HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

2026

BOROUGH OF BROXBOURNE
www.broxbourne.gov.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

All local authorities publish a scheme for the allocation of housing as set out under Section 106 of the Housing Act 1985 and Section 168 of the Housing Act 1996. This should include the rules governing transfers and mutual exchanges.

This Allocations Policy sets out this scheme and outlines how the Housing Register works within Broxbourne. It is available for inspection online at www.broxbourne.gov.uk.

This policy determines priorities for the nomination of applicants to affordable housing owned by registered partner providers (also known as registered social landlords or housing associations). This Allocations Policy is fully compliant with all relevant legislation and guidance.

The Borough of Broxbourne is an area where the need for affordable housing is higher than the existing supply. The purpose of this policy is to make sure available homes are let to those people most in need, and to ensure that working households with a strong local connection to Broxbourne are prioritised.

1.1 Aims and objectives of the Allocations Policy

- To discharge the Council's statutory duties as stated in Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011
- To contribute to achieving the Council's Corporate Objectives and meet the housing needs of local and working families
- To reduce homelessness
- To ensure that the allocations process is simple, clear and understandable to applicants.

1.2 Legislative background

The 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the 2002 Homelessness Act) requires local authorities to make all allocations and nominations in accordance with an Allocations Policy. A summary of the Allocations Policy must be published and made available free of charge to any person who asks for a copy.

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) requires councils to give reasonable preference in their Allocations Policy to people with high levels of assessed housing need who are defined as:

- People who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act (including those who are intentionally homeless and those not in priority need) (See Section 2.5 - Homeless households)

- People who are owed a duty by any housing authority under Section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3) (See Section 2.5 - Homeless households)
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

1.3 The Housing Register

The Council administers the Housing Register for affordable housing provided by Registered Providers (RPs) that are partners of the Council. Applicants to the Housing Register may be either home seekers (those not already in a socially rented home) or transfer applicants (those already in a socially rented home and needing to move).

An applicant's status on the Register affects whether they receive an offer of an affordable housing property. Full details of the application process and status are set out later in this Allocations Policy.

1.4 Assessment of housing need

Applicants who apply to the Register will have their housing needs assessed by the Council's Housing Advice Service and may be awarded points if eligible, to reflect their housing need.

The points scheme is designed to reflect each applicant's level of housing need, therefore the higher the points, the greater the level of housing need.

Each applicant must have a housing need and be awarded points to be able to join the Register. If no points are awarded, an applicant will not be allowed to join the Register. If only residency points are applicable, an applicant will not be able to join the Register, as there is no housing need identified.

The applicant with the highest housing need will usually be nominated to an affordable housing property (with some exceptions which are set out later in this policy). The applicant's assessment will also determine the size of property they are eligible for.

1.5 The Lettings Plan

As well as determining an applicant's priority for being nominated to an affordable housing tenancy, the Allocations Policy sets guidelines for the number of properties to be allocated to applicants on the Housing Register as follows:

- 75% of properties allocated to home seeker applicants
- 25% of properties allocated to transfer applicants

This guideline is subject to periodic review.

2. APPLYING TO JOIN THE HOUSING REGISTER

2.1 Procedure

Details can be found on the HomeOption website www.homeoption.org.

2.2 Age

To register, a person must be 16 years old, although the case will generally be suspended until the applicant is 18 years old.

2.3 Household composition

The Council will accept applications from single applicants (with or without children) or a couple (with or without children).

Applications from other households will be considered but will only be accepted where there are clear reasons and evidence to do so.

2.4 Local connection

To qualify for a local connection, applicants must live in the Borough at the time of application and have been resident continuously for the last five years. Residents who are living in the Borough of Broxbourne in temporary accommodation provided by another local authority do not qualify for local connection.

Household members of an applicant who would not be eligible for local connection may be included within the household, subject to meeting the relevant criteria, but may not be an applicant or joint applicant.

An applicant who has declared No Fixed Abode will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The location of their previous settled accommodation will be a consideration. If it is deemed that an applicant has spent the majority of their time outside the Borough during the No Fixed Abode period, the application will not be eligible.

The following are exceptions:

- Persons normally resident in Broxbourne, having accumulated five years' residency including time temporarily living outside Broxbourne whilst:
    - Receiving medical or respite care
    - Placed in supported housing by a public body
    - Studying at a school, college or university
    - Serving a custodial sentence
    - Adhering to bail conditions

- Persons serving in the HM Forces or veterans of the Regular Armed Forces
- A person who is a housing association or council housing tenant and needs to move to the Borough for work and:
  - Has been awarded 25 location points under this scheme (reflecting a reasonable preference under Section 166 (3) (e) of the Housing Act 1996)
  - Meets all other right to move criteria
- Persons in accommodation located outside of Broxbourne, placed there by the Council under homelessness legislation. Residency time accrued under this arrangement will be equivalent to residency within the Borough
- A tenant of a Registered Provider participating in the Register living in the Borough for at least one year
- An applicant who is not resident in the Borough, or who is resident but does not meet the residential criteria, shall, at the discretion of the Council, be regarded as eligible if they are aged 60 years old and over; and
  - Are seeking sheltered, extra care or other housing designated for elderly persons
  - They wish to move to Broxbourne to receive support from a close family relative who is a permanent resident of the Borough and has been for at least five years continuously, and can provide evidence that such a move is needed from a relevant professional
  - There are no factors that would make them ineligible or subject to suspension under this policy.
- An applicant living in supported accommodation, following a homeless duty being accepted by the Council, in the Borough. This applies where the supported accommodation is provided by an RP which is a participant in the Council's Housing Register and where the applicant is deemed ready to move on from supported accommodation. This exception does not apply to applicants who have been placed into supported housing by another agency, such as a mental health support agency, or by another local authority
- Persons who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse where the need to move area is connected to the abuse, including from accommodation occupied initially on a temporary basis. Evidence of the need to move to a new area due to the abuse must be provided
- A person who is a care leaver aged 16 to 24 years old, and who has spent at least thirteen weeks in care since their 14th birthday, at least one day of which was after reaching the age of 16. This exemption will no longer apply once the young person reaches the age of 25.

