

Allocations Policy

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This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

1. The Hampshire Home Choice Allocations Framework

<https://www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk/content/Policy/AllocationsFramework>

2. Eastleigh Borough Council Home Choice Allocation Policy

<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/11364/scheme-of-allocations.pdf>

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1 Aim of Policy

This policy outlines how Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service allocates its affordable homes. An allocation is defined as:

- selecting a person to be a secure, flexible or introductory tenant for accommodation held by a local authority
- nominating a person to be a secure, flexible or introductory tenant of another local authority
- nominating a person to be an assured or assured shorthold tenant of a housing association or other private registered provider of social housing. (This includes tenancies let at an affordable rent.
- transferring an existing local authority or private registered provider of social housing, to accommodation held by the local authority, or by a different housing authority – this only applies to an existing tenant who is in one of the categories of person to be given reasonable preference under the allocation scheme

This is in accordance with our regulatory and statutory responsibilities. (The difference between statutory and regulatory compliance comes from who enforces the laws. Regulatory laws are not enforced by the government but rather by a regulatory body appointment by the government.) Affordable housing refers to decent, secure housing let at a social or affordable rent. The best housing solution for every customer will differ. Where it is appropriate to assess an applicant's eligibility for allocation, the details set out in this policy will come into effect.

2 Background

The Housing Act (under s.169 of the Housing Act 1996 ('the 1996 Act') requires all housing authorities to have a scheme for determining priorities and procedures in allocating social accommodation.

2.1 The Government encourages housing authorities to use a 'housing options method' in conjunction with their housing register. This method is an information and advice process to

prevent homelessness before it occurs through understanding the customer's personal circumstances and helping them explore all housing options.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-2-homelessness-strategies-and-reviews>

2.2 Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service consider the housing options method to be the best approach; it means that applicants are more easily able to solve their housing problem and those in greatest need do not slip through the net.

2.3 The Council's Housing Options Team operates a choice-based lettings scheme to register applicants for housing, advertise details of available properties; allow customers to bid or register their interest in suitable properties; and to match customers following successful bids to social rented housing. Information about this register is online at www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk/.

The choice-based lettings scheme is operated in partnership with East Hampshire District Council, Havant Borough Council, Winchester City Council and Test Valley Borough Council and makes use of a Common Allocations Framework agreed between these authorities, with individual allocation schemes prepared by each participating authority in accordance with that Framework.

This policy constitutes the Council's Affordable Housing Service Allocations Scheme and applies only to those affordable homes held by the Council as a Registered Provider. This Scheme is further detailed in the Affordable Housing Service's Lettings Policy and sits under the Hampshire Home Choice Allocations Framework (hereinafter referred to as 'the Framework') and must be read in conjunction with the Framework.

This policy incorporates the Council's key aims and objectives outlined in its Homelessness, Housing and Tenancy Strategies. The policy is applicable to both existing Council and Registered Provider/Housing Association tenants in the Borough wishing to apply for re-housing, and to new customers who have applied to the Eastleigh Housing Register. Existing Council tenants or tenants of other Registered Providers seeking a transfer are assessed, prioritised and registered in the same way as other housing customers. Transferring tenants have access to the same range of housing options (i.e. Council or Registered Provider properties and relevant private sector options) as other customers, dependent on their level of priority.

3 Principles and Objectives of policy

3.1 Strategic Priorities

Supporting local people in accessing high quality, affordable housing is one of the Council's strategic priorities.

3.2 Key Principles of the policy

The key principles and objectives of the policy which determine how allocations will be made are:

Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service aims to offer housing solutions to customers through a range of housing products.

Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service will do this by:

- Making the best use of available housing
- Allocating scarce local housing resources in as fair a way as possible
- Giving 'reasonable preference' to those in greatest housing need
- Allocating homes in a fair and transparent way
- Identifying and helping customers who are vulnerable or require additional support
- Meeting homeless prevention and statutory homelessness duties
- Providing applicants with as much choice as possible
- Helping to create and maintain sustainable local communities

All staff within the lettings, income, housing, and customer services teams will be aware of and understand this policy.

4 Legislative Requirements

4.1 This policy is laid out in accordance with the following legislation and Government policies/guidance:

- The Housing Act 1996 (Part 6), as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Localism Act 2011 and other relevant legislation.
- Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local housing Authorities in England (2012, DCLG) "the Code".
- Providing social housing for local people: Statutory Guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England (DCLG, December 2013) "Supplementary Code".
- Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997, SI 1997/483.
- Allocation of Housing (England) Regulations 2002, SI 2002/3264.
- Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294.
- Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/1869.
- Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed forces) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/2989.
- Allocation for Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015, SI 2015/967.
- The Council's Homelessness Strategy.
- The Council's Tenancy Strategy.
- The Equality Act 2010.

