

	Current Policy	Proposed Change and Comments
1	<p>Qualifying criteria - Local connection can be achieved through close family members (children, parents or brothers/sisters) who currently reside in the Borough and have lived here for at least the last five years.</p> <p>Other family members such as grandparents aunts and uncles will only be considered if they have a parental role or can offer practical or emotional support.</p>	<p>This category will be expanded to include grandchildren, step-parents, step-children or foster siblings.</p> <p>The reference to other family members providing practical or emotional support has been deleted.</p>
2	<p>Qualifying Criteria - Applicants are assessed as having a local connection through current residence in the Borough without having to establish any minimum period of residence.</p> <p>Other categories of local connection include: Previous Residency Employment Family Association Serving or Former Members of Armed Forces Other Special Reason</p>	<p>Introduce a minimum residency criteria of at least 6 months for applicants currently living in the Borough</p> <p>All other categories to remain the same</p>
3	<p>Qualifying criteria – Local connection. Some applicants may have no local connection anywhere – for example because they have recently arrived in or returned to the UK or are at risk of violence.</p>	<p>Applicants with no local connection anywhere will be included within the definition of those who have some other special reason for needing to reside in the Borough.</p>
4	<p>Overcrowding priority – applicants that are assessed as Band B if they need two or more bedrooms than they currently have, or Band C if their need is for one bedroom more than they have.</p>	<p>All overcrowding cases will be assessed as Band B irrespective of the number of bedrooms lacking.</p>
5	<p>Underoccupation priority – Registered Provider tenants living in the Borough are assessed as Band A if they need two or more bedrooms fewer than they currently have, or Band B if their need is for one bedroom less.</p> <p>Other underoccupiers – social housing tenants living outside the Borough are assessed as Band B or C depending on the number of bedrooms they are giving up, and private sector underoccupiers are assessed as Band C.</p>	<p>All Registered Provider tenants living in the Borough will be assessed as Band B irrespective of the number of bedrooms they are giving up. This will help prioritise local residents impacted by welfare reform and assist in making the best use of existing stock.</p> <p>Other Registered Provider and Council tenants living outside the Borough will be assessed as Band C irrespective of the number of bedrooms they are giving up.</p> <p>Underoccupiers in the private sector with no other housing need will no longer be included on the housing register.</p>

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6	<p>Sheltered Housing – Band C awarded to Registered Provider tenants or Council tenants assessed as needing sheltered, but not currently living in sheltered housing.</p> <p>Private sector tenants needing sheltered housing are assessed as Band D.</p>	<p>All applicants assessed as needing sheltered, but not currently living in sheltered housing will be assessed as Band C irrespective of tenure.</p> <p>Other types of occupation provided by charitable landlords such as almshouses or Royal British Legion Village will now fall within this definition.</p>
7	<p>Housing Needs Panel – currently all medical assessment forms and any supporting letters from GPs, Health Visitors or support workers are automatically passed to the Housing Needs Panel for assessment, unless the applicant is already in Band A or B.</p>	<p>The initial decision on medical or welfare priority to be made by a member of the Housing Needs team as part of the usual assessment process. Requests for a review of these decisions will be undertaken by a senior officer not involved in the original decision. This will speed up the decision making process for customers and increase efficiency by reducing the administrative burden associated with a panel.</p> <p>The medical assessment form has been revised to emphasise that the assessment is based on the current accommodation rather than the nature or severity of the medical condition.</p> <p>Applicants must provide sufficient independent evidence of their condition – we will no longer routinely request or pay for medical reports.</p>
8	<p>Financial thresholds – currently those with a household income of at least £50,000 or with savings or equity of at least £30,000 are placed in one band lower than their assessed need.</p> <p>Higher thresholds apply to those assessed as needing sheltered accommodation.</p>	<p>Income threshold increased to £60,000 gross per household.</p> <p>Savings and equity threshold will be reduced to £16,000.</p> <p>Those exceeding the above thresholds will no longer be included on the housing register.</p> <p>This revised income threshold is in line with Help To Buy scheme and recognises the increasing cost of housing in the Borough.</p> <p>Savings/equity threshold levels are in line with Housing Benefit regulations and reflect that those exceeding these thresholds will have alternative options in the open market.</p> <p>No change to thresholds for those seeking sheltered accommodation</p>

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9	Property condition – currently applicants awarded priority due to the condition of their current home are placed in Band B regardless of tenure.	Property condition priority will not be awarded to Registered Provider or Council tenants as the body that regulates these organisations, the Homes & Communities Agency requires all homes meet the decent homes standard. Private sector occupiers that are awarded priority will be placed in Band C.