2.5 Homeless households

Homeless applicants where the following legislation applies can join the Housing Register as reasonable preference applies (see Section 1.2 – legislative background):

- People who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act (including those who are intentionally homeless and those not in priority need)
- 190(2) – eligible for assistance, homeless, in priority need and intentionally homeless
- 193(2) – eligible for assistance, homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless
- 195(2) – the prevention duty owed to persons who are eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness.

The above will apply when the Council is satisfied the applicant is eligible and homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days. This decision will be made by the Housing Solutions Manager, or equivalent role, following completion of the case assessment. For example, it is acknowledged that the Council may accept a prevention duty while completing assessment and before it has confirmed threat of homelessness.

Reasonable preference does not apply if the applicant would not have been deemed homeless or in priority need without the local housing authority having had regard to a household member who is ineligible for assistance.

Applicants with no local connection who are accepted under the homelessness legislation and have their homelessness duty discharged will be removed from the Register. They can re-apply if they accrue five years' continuous residency in Broxbourne, or for transfer applicants, if they live for one year in the same RP home.

Applicants who are found to be intentionally homeless and those not in priority need can remain on the Register until they secure accommodation.

2.6 Intentionally worsened circumstances

Applicants who worsen their housing circumstances to become eligible or gain greater priority on the Housing Register will not benefit from these actions.

If the Council has reason to believe an applicant has worsened their housing circumstances intentionally, points will not be awarded for the new circumstances. The applicant will retain the level of priority given for their previous accommodation, or in the case of a new applicant, they will be given points to reflect their previous circumstances.

2.7 Home visits

A home visit may be conducted to verify information applicants have provided. If an applicant is already the tenant of an RP, the landlord may wish to visit to check the condition of the property before an offer can be made. Applicants should co-operate with the officer conducting the visit. Failure to do so may result in the Council being unable to assess the application.

2.8 Criminal convictions

Applicants will be required to complete a declaration on the application form setting out any criminal convictions or injunctions that relate to the applicant and any member of the applicant's household within the last seven years.

Failure to disclose such information or to update the Council on any new convictions, orders or injunctions will result in the application being cancelled.

The Council reserves the right to conduct checks with any relevant law enforcement or other agency to verify applications. The Council reserves the right to disclose information in relation to any of the above to any relevant agency, RP or other statutory or voluntary agency, as it deems appropriate.

The Council may conclude that applicants who hold a record as set out above may be deemed as ineligible or suspended (having regard to the seriousness of the offences and the impact this could have on any tenancy granted) and the Council may choose to limit the areas or types of accommodation that an applicant may bid for under the scheme as a result.

2.9 Change of address or circumstances

When circumstances change, applicants are required to update their application immediately on HomeOption. They should access and update their account so that Housing Advice Service records are accurate and applicants receive all the points they are entitled to.

Examples of changes in circumstances which must be reported are set out below:

- A change of address, for the applicant or any other person on their application
- A change in medical condition
- Any additions to their family or any other person joining their application
- Any member of the family or any other person included on their application who has left the household
- Any criminal convictions relating to the applicant or any member of their household
- The Housing Advice Service will give advice on any change in applicants' eligibility or prospects for an offer.

3. STATUS OF APPLICATIONS

The Localism Act (2011) enables the Council to determine who is deemed a "qualifying person", meaning someone who is eligible to be on the Register.

3.1 Immigration status

An applicant who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act (1996), or who is otherwise in a group or category of person deemed ineligible by law, will be ineligible.

3.2 Other qualifying criteria

The following types of applicants will also be ineligible:

- An applicant who has deliberately given false or misleading information or withheld relevant information in connection with their application with the intention of obtaining accommodation to which they would otherwise not be entitled. Such an applicant will be ineligible to join the Housing Register for five years, or for another reasonable period at the Council's discretion
- An applicant (or a member of their household) that the Council is satisfied has behaved in an unacceptable way, serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant
- An applicant who is unable to sustain a tenancy (for example, because of medical factors, learning disability, mental health or some other issue) even with appropriate support, or who is unwilling to accept such support
- An applicant, or any member of their household who has a leasehold or freehold interest in a home in the UK or elsewhere, unless exceptionally agreed that this should be waived. For applicants seeking extra care housing for older persons, this may be disregarded. For applicants who have previously owned a home, the Council will request further details regarding the sale of the home and the equity received
- The spouse or civil partner of an owner occupier who can exercise rights of occupation of that property by any statutory or other provision
- A person who is only living in Broxbourne having been temporarily housed in the Borough by another council
- An applicant who is deemed able to make their own housing arrangements, including any household which has capital exceeding £16,000 (or whatever capital savings cap is applicable under the housing benefit regulations at the time) or a household that earns more than £60,000 per annum before tax and other deductions. This limit applies to all household members. Applicants must provide evidence of their income, which may take the form of wage slips, bank statements or business accounts. At the discretion of the Council this can be waived for applicants seeking older persons' housing

- An applicant who has been evicted from a social housing tenancy within the previous year. Persons evicted from a social tenancy will be ineligible for a minimum of one year and will only be made eligible where they can demonstrate that the factors that led to the eviction have been addressed (e.g. repayment of rent arrears). However, this is without prejudice to any other eligibility criteria (such as suitability to be a tenant) that may be applicable on a case-by-case basis.

