points, the tie breaker mechanism which applies to their Group will be used to determine the winning bidder.

The viewing must take place within the timescale given. Applicants who are not able to do so or need help to view a property must let the Allocations Team know. An applicant who does not follow this procedure will be treated as having refused the property.

If an applicant accepts the property they will be given advice on moving in and their application on the housing register will be closed. If the property is refused it will be offered to the next bidder with the highest priority.

At the point at which an applicant is made an offer of accommodation, this offer will be conditional on the applicant providing further information or supporting evidence in order that we can then verify the points they were awarded. Applicants are advised to gather in advance all documents required for verification of their application in order to avoid losing an offer of a home.

We will confirm:

- the property meets the applicant's needs in terms of size and assessed need
- the applicant is eligible to be made an offer
- the applicant's priority for housing.

In order to do this, we may contact individuals or organisations whose details have been provided on the application, as well as any other relevant parties whose details come to light during our enquiries.

Failure to provide information within the timeframes requested may result in the offer of a social or affordable rented home being withdrawn and the application being cancelled. Applicants would then need to submit a new application if they wanted to reapply to join the housing register.

Where appropriate, any information provided by the applicant may be shared with partner housing associations (registered housing providers or registered social landlords).

An offer will be withdrawn if fraudulent information is uncovered.

## **8 DIRECT OFFERS**

A direct offer is where we match an applicant to a suitable available home and make the applicant the offer without anyone bidding for that property. Direct Offers are designed to help an applicant to find a home if they need to do so urgently or have been unable to find a home themselves. The Council is only able to make a direct offer if a suitable home which meets the applicant's need becomes available.

All allocations of homes for applicants in Groups 4 and 5 will be made as a direct offer.

The following applicants may be made a direct offer in order to support them to move more quickly:

- Council tenants needing to move home for exceptional and emergency reasons. In most cases, the direct offer made will be similar to the applicant's existing accommodation. Discretion will be used to alleviate severe overcrowding at the same time.
- Applicants with a high health and wellbeing need to move.
- Applicant has been diagnosed with a mental health illness; a learning disability; or a physical disability and has been assessed by the relevant Enfield housing panel as requiring a social or affordable rented tenancy.

Homeless households who are not bidding may be made a direct offer in certain circumstances, as an alternative to being placed on an auto-bidding system. Further information on this is set out in section 6.4.4.

Homeless applicants who have been placed in temporary accommodation because they are owed a full housing duty by Enfield Council under the homelessness law may be made a direct offer if exceptional circumstances apply. This will be decided by the Exceptions and Special Applications Housing Panel. Exceptional reasons include:

- the lease of the home currently occupied is about to come to an end and no other housing options are available
- the household has assessed disability needs requiring an urgent move
- financial hardship.

When making a direct offer, we will take into account any recommendations made in a health and wellbeing assessment and occupational therapy assessment, and the area and type of home the applicant has expressed a preference to live in. However, offers will be made based on the housing that becomes available, and it is not always possible to meet all the preferences an applicant has made. Refusing a direct offer of a home on the grounds that it is not in the applicant's area of preference will not be accepted as a reason.

## **8.1 Reciprocal arrangements with housing associations on direct offers**

In exceptional circumstances the Council may agree to assist housing association tenants on a reciprocal basis by making the housing association tenant **one** direct offer of suitable alternative accommodation. If the direct offer is unreasonably refused the reciprocal arrangement concerned will be cancelled.

Enfield Council expects housing associations to respond to the exceptional and emergency needs of their tenants by using their own housing stock. All reciprocal arrangements are agreed on a discretionary basis and the Council retains the right to decline a request.

Reciprocal arrangements are only agreed when there is no material loss to the Council in terms of available housing stock. A reciprocal offer in most cases means that the Council will expect back a property of equal or larger size than the home offered. The home must also be comparable in terms of quality and type.

In exceptional circumstances, the Council may agree to accept two smaller homes in exchange for a larger home of the same number of bedrooms. This will only be considered where there is no other re-housing option available to the applicant and where there is a strong welfare reason to support the request.

The Council expects to receive back the replacement home within twelve months of the housing association tenant's start date for their new tenancy.

The housing association concerned will be required to provide a written commitment to the terms of the reciprocal, as agreed by Enfield Council.

## **9 APPLICANTS WHO DO NOT ACCEPT AN OFFER OF A HOME**

In most circumstances, we will cancel an applicant's application and will not make any further offers of accommodation if they refuse, or are deemed to refuse, two offers of a home allocated through either the choice based lettings system (including an offer made via auto-bidding to homeless households) or through a direct offer.