3.3 Transfer applicant criteria

Tenants of an RP that does not participate in the Register may (subject to meeting all the requirements of this policy) register as homeseekers on the Housing Register. Tenants of properties managed by an RP which participates in the Register qualify to join the Housing Register as transfer applicants.

The Council is required to make sure a certain proportion of properties are allocated to qualifying RP tenants known as transfers (25%). This means that some properties will be ringfenced for existing tenants only. RP tenants seeking to benefit from these arrangements (including downsizers) must be:

- Resident in the property and known to the RP landlord and authorised to be resident
- Ordinarily resident in the dwelling of which they are a tenant as their principal and only home
- Able and willing to give vacant possession of the dwelling to the landlord when they move under these arrangements
- Seeking to transfer both themselves and all members of their household living in the property
- The tenant of the dwelling they currently occupy for at least one year
- Not an applicant who is housed in an RP property because of a duty under the homelessness legislation.

3.4 Suspended applications

Suspended status means the applicant is unable to bid while their application is suspended. This will apply in the following circumstances:

- An applicant who is in supported accommodation and is not yet ready to move
- Where the Council is assessing or re-assessing an application
- The applicant has asked that their application be suspended
- There are extenuating circumstances which means it is inappropriate for a person to move at a particular time
- Applicants during their first period (six months) in a privately rented home provided under the Council's Simple Lets scheme
- There are rent arrears or other debts to the Council or an RP
- Where the applicant has obtained a debt relief order, an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA) or similar order or is bankrupt and where there were rent arrears or other housing-related debts to the Council or an RP
- Where an applicant is in the process of buying a property under the Right to Buy or the Right to Acquire or is in the process of purchasing a private property on the open market or via shared ownership

- An applicant, or a member of the applicant's household behaves in an abusive, violent, or threatening way towards Council staff or Council property, resulting in them being added to the Council's Abusive Behaviour Register. The Housing Register application will be suspended while the customer is included on the Abusive Behaviour Register. The application will be reconsidered at the end of this time if no further incidents have occurred.

3.5 Lifting suspensions

Applicants who owe a housing-related debt to the Council or to an RP will be suspended. When and if the debt is repaid in full their application will be reassessed by the Council which will decide whether the suspension can be lifted.

Where a person is suspended having obtained a debt relief order, IVA, or similar order or is bankrupt, the criteria for reinstatement will either be on repayment of the debt or following a period of two years from the date the relevant order is issued, whichever is the sooner.

Applicants who make, and keep to, a repayment agreement may, on a case-by-case basis have the suspension lifted. The decision rests jointly with the Council/RP which will consider:

- The size of the initial and remaining debt
- The reasons for the debt accruing
- The amount of debt repaid, and adherence to repayment schedule which must be a minimum period of six months continuously
- Any other financial implications that might fall on the Council/RP because of any decision to suspend or lift a suspension.

3.6 Right to Move

Housing association or council tenants who live outside of the Borough are not eligible to join the Housing Register unless they meet the following criteria:

- They are employed in, or have been offered employment within the Borough of Broxbourne
- They have been awarded 25 location points reflecting the need to move to the Borough because of the tenant's work in the Borough or the need to take up an offer of work in the Borough
- The applicant resides more than 40 miles from the place of employment in the Borough
- The employment or offer of employment must be of a permanent nature and amount to a minimum of 16 hours per week.

The applicant must meet all other criteria for the Housing Register.

Right to move applicants will be:

- Eligible for only one offer of accommodation following a successful bid on the HomeOption website
- In the event of a refusal, they shall no longer be regarded as eligible under this scheme.

3.7 Status Types

Each application will be given one of five status types; details are in the appendix.

4. ANNUAL REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

To keep the Register up to date, applicants will be required to log in to their HomeOption account and review their application annually.

If the applicant fails to complete the Change of Circumstances the application is removed from the system and will not be reinstated.

An application will be removed if the applicant withdraws their application or fails to respond to their annual review letter.

5. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

Under Choice Based Lettings (CBL), applicants decide which properties to bid for from the list of available properties shown on the HomeOption website, within the limits defined in this Allocations Policy.

5.1 Homeless households and autobidding

Auto-bidding is where certain applicants have bids automatically placed on their behalf for suitable properties available under CBL, regardless of whether the applicant expresses such a preference themselves.

Under the auto-bidding procedure, all statutorily homeless households in receipt of homelessness points will have auto-bidding applied.

This also includes all applications in receipt of homeless points who have been accepted as homeless at home.

An applicant placed on auto-bid is required to accept a property in any area of the Borough unless there are safety or similar concerns about a particular area.

Failure to accept an offer of accommodation made via autobid may result in the ending of any homelessness duty owed.

Auto-bidding is applied following approval from the Housing Solutions Manager, or equivalent role.

5.2 Other circumstances

The Council may restrict the choices available to an applicant if, in conjunction with the Police or Probation Service, it agrees that such a restriction is necessary to safeguard the public interest.

6.1 POINTS SCHEME

6.1 The points scheme

Point name and summary	Number of points
Residency	
Five years' continuous residency in the Borough of Broxbourne for home seeker applicants Or One year's continuous residency in current property for transfer applicants	125
High priority	
A tenant of an RP transferring from a home larger than required Staff re-housing Registered Provider requires vacant property	200
Separated family	
Separated family points will only be awarded to households who have lived together in the past, are now apart for no other reason than lack of accommodation, and who are either: · Married or in a civil partnership · Have a child or children together	25
Medical	
Moderate	50
Significant	100
Major	150
Extreme	200
Room deficiency (new applicants and existing tenants)	
(Rooms of less than 50 square feet will not be counted) Points will be awarded according to the difference between a household's entitlement and the current situation	
One room lacking	25
Two rooms lacking	50
Three rooms lacking	100
Four or more rooms lacking	200
Mixed sex sharing – additional points to the above where members of the opposite sex are required to share a room when not in a relationship or parent/carer and one child is aged 10 and over	25
Bedsit – living in a bedsit with a dependent child	25
One bedroom priority need	
Extra points for those that can evidence overnight access to children and are therefore entitled to a one-bedroom property	20
Lack of facilities	
Awarded if lacking one or more of the following: bathroom, hot water supply, kitchen, toilet except where it is a result of disrepair	50
Domestic abuse and harassment	
Points for households suffering harassment or violence, i.e. domestic abuse, witness intimidation or racial harassment, in or around the accommodation that they occupy as their principal and only home. In all cases, this is to be approved by a manager and reviewed after three months	25

Location/hardship	
Applicants who need to move to the Borough or a particular locality where failure to do so would cause hardship to themselves. For those wishing to move to the Borough, the award of points under this clause is discretionary and shall include those wishing to move under (and otherwise qualifying under) the Right to Move provisions set out in this policy. In all cases, this is to be approved by a manager	25
Homelessness	
These will be awarded in the following circumstances: Applicants accepted as homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and who occupy defined accommodation At the discretion of the Council, to applicants considered to be threatened with homelessness and in priority need as defined by the Housing Act 1996	100
Homeless at Home Following a homeless application and a home visit to the excluders (e.g. family/friends), the Council has identified that the applicant is unable to remain at home long-term (six months or more), however they can remain short-term while the Council works with them to prevent homelessness and avoids the requirement for the provision of temporary accommodation	100
These will be awarded in the following circumstances: Applicants found to be intentionally homeless or not in priority need as defined by the Housing Act 1996	25
HM Forces	
The award shall be made in accordance with all relevant legislation	10
Care leavers	
This will apply where: The applicant is in the care of Hertfordshire County Council (under the Children's Act 2004) and is eligible for a permanent offer under this policy and any protocol agreed by Hertfordshire County Council about care leavers that have a local connection In the joint view of the Council and Hertfordshire County Council, the applicant is ready to leave care and would be able to maintain a tenancy Or	200
Care leavers that do have a local connection and have spent at least thirteen weeks in care since the age of 14, at least one day of which was since reaching the age of 16	25

6.2 Points scheme: definitions

6.2.1 Residency

Auto-bidding is where certain applicants have bids automatically placed on their behalf for suitable properties available under CBL. Failure to accept an offer of accommodation made via autobid may result in the ending of any homelessness duty owed.

Auto-bidding is applied following approval from the Housing Solutions Manager, or equivalent role.

6.2.2 High priority – transferring from a home larger than required

These points can be awarded to housing association tenants who live in a home that is larger than they need and make a transfer application for a smaller home and are giving up at least one bedroom, also known as 'downsizing'.

Offers may be up to one bedroom more than required if the RP agrees to this. If the applicant has arrears outstanding, nominations under these criteria will be determined by the Council and partner RP on a case-by-case basis.

Applications from households living in separate affordable rented dwellings but who wish to live together may be considered under this clause, but only where the total number of bedrooms occupied in the two properties exceed the household's entitlement under the scheme, i.e. the number of bedrooms being given up exceeds the number that would be occupied.

For separated households, and those that are or would be subject to withdrawal of Housing Benefit because of under-occupation, an additional bedroom will not be permitted under this clause.

6.2.3 High Priority - Registered Provider requires a vacant property

This applies where a partner RP requires a property or properties to be vacant for the purpose of site redevelopment or major refurbishment, also known as a 'decant'.

In this situation, secure or assured tenants of that RP may be afforded high priority.

Where re-development is proposed which includes the development of affordable rented housing, the agreement of the Council will only be forthcoming where the Council is given nomination rights to the newly developed homes. Such moves shall be regarded as transfers under the Lettings Plan.

6.2.4 Separated family

Separated family points shall only be awarded to households who have lived together in the past and are now apart for no other reason than lack of accommodation.

The case will be assessed based on the best accommodation occupied by a member of the separated household. At least one applicant must be resident in the Borough and be eligible.

Separated family points will not be awarded to RP tenants in any circumstances.

6.2.5 Medical priority

The Council will consider medical information in relation to applicants and/or any member of their household for the purpose of assessing priority on the Register. When assessing the level of priority, the Council will consider the following:

- The nature of the medical condition
- How it is affected by the applicant's current housing circumstances
- How the condition will be improved by the provision of alternative accommodation, having regard to the housing stock that might reasonably be expected to be available for letting.

The categories of award are:

- Moderate – where the applicant's current housing circumstances will have a clear impact on the applicant's health and where alternative accommodation would alleviate the condition
- Significant – the applicant is experiencing considerable difficulty because of their current housing circumstances, impacting the applicant daily. A move to more appropriate accommodation would reduce the adverse effect.

- Major – the applicant is experiencing major difficulty due to their current housing circumstances, and a move to appropriate accommodation would relieve the adverse effect
- Extreme – there is a critical need to move. The applicant's current housing circumstances are seriously injurious to health and interfere with quality of life to an intolerable degree.

Clients with medical points will not be considered for any property type that does not meet their medical needs e.g. a house where the applicant has mobility problems.

Points are awarded for an applicant's combined household, not for each household member. These points are awarded by the Council after assessing the medical evidence provided.

6.2.6 Room Deficiency / Entitlement of property

The guiding principle is that room deficiency points are awarded according to the difference between the accommodation the applicant is entitled to under the policy and the number of rooms in the dwelling they currently occupy.