In most circumstances, this action will be taken after two offers are refused. However, in some circumstances, the action will be taken after one offer of accommodation is made and refused. This includes the following circumstances:

- Where we have agreed a transfer of an existing social or affordable rented tenant for Exceptional and Emergency reasons (Group 1)
- Enfield New Generation Scheme applicants (Group 3)
- Applicant has been awarded a high or medium health and wellbeing priority (and no other housing circumstances apply) (Group 1)
- Where Enfield has agreed a transfer of an existing social or affordable rent tenant who is severely overcrowded (lacks two bedrooms) (applicant in Group 1) and the applicant has refused two offers of a suitable alternative home (whether these were chosen by the applicant through the CBL system or made by direct offer), the applicant will be unable to access the choice based lettings system or receive a direct offer of a social or affordable rented home for a period of 12 months
- Applicant is living in the private rented sector or with family or friends lacking 3+ bedrooms or lacking 2 bedrooms
- Homeless applicant living in accommodation provided by Enfield Council owed a full homelessness duty under homelessness legislation, who became homeless after November 2012 and have been placed in temporary accommodation, pending being made an offer of a private rented home to discharge the Council's duty.
- Applicant who was threatened with unintentional homelessness, has priority need for accommodation and has become homeless despite the Council taking reasonable steps to try to prevent the homelessness.
- Applicant is intentionally homeless and is being given reasonable preference for a set time period
- Non-priority homeless applicants
- Homeless applicants who are owed a homelessness duty by another borough but who have been placed in temporary accommodation in Enfield.

For applicants in Group 2, if an applicant refuses two offers of a social or affordable rented home, if those 2 offers were made through bidding, we will make a direct offer of accommodation as a third and final offer. Following the final offer of accommodation, applicants will be given the option of moving into one of the new properties on their existing estate once the regeneration work is complete. As a last resort, a Possession Order will be sought to protect the Council's and other tenants' interests in ensuring the estate regeneration programme is not held up.

For applicants in Group 4, the Council will try to meet all needs possible through assisting with adaptations to suitable homes. However, we may require applicants to make compromises. For example, a suitable home may not always be in the area of the borough which the applicant would prefer to live in. The Council will not cancel applications after two refusals, provided that the applicant is demonstrating flexibility on the area of the borough in which they will live. If the applicant does not

compromise on the area of choice, then the application will be cancelled after 2 offers have been made.

For any application that is cancelled, the applicant will have to make their own arrangements to find a suitable home. If we cancel an application after the applicant has refused an offer of a home, they will be unable to apply again for a set time period (to be determined following outcome of consultation).

## **10 MANAGING SUPPLY**

### **10.1 Assigning an expected quota of homes to each demand group: the lettings plan**

We estimate the number of general needs council and housing association homes in Enfield likely to become available each year and use this to estimate the number of available homes we will make available to groups 1 to 4. Any sheltered accommodation which becomes available to let is allocated to group 5.

We estimate how many homes and the size and type of homes that might become available for letting to applicants in groups 1 to 5 by:

- taking as a guide the number and size of existing homes which become available to be re-let over a twelve month period
- taking account of any new homes expected to be built and completed in the coming months from our Development Programme – this includes Council properties and also properties built by Registered Providers/ Housing Associations.

Using the expected number of vacant properties, we then allocate a number of those homes to each of the five demand groups.

We consider how many of the predicted number of available homes are likely to be wheelchair accessible homes for Group 4 applicants. Of the remaining number of homes likely to become available, we then assign a quota to Group 2 based on the needs of existing Group 2 applicants who need to move under the Council's estate regeneration plans; and a quota to Group 3 based on the needs of existing Group 3 applicants and on what we know of the future demand from these categories of applicants.

Lastly, we ensure a quota of re-lets are made available for existing social housing tenants moving from other boroughs through Housing Moves<sup>1</sup>, the Mayor of London's Pan-London Mobility Scheme. The quota made is in line with the Mayor of London's Scheme.

The remaining estimated number of properties is assigned to Group 1.

The quotas assigned to each Group are set out in a lettings plan which is approved by the Lead Member for Housing and Housing Regeneration.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.housingmoves.org/>



We review our lettings plan periodically to ensure it is based on the latest available information on housing supply. We publish the current version on our website.

## **10.2 Assigning available homes to a demand group based on the lettings forecast**

The Housing Allocations Manager decides which Group to assign each available property to, in accordance with the lettings plan.

When a property becomes available for letting, we first consider whether it is suitable for a direct offer, including whether it is suitable for an offer to applicants in Group 4. If the property is not suitable for a direct offer, it will be allocated to either Group 1, 2, or 3 on a rotation, with the aim of meeting the target number of properties for each Group as set out in our lettings forecast.