In assessing whether the property is not of a suitable size with adequate rooms, the Council discounts the following rooms: kitchen, bathroom and other rooms less than 4.65 square meters in keeping with statutory requirements.

Home visits are required before 100 or 200 room lacking points are awarded.

In calculating the number of rooms an applicant currently has the following definitions shall be used:

Current accommodation	Defined as (number of rooms)
Sharing room/no definable room (e.g. sleeping on friend's floor on a temporary basis)	0
Exclusive use of own room in shared house, bedsit/studio	1
One bed dwelling	2
Two bed dwelling	3
Three bed dwelling	4
Four bed dwelling	5

In calculating the entitlement of the **property and room deficiency points,** the definitions below shall be used as a guideline.

Household composition	Entitlement	Defined as (number of rooms)
Single person, pregnant women	Bedsit / Studio	1
Single person with access to children, Couple Single person over the age of 35	One-bedroom dwelling	2
Couple or single parent with: One child Two children of the same sex 16 or under Two children under 10	Two-bedroom dwelling	3
Couple or single parent with: Two children of the opposite sex where one is 10 or older Two children of the same sex where one is 16 or older Three children in any other combination, unless at least two of the children are over 16 Four children where two pairs of children would be expected to share a room as detailed above	Three-bedroom dwelling	4
Couple or single parent with: Six children where all children are under 10 Five children Four children where two pairs of children would not be expected to share a room as detailed above Three children where at least two of the children are over 16	Four-bedroom dwelling	5
Couple or single parent with six or more children, unless all the children are under 10	Five-bedroom dwelling	6

Exclusive use of one room will be allowed for:

- Every adult couple
- Any other adult aged 16 or over
- Any two children of the same sex aged under 16
- Any two children who are 10 years or younger
- Any other child under 16

The Council may award a lower number of points under this entitlement, where it has reason to believe that the applicant has provided false or misleading information about their accommodation arrangements or deliberately worsened their circumstances.

Mixed sex sharing points will only be agreed where the Council is satisfied that the sleeping arrangements optimise the use of the available space and not to benefit from this award.

Housing association tenants moving from larger accommodation to smaller may be allowed up to one bedroom more than they need, unless the applicant is restricted from doing so under this policy.

An applicant household requiring an additional bedroom for medical reasons, as recommended by the Council's medical advisor, may at the discretion of the Council be entitled to an extra bedroom.

Applicants needing four or five-bedroom accommodation may be permitted to bid for three-bedroom properties with the agreement of the Council. Where this is agreed, and if there is a successful nomination, the final decision will be taken by the RP regarding the allocation. Similarly, an applicant eligible for three-bedroom accommodation may be permitted to bid for two-bedroom properties. This applies where a household comprises two children of the same sex and no other children.

Only applicants where at least one of the children in the household is under 16 will be permitted to bid for houses, unless the applicant is a tenant who is downsizing, or the move is medically required. A bungalow made available for general needs shall be regarded as a house.

A single person over 35 years old or pregnant woman can bid on a one-bedroom dwelling or a studio/bedsit.

A single applicant over the age of 35 whose current accommodation is defined as a bedsit, studio or sharing a room, will not be eligible for room deficiency points, as the one-bedroom home entitlement is not an identified housing need.

A single person under the age of 35 not subject to the single room rate and who can demonstrate the means to pay rent through means other than housing benefit may be entitled to bid on one-bedroom homes.

The Council will assess each application on a case-by-case basis using the above information as a guide.

6.2.7 One-bedroom priority

These points recognise the need of applicants who have overnight access to a child or children.

To be awarded these points, the applicant should provide a full birth certificate for each child and one of the following:

- Letter of confirmation from a solicitor
- Court order showing proof of parental responsibility
- Letter of confirmation from Children, Schools & Families, Department of Social Services or County Council
- Letter of confirmation from the other parent or guardian.

6.2.8 Lack of facilities

These are awarded if the applicant lacks (for reasons other than disrepair) one or more of the following: bathroom, kitchen, hot water supply, internal toilet.

6.2.9 Domestic abuse and harassment

Applicants would be expected to provide evidence of the harassment, although the Council will consider representations from appropriate professionals.

The points will be reviewed after three months to determine whether the award remains appropriate.

An applicant who is on the Housing Register because residency requirements have been waived due to the need to move to escape domestic abuse, or receive support related to the domestic abuse, will also have their eligibility to be on the Housing Register reviewed every three months.

6.2.10 Location/hardship

Applicants who need to move to the Borough or a particular locality, where failure to do so would cause hardship to themselves. For those wishing to move to the Borough, the award of points under this clause is discretionary and shall include those wishing to move under (and otherwise qualifying under) the Right to Move provisions set out in this policy. In all cases this is to be approved by a manager.

6.2.11 Homeless/threatened with homelessness

Homeless points are awarded in the following circumstances:

- Applicants accepted as homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and who occupy defined accommodation
- At the discretion of the Council, to applicants considered to be threatened with homelessness and in priority need as defined by the Housing Act 1996
- Where an applicant is homeless at home having satisfied all other criteria and a home visit has been conducted. The applicant will also have reasonable prospect to remain in their current accommodation for at least 6 months
- Applicants considered to be intentionally homeless or not in priority need as defined by the Housing Act 1996.

The point awards are stated within the points scheme summary.

Any award of homelessness points under this clause will end in the following circumstances:

- Where the homelessness duty ends for whatever reason
- Where the applicant ceases to occupy accommodation provided under any homelessness duty
- Where a homeless at home applicant ceases to occupy their accommodation for at least six months
- Applicants who were found to be intentionally homeless and those not in priority need have secured accommodation

6.2.12 Homeless at home

Following a homeless application and a home visit to the excluders (e.g. family/friends), the Council has identified that the applicant is unable to remain long term at home (six months or more).

However they can remain short term while the Council works with them to prevent homelessness and avoids the requirement for the provision of temporary accommodation.

During this time, the applicant will be required to adhere to their Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) and take part in regular reviews with the Council. Failure to do so may result in these points being removed.

Homelessness points are not awarded to applicants who have access to accommodation that they cannot occupy due to disrepair while works to bring the property up to an acceptable standard are completed.

6.2.13 HM Forces

The following shall be eligible for an award of 10 points under this criterion:

- A person serving in the regular forces who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to the person's service
- A person formerly serving in the regular forces
- A person who has recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of the person's spouse or civil partner who was serving in the regular forces and whose death was attributable to that service
- A person serving or formerly serving in the reserve forces who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to the person's service.

Persons made an award under this criterion are entitled to retain the points allocation until such time as a permanent offer of accommodation is accepted.

6.3 How applications are prioritised under the points scheme

Under the CBL scheme, only those applicants expressing an interest for (bidding for) a given property will be considered for that property, unless a bid has been placed by auto-bidding.

There are circumstances where a live applicant with the highest points may not be considered the highest priority for a given property, for example, if the property is specially adapted or ringfenced for working households only.

7. DIRECT OFFERS

There are circumstances where applicants will need to be moved urgently or as a matter of high priority, and so the points scheme needs to be disregarded in their case. These are set out below. Applicants will receive one direct offer.

7.1 Management moves

Management moves can only be considered for existing tenants of a partner RP on an emergency basis. Only one management move offer of a similar type and size of property will be made. A management move may be agreed for one of the following reasons:

- Serious harassment of a tenant
- Significant disrepair that cannot reasonably be rectified while the tenant remains in the property
- To enable the RP to manage their housing stock in circumstances where this could not reasonably be achieved without a move (for example, to enable a sale with vacant possession).

Cases will be agreed by a joint Council and partner RP panel and will include evidence from relevant professionals. Approvals for such a move will be reviewed after three months if no offer is made.

An applicant will be offered a property of the same size and type as the one they are leaving. If the applicant is in the top 10% of transfer applicants and needs larger accommodation, appropriate size housing may, with the agreement of the Council and RP, be offered.

7.2 National Witness Mobility Scheme/Multi-Agency Protection Panel

The Council could be asked to house applicants urgently by these agencies, in order to protect them or to enable the police to supervise them properly. Each case will be considered on its own merits, although the Council will have regard to the volume of applications of this sort.

Under this arrangement, applicants will be made one direct offer.

7.3 Temporary accommodation

Homeless households may be nominated to an RP-owned property and occupy that accommodation on a temporary basis.

7.4 Care leavers

The Council will consider applications from people who are currently placed in care of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) or in a foster placement arranged by HCC.

Any care leaver aged 16-24 who has spent at least 13 weeks in care since the age of 14, at least one day of which was after reaching the age of 16, may join the Register. Points will be awarded in accordance with the points scheme.

Care leavers gain a local connection under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 in the housing authority area where they lived at the point they went into care. Care leavers that have a local connection to Broxbourne will be awarded points according to the points scheme. In cases where a local connection is established, care leavers will normally be offered a Foyer place, with any permanent re-housing by one direct offer from the Council when they are ready to leave the Foyer.

Care leavers deemed to be ready to leave care, able to maintain a tenancy and live independently, and have a local connection to Broxbourne will be eligible for a direct offer, and will be able to bid for a suitable property. Applicants will receive one direct offer under this clause.

Those who do not have a local connection will not be eligible for a direct offer. They will be assessed and awarded points in keeping with the points scheme and will be able to place bids on suitable properties.

If a care leaver applicant does not have a local connection and it is not appropriate for a young person to return to their host authority, a request may be made to the Council to consider applying the local connection care leaver points. This is at the discretion of the Council and will be determined on a case-by-case basis, using evidence which must be provided to support such a request.

All care leavers must be 18 years of age or above to receive an offer via the Housing Register. Prior to a placement being offered, the Council will require details, in writing, of a care plan and/or support package.

When deciding on care leaver applications, the Council will consider any operating protocol or agreement between the Council, HCC, and the relevant housing provider(s).

7.5 Non statutory successions

A partner RP may allow an applicant to succeed to a tenancy where there is no statutory right to do so at its own discretion. This is only allowed where the property is of the appropriate size under this Allocations Policy. Where the property is not of the appropriate size, an alternative property of the appropriate size will be allocated under this clause. Such an allocation shall be regarded as a transfer.

7.6 Persons requiring disabled adapted properties

Vacant properties which are adapted (or where an adaptation has been agreed by a partner RP) or which are suitable for applicants with a disability, or other special needs, may be let outside of the points scheme, this includes properties that are ground floor flats.

Wheelchair adapted/accessible accommodation may be ringfenced for applicants who require this type of dwelling (as agreed by an occupational therapist) and allocated based on need.

Where properties are significantly adapted in other ways (e.g. the inclusion of a wet room) the Council reserves the right to give priority to applicants who require these adaptations over those who do not, regardless of the level of points.

An allocation may also be made outside points order in the case of a RP tenant who is willing to transfer from a property which they do not require, and which is particularly suitable for an applicant with special needs.

7.7 Hard to let properties

Where a property is deemed hard to let, it may be offered directly to any applicant (including any suspended applicant) who would qualify.

Generally, properties will be deemed hard to let once no interest has been expressed in at least two bidding rounds under the CBL scheme. Designating a property as hard to let is at the discretion of the Council in consultation with the RP.