We monitor lettings throughout the year to check whether applicants have an opportunity to bid on an appropriate share of available social or affordable rented homes. If too many homes have been set aside for Group 2 compared to the actual number of Group 2 applicants needing to move during the year, then the additional homes will be re-allocated to Group 1 applicants.

## **10.3 Local lettings plans for new homes**

We use local lettings plans to respond to specific local circumstances in a defined area, usually a new-build estate. We will consider using a local lettings plan to address a wide range of issues, including particular housing management and wider public policy concerns. We will ensure that any lettings plan has a clear aim, and will not undermine this Allocations Scheme. They will always operate for a set period of time – for example, during the period in which newly built homes are let for the first time.

They may be used in order to create balanced and mixed communities, protect existing stable communities, and help with community stability and cohesion. This may be done by:

- ensuring that a high enough proportion of new tenants have demonstrated experience of being able to successfully maintain a tenancy
- ensuring that the number of vulnerable households in need of support are such that their support needs can be adequately met within the Council's available resources
- ensuring an appropriate proportion of households with children, so that their needs can be adequately met through available resources
- putting in place specific actions to how high or low demand homes will be let.

The types of outcomes we aim to achieve through a local lettings plan include a reduction in void rates or tenancy turnover, reduction in incidents of anti-social behaviour, and successfully achieving positive outcomes for the individual households living in the area (for example increasing levels of employment, education and training).

Where we have a local lettings plan in place, we will ensure that an equality impact assessment is completed, that the local plan is clearly communicated to housing

association partners and other relevant stakeholders including tenants and residents, and that is reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains relevant.

If a Local Lettings plan is in operation then this will be stated on the advert for a property and the property will be advertised for applicants who meet the criteria.

The Assistant Director for Council Housing will decide whether to put a lettings plan in place for a designated area, and will determine the content of that plan. This will be agreed by the Lead Member for Housing and Housing Regeneration.

## **11 APPLICANTS' RIGHTS**

We will ensure that all applicants:

- are treated politely, fairly, with respect and without prejudice;
- are provided with information to enable them to assess how their application is likely to be treated, including whether they are likely to be regarded within the reasonable and local preference categories; and whether a home appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available to them and, if so, how long they can expect to wait to secure a successful move;
- are notified in writing of any decision made regarding their application for rehousing and the grounds on which that decision was reached;
- are given the opportunity of review against decisions made in respect of their application.

We ask that applicants treat our staff politely and with respect too, and verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated. Anyone using abusive, racist or derogatory language will be politely asked to stop. Failure to do so will result in a written warning. Should this behaviour continue we will either only communicate with the applicant in writing or may instead reduce their priority or cancel their application, depending on the severity of their actions.

### **11.1 Data protection**

Applicants have the right to ask for details of any information about them that is held by the Council. The right applies to all personal information regardless of the date that information was recorded. All applicants are entitled to information about how their application for a social or affordable rented home was assessed and also about their prospects of being housed. An applicant will be entitled to receive in writing the Council's decision not to consider them for housing because of unacceptable behaviour by them and reasons for the decision. Further information is set out on the Council's website, [www.enfield.gov.uk](http://www.enfield.gov.uk), in our policies and procedures regarding data protection.

We will treat all information provided by applicants in accordance with the Council's confidentiality procedures and with any inter-agency protocols that apply to particularly sensitive information known to the council.

## 11.2 Applicant's right to request information or a review

The Housing Act 1996<sup>2</sup> gives housing applicants the right to know the facts of their case which have been or are likely to be taken into account by Enfield Council when considering their application to join the housing register or to make them an offer of a social or affordable rented home.

Applicants are entitled to receive this information in writing together with information that explains how and by when they can request an internal review of a decision made that they do not agree with. Homeless applicants have an additional right of review under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996 about the suitability of any offer of a social or affordable rented home.

We will advise applicants of these rights at the point of application.

Applicants can request a review if:

- they have been advised that they have been excluded from our housing register;
- they have been suspended from our housing register for unreasonable refusal of an offer of accommodation; or
- any decision has been made about the facts of their case which is likely to be or has been taken into account in considering whether to allocate accommodation to the applicant.

We will inform applicants in writing (by post or email) when we make a decision regarding their case. The letter will inform the applicant of who to contact if they would like to request a review, and who within the Council will deal with any review.

When an applicant receives notice of our decision in writing, they can request a review of it within 15 working days.

At the same time as requesting a review, the applicant, or whoever they would like to represent them, should also provide any additional details or information they would like us to take into account.