7.8 Medical cases and other vulnerable persons

Applicants with an award of extreme medical points where a direct offer is considered the most appropriate way of meeting their needs.

7.9 Returning from institutions

Applicants who, with the agreement of their landlord, have given up a housing association tenancy to go into an institution (e.g. prison) and are returning. This will always be on a like-for-like basis regardless of any change of circumstances in the intervening time (except for relevant medical factors).

7.10 Specialist accommodation

A direct offer will be made for residents of certain specialist housing schemes who are deemed eligible to move and were nominated to the property by Broxbourne Council. An applicant placed in supported accommodation following a non-priority homelessness decision will not receive a direct offer.

8. MATCHING PROPERTIES AND APPLICANTS

8.1 Lettings plan: property types and location

The type and location of dwellings will be distributed evenly between home seekers and transfers, at a ratio of 75:25.

8.2 Local lettings schemes

In some cases, the Council may agree to operate a local lettings policy in line with Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996, enabling housing authorities to allocate accommodation to people of a particular description whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories. For example, this clause could be used to ensure that an extra care scheme for older people was only let to those who meet the age requirement and require the level of support provided by the scheme, rather than being let to those with no need for this support.

8.3 Lettings plan: households in work or making a community contribution

As part of the Council's objectives to support households in employment or who otherwise make a community contribution, the Council has agreed that up to 30% of lettings will be ringfenced for households that meet this criterion.

This will form part of a local lettings plan and certain properties will be advertised as being for households in work or making a community contribution. Applicants bidding successfully under this clause will be required to provide evidence that they meet the criteria for the nomination to proceed.

The following shall be deemed to qualify under this clause:

- An applicant who is in paid employment for a minimum of 16 hours per week and who has a contract of employment, or is an agency worker or is self-employed for tax purposes
- Temporary work may be considered as employment where it is of sufficient duration (a minimum contract of six months) or the applicant can demonstrate that the temporary contract is part of a pattern of ongoing employment of this type. Casual or seasonal work (for example, a student employed during the holidays) shall not be regarded as employment for the purposes of this clause
- The Council will require three months of wage slips, including the most recent, for an applicant to qualify under this clause. Self-employed persons will be required to demonstrate an ongoing and viable business, including proof of income or accounts for the last year, to qualify.

An applicant who is currently:

- A registered foster carer
- A retained firefighter
- A police special constable
- A person who served in HM Forces
- A serving reservist in either the Maritime Reserve, Territorial Army or RAF Reserve.

8.4 Choice Based Lettings

Details of the scheme can be found in the scheme guide at www.homeoption.org.

8.4.1 Number of offers

An applicant bidding successfully for a property under CBL may receive three offers, unless they are in a category for which there are different arrangements. However, in the event of a refusal after a third successful bid, the applicant will be removed from the Housing Register. The applicant will not be able to make a new application for five years from the date of removal.

8.4.2 Bypassing applications

- The applicant is a tenant of an RP, and the RP has informed the Council that they have breached their tenancy and are not eligible to be made an offer. This includes rent arrears, anti-social behaviour or because the property is in a poor condition due to neglect or damage that is the responsibility of the tenant
- There are rent arrears or other debts outstanding to the Council or an RP
- The Council is satisfied that the offer of a particular property would not be in the public interest having regard to community safety and cohesion
- A sensitive allocation is necessary, or a local lettings scheme is in operation
- An applicant in high housing need has a special requirement which can only be met by a specific property
- A property is purpose built or significantly adapted for a person with a disability
- The property is on the ground floor or is a bungalow. This is to ensure that it is occupied by someone who needs it, for example on medical grounds
- A nomination to an RP would not meet the rules of that landlord concerning income, household size, pet ownership, etc.
- The applicant is a tenant of an RP, and their current property is in a poor condition due to neglect or damage caused by the applicant
- The applicant has not responded to an offer within five days of the offer made by the RP, unless the RP has agreed a longer period
- The Council or an RP has been unable to carry out a home visit
- The applicant is seeking housing for older people but is not a Borough resident
- The applicant does not fit the criteria as per the advertisement on HomeOption.

8.4.3 Withdrawal of nominations

The Council may withdraw a nomination in the following circumstances:

- The property is not suitable for the applicant's needs
- The Council has decided that the applicant is not entitled to the offer
- The applicant is a tenant of an RP, and their current property is in a poor condition due to neglect or damage caused by the applicant
- The applicant has not responded to an offer within five days of the offer made by the RP, unless the RP has agreed a longer period.

If a nomination is withdrawn, the Council will tell the applicant the reason why in writing and will ask the applicant to contact the Council immediately.

8.4.4 Application Status Types

Household composition	Entitlement
Live	The application has been approved for offers, following the submission and checking of all documentation, arrears history and other relevant information. This is the only status that enables applicants to receive or bid for an offer of a home.
Nominated	This applies where an applicant has been nominated to a home and has not yet formally accepted the offer. Where an applicant is Under Offer, they are not eligible to receive additional offers.
Offered	Where an applicant has accepted an offer and has moved in, or is waiting to move into their new home. Applicants with this status are not eligible to receive any additional offers.
Removed	An application will be removed if the applicant withdraws their application or fails to respond to their annual review letter. An application will also be cancelled if the applicant has succeeded to or been assigned a secure tenancy or an assured tenancy of a registered provider landlord.
Housed	This applies where an applicant has signed a tenancy agreement for an RP property. The Housing Register application is removed.

9. OLDER PERSONS' ACCOMMODATION

Housing associations have some properties which are available exclusively for residents over a certain age depending on the scheme, usually over 60. In exceptional circumstances, allocations may be made to an applicant who is younger, if for example, they have particular medical needs or there are no suitable applicants who meet the age criteria on the Housing Register.