When we receive a request for a review, we will write to the housing applicant within five working days:

- acknowledging receipt of their request for a review
- explaining the review procedure
- explaining that the housing applicant will know the outcome of the review within 20 working days, unless a longer time is agreed with the applicant.

When we receive the housing applicant's written representation, we will review our original decision, taking into account any additional information and any other relevant facts. A more senior officer than the one who made the original decision will carry out the review. We will let the applicant know the outcome of a review in writing. Where we confirm our original decision, we will explain why.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 166(A) Housing Act 1996 as amended by Localism Act 2011, S147 (2)(a)

Where an applicant may have difficulty understanding the implications of a decision on eligibility or disqualification we will make arrangements for an additional verbal explanation.

### **11.3 Complaints**

We aim to provide a high quality housing assessment and allocation service. However, we recognise that sometimes, our service may not be of the standard we want it to be.

We are always looking to improve our services and we use complaints, along with other feedback, to help us to do this.

A complaint may be about delay, lack of response, discourtesy, failure to consult or about the standard of service an applicant has received. We encourage applicants to tell us if they feel we have not treated them fairly or politely, have not done something we should have done, or have done something badly. Making a complaint will not put any applicant at a disadvantage now or in the future.

Applicants can make a complaint to Enfield Council using any of the following methods:

#### **By telephone**

- Enfield Council's Customer Services on 020 8379 1000 (Calls may be recorded)
- Textphone - 020 8379 4419

#### **In writing**

- using the complaints form on Enfield Council's website or at a local library or the Enfield's Civic Centre
- e-mailing us at [complaints@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@enfield.gov.uk)
- By letter to Enfield Council Housing, Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield, EN1 3BG

## Appendix A

### Who makes decisions?

Type of decision and / or assessment	Who makes the decision
Determining eligibility and qualification for a Council or housing association home	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Officer level
Deciding that an application should be cancelled	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Officer level
Assessing and prioritising housing applications	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Officer level
Assessing the size of home needed by an applicant	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Officer level
Agreeing an extra bedroom for an applicant based on their assessed need.	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Assessment and Allocation Manager or another manager within the Service at the same grade
Deciding to accept someone not in the immediate family on an application	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Assessment and Allocation Manager or another manager within the Service at the same grade
Recommending health and wellbeing priority based on assessed need	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Medical Assessment Officer
Deciding health and wellbeing priority based on the recommendation of the Medical Assessment Officer	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Assessment and Allocation Manager or another manager within the Service at the same grade
Deciding that a homeless applicant living in accommodation provided by Enfield Council owed a full homelessness duty is not in a position to find work.	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Assessment and Allocation Manager or another manager within the Service at the same grade
Decision that an applicant has an emergency and exceptional priority and requires an urgent move (excluding management transfers for existing Council tenants)	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Assessment and Allocation Manager or another manager within the Service at the same grade
Decision that an applicant has an emergency and exceptional priority and	Enfield Council Housing: Housing Options Transfer Panel

<b>Type of decision and / or assessment</b>	<b>Who makes the decision</b>
requires an urgent move - management transfers for existing Council tenants	
Assessing housing and support needs – people with mental health problems	Mental Health Housing Assessment Panel and Mental Health Housing Panel
Assessing housing and support needs – people with learning difficulties	Learning Difficulties Housing and Resources Panel
Assessing housing and support needs – people with physical disabilities, visual impairments and hearing impairments	Housing Options Panel
Deciding which Council and housing association homes are to be let by direct offer or through the choice-based lettings scheme	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Assessment and Allocations Manager
Deciding which demand group a vacant Council or housing association home will be prioritised for	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Assessment and Allocations Manager or Team Leader
Shortlisting applicants who have bid for vacant Council or housing association homes via the choice based letting system	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Officer level
Conducting a review of a decision we have made on an applicant's case	Enfield's Housing Assessment and Allocations Service: Review Officer
Deciding where and when local lettings plans will be put in place and agreeing the content of letting plans	Assistant Director Council Housing, with approval of the Lead Member for Housing and Housing Regeneration
Determining the points threshold for applicants to be able to bid on homes	Lead Member for Housing and Housing Regeneration
Determining the lettings forecast and quotas	Lead Member for Housing and Housing Regeneration

## **Appendix B**

### **Enfield's Housing Panels which consider applicant need and priority**

The Council has Housing Panels for assessing an applicant's housing and support needs. Senior Officers with delegated authority by the Council make decisions about housing as appropriate to each case. Each panel considers an applicant's priority for social or affordable rented housing and the support they will need to live independent lives.