9.1 Older persons' accommodation with support

This type of housing with support comprises bungalows, studio apartments and flats within a self-contained scheme. Each flat in the scheme is linked to an emergency alarm service, should the tenant require assistance. The scheme may have a support worker (also known as an independent living advisor) and facilities such as a communal lounge and garden.

Assistance with shopping, cleaning or personal care is not provided. If the tenant needs support with these, please see the 'Extra care' section below.

9.2 Extra care

Designated extra care units provide a higher level of care and support to tenants than older persons' accommodation and may be allocated outside of the points scheme.

Where it is agreed by the Council that allocations to partner RP extra care properties can be made outside of the points scheme, a panel will be established comprising the Borough of Broxbourne, the RP, Hertfordshire County Council's Health and Community Services, the client's care agency and any other relevant professionals.

10. REVIEWS AND COMPLAINTS

Under the Housing Act 1996, an applicant has the specific right to request a review of the following decisions affecting their application within 21 days of the decision:

- Not having been included on the Housing Register
- Removal from the Register other than at the applicant's request
- The applicant considers that they have not been awarded the correct points
- The reasonableness of any offer made
- The status of an application.

All requests to review must be made in writing and sent to the Council. The review will be carried out by an officer senior to the officer who made the original decision. The Council has 56 days to complete the review and respond; this can be extended depending on the complexity of the case.

If an applicant disagrees with any other decision on their application or feels that their application has been assessed unfairly, they should follow the Council's complaints procedure. Details of the procedure are available on the Council's website via www.broxbourne.gov.uk.

11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and aims to prevent unlawful and unjustified discrimination against service users.

The Council is required by Section 166 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), to ensure that advice and information is available regarding the right to make an application for housing and to help anyone who has difficulty in making such an application.

Information on the Allocations Policy will be made available in alternative formats and languages on request.

12. DATA PROTECTION

Computer records are covered by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which controls the collection, storage, processing and distribution of personal data.

The regulations also give rights to all individuals about whom information is recorded. These rights include the right of access to the information and the right to challenge the accuracy of such information.

Requests for access to data must be made to the Council's Freedom of Information department via www.broxbourne.gov.uk.

13. PREVENTION OF FRAUD AND FALSE STATEMENTS

Where an applicant provides false information in connection with their housing application or if the Council has reason to believe fraud of any nature is being committed, the Council will place the application on hold on the grounds of suspected fraud and arrange for further investigation, including a referral to the Shared Anti-Fraud Service.

The application will be placed on hold until the Council is satisfied no fraud is or has taken place.

Should fraudulent activity be confirmed, the Council has the right to reject or remove the application on these grounds for up to five years. It is a criminal offence for any applicant and/or anyone providing supporting information to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement or knowingly to withhold reasonably requested information relevant to the housing application.

APPENDIX: APPLICATION STATUS TYPES

Household composition	Entitlement
Live	The application has been approved for offers, following the submission and checking of all documentation, arrears history and other relevant information. This is the only status that enables applicants to receive or bid for an offer of a home.
Under Offer	This applies where an applicant has been nominated to a home and has not yet formally accepted the offer. Where an applicant is Under Offer they are not eligible to receive additional offers.
Offer Accepted	Where an applicant has accepted an offer and has moved in, or is waiting to move into their new home. Applicants with this status may not bid for another home.
Removed	An application will be removed if the applicant withdraws their application, or fails to respond to their annual review letter. An application will also be cancelled if the applicant has succeeded to or been assigned a secure tenancy or an assured tenancy of a registered provider landlord.
Housed	This applies where an applicant has signed a tenancy agreement for an RP property. The Housing Register application is ended.

GLOSSARY

Affordable housing – refers to a range of housing types including affordable rented housing, intermediate rented housing and shared ownership, typically provided by RP organisations and/or councils.

AST - Assured Shorthold Tenancy – this is a type of agreement between tenant and landlord that is most commonly used in the private rented sector. It contains information such as the rental price, the deposit amount, the start and end dates of the tenancy and whether it can be ended early. The terms must be fair and comply with the law.

Bedsit - a non self-contained room with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities.

CBL - Choice Based Lettings – an online system which enables eligible Housing Register applicants to express an interest in a property which is suitable for their needs when it becomes available. Applicants who are live on the Housing Register can use the system to view accommodation that is available for letting each week and can choose to bid for a property.

CHR – Common Housing Register – a database of everyone who has applied for housing provided by a Registered Provider. This includes applicants seeking to become a tenant for the first time as well as RP tenants seeking a transfer.

Foyer – supported accommodation for young people aged 16 to 25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, accessed via a referral process.

HA – Housing Association (see RP)

HCC – Hertfordshire County Council – Broxbourne Council is a district council in a 'two tier' system. It falls under the 'upper tier' which is Hertfordshire County Council. Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for delivering adult social care services in all the districts in the county.

Hertfordshire Joint Housing Protocol – a document signed by all districts in Hertfordshire, and by Hertfordshire County Council, agreeing how they will work together to prevent homelessness among young people aged 16 to 25.

NSP – Notice Seeking Possession – this is served on a tenant by a landlord when the landlord wants to end the tenancy usually because the tenant has breached the terms of the tenancy e.g. they have not paid their rent or have committed serious antisocial behaviour. A tenant has 28 days to respond to a notice seeking possession.

RP – Registered Provider – also known as a Housing Association or Registered Social Landlord. A Registered Provider is a private non-profit making organisation that provides housing for people in need of a home at below market costs.

Social housing – affordable rented housing provided by a RP or a council.

Temporary Accommodation (TA) - short-term accommodation provided by the Council to a homeless household under a relevant duty of homelessness legislation.