#### **Mental Health Assessment Panel**

Applicants are referred to the Mental Health Assessment Panel where there is a need for more in depth discussions and sharing of information about their mental health issues.

The Mental Health Assessment Panel assesses:

- The vulnerability of applicants on the grounds of mental health where they request assistance from Enfield Council because they are homeless
- Whether to award a mental health priority to an applicant applying through the housing register for a Council or housing association home

The Panel is chaired by the Medical Assessment Officer and comprises a Senior Community Mental Health worker and Team manager from the Council's Housing Options and Advice Service. This panel may refer applicants to the full Mental Health Panel if necessary. The Panel reviews on average 120 cases each year. Of this number about 40 cases will involve a review of an applicant's housing and support needs.

#### **The Mental Health Panel**

This consider applicants who have severe and enduring diagnosis who have recently been hospitalized or who are being assessed for independent living having been in residential supported accommodation commissioned by the Mental Health Team.

The Head of Housing Options and Advice or other delegated officer chairs the meeting. Applicants may attend. The Panel includes a Senior Officer from the Community Mental Health Team or Community Psychiatric Nurse to enable the panel to decide on the suitability of independent accommodation and award an appropriate priority. The Mental Health Panel reviews on average 40 cases each year.

#### **Care Leavers Housing Panel**

Enfield's Care Leavers Housing Panel reviews the cases of young people who are due to leave the care of the local authority because they are owed a duty by Enfield Council under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

The aim of the panel is to:

- ensure a young person is fully prepared for move-on into independent living

- identify their support needs with, for example, the Choice Based Lettings bidding process
- maximise the young person's ability to sustain their tenancy through early interaction between the young person, their support workers and Enfield Homes Rehousing, Tenancy Estate Management and Income Management teams.

The Panel is chaired by the Head of Service, Looked after Children (LAC), and includes staff from:

- Enfield Council (LAC Head of Service, LAC Deputy Team Manager, Fostering Manager, Asylum Team Support Service Manager, Panel Administrator)
- Enfield Council Homes (Rehousing Team plus Income Management Team/ASB Team rep as and when required).
- Housing Association partner (Floating Support Service)

Around 120 young people are reviewed by the Care Leavers Housing Panel annually and on average 40 cases are approved for independent living into council or housing association.

### **Reciprocal arrangements for young people leaving care**

Young people leaving care who have been placed in Enfield by another local authority under the Leaving Care Act 2000 may be considered at the discretion of the local authority under the terms of a reciprocal agreement (one for one) if the young person was placed in the borough prior to their 16th birthday and has lived in the borough continuously for a period of 5 years

### **Learning Difficulties Panel (Resources)**

Applicants who have learning difficulties are referred to the joint Social Services/Housing Learning Difficulties Panel. A Learning Difficulties Manager chairs the meeting which is comprised of a Senior Officer from the Housing Options and Advice Service, Social Workers, Support / Care providers. Cases are presented by Social Workers to enable the Panel to decide on the suitability of independent accommodation. This Panel reviews on average 60 cases each year.

### **Housing Options Panel for People with physical disabilities or visual impairment or hearing impairment**

The Housing Options Panel will consider applications from people who have physical disabilities. The Panel is chaired by a Manager from the Disabilities Team and comprises a Senior Occupational Therapist, Senior Officer from the Private Sector Housing Team and a Senior Manager from Enfield Homes. A Senior Housing Options and Advice Officer may attend. The Housing Options Panel will decide whether an applicant can remain in their home with appropriate and cost effective adaptations or recommend a move to more suitable housing. The Panel reviews on average 80 cases per year.



### **Joint Assessment Panel (Older Persons)**

The Joint Assessment Panel (Older Persons) will consider applications from older people needing to live in a housing scheme that provides extra care. This panel is chaired by Sheltered Housing Services Manager, and includes an In House Home Care Manager, the Team Manager - Older People, a Housing Occupational Therapist. Around 30 cases are considered each year.

### **Housing Options Transfer Panel**

This panel considers urgent moves for Enfield Council Housing tenants. The Panel is chaired by the Head of Housing Operations, Enfield Council Homes. The panel's decision on whether to agree for a transfer will be based on an investigation undertaken by housing management staff to gather evidence of the reason for needing to move urgently and any health and well-being assessment available.

### **Exceptions and Special Applications Housing Panel (ESAHP)**

Enfield's Housing Allocations Scheme cannot cover every eventuality. Discretionary powers may be used to deal with special cases that may need to be treated in an exceptional way.

A senior manager graded PO2 and above from within the Council's People Assessment Hub Services will chair the ESAHP. The Assistant Director of Assessment and Gateway will hear appeals against Panel decisions.