5 Local Lettings Policies

Local lettings policies will be used to ensure where possible, that there is a mixed and balanced community. Local letting policies for some existing properties and initial lettings on new build schemes may specify different priorities for allocating properties. Properties subject to such a policy will be clearly labelled in the property advert. Local lettings policies may be applied in addition to any local planning restrictions (Section 106) in place but will not override them.

[Section 8 HHC Framework](#)

These local lettings policies will be agreed by an Affordable Housing Manager.

6 Local Planning Restrictions (Section 106)

Where the allocation of a dwelling is restricted by a Planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applicants will be prioritised in accordance with the criteria set down in that agreement.

7 Sensitive Lettings

There may be occasions when Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service requests that a vacant property is advertised as a sensitive letting; for example, where a previous tenant has caused anti-social behaviour and it is important to get the right mix of tenants in the area having regard to the needs of existing vulnerable or elderly tenants. Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service may agree that the applicant in prime position for nomination, is not suitable to be offered the property and instead agree to offer the property to a more suitable applicant.

Priority may be given to working applicants considering all relevant factors in relation to the applicant's housing need, suitability of the property for that applicant and the needs of the community. In these cases the advert will clearly state the property is subject to a Sensitive Letting.

8 A Fair Allocations Statement

Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all customers who apply for housing. Monitoring of applications and lettings will take place to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

9 Housing Register, Eligibility & Exclusions

The Council's Housing Options Team maintains the Housing Register and is the main point of contact for all applicants wishing to apply for social housing within Eastleigh Borough Council district. The Council maintains the register on behalf of Registered Providers who operate within the borough. All nominations or allocations to vacancies provided by Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service are made by the Council's Housing Options Team in accordance with the Scheme and the Framework.

Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service will allocate their accommodation in accordance with the Scheme and the Frameworks, except for:

- Any applicant who may be excluded for an allocation by virtue of Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service's own Allocation policy.
- No applicant will be excluded for an allocation by Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service without full written notification by Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service and the Council's Housing Options Team to the applicant. All applicants will have the right of a review on any aspect of an adverse decision. Details of Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service's review policy will be included with any notification of an adverse decision.

Eligibility for the Housing Register

Please see the Council's Scheme of Allocation for details.

Habitual Residence Test

Most persons from abroad who are not subject to immigration control (including British Citizens) must also be habitually resident in the Common Travel and/or have the right to reside in the Common Travel Area to be eligible to join the Housing Register.

10. Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service's Scheme of Allocation

Applicants will be able to request Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service to review its decision according to its own independent appeals procedure.

11. Housing Need Assessment

Applications will be assessed in accordance with Sections 14 (Household Size and Accommodation Eligibility), Section 15 (Health and Welfare Assessment), and Section 16 (Additional Priority) of the Framework.

Banding Applicants, who are eligible and qualify, will have their housing need assessed and be placed into one of four bands:

- Band 1: Urgent Priority
- Band 2: High Priority
- Band 3: Medium Priority
- Band 4: Low Priority

Priority is awarded within each band by the date the application was placed in that band. This date is known as the priority date. Full details of the categories are available in Sections 17 to 21 of the Framework.

Band 1: Urgent Priority

Applicants who fall into this category will be households who need to move because of:

- Emergency Cases – Usually on health medical or welfare grounds; or
- Emergency Management Transfers

Band 2: High Priority

Applicants who fall into this category will be households who need to move because of:

- Statutory Homeless Duties
- Overcrowding by Two Bedrooms
- Serious Disrepair (including assessed under the HHSRS Category)
- High Medical or Welfare Grounds
- Vulnerable applicants in Supported Housing ready for Move On
- Management Transfers
- Existing Social Housing Tenants Under-occupying their Current Accommodation – consideration will be given to those tenants in rent arrears and also those wishing to downsize to a property that is 1 bedroom larger than their housing need (excluding those living in sheltered or older persons housing).

Band 3: Medium Priority

Applicants who fall into this category will be households who need to move because of:

- Overcrowding by one bedroom.
- Temporary/insecure housing (including the private sector housing, and Ministry of Defence (MOD) applicants with notice to quit MOD accommodation – see below).
- Lacking/sharing facilities.
- Medium Medical or Welfare Grounds.
- Social housing tenants living in two-bedroom flats that have two children.
- Customers succeeding a secure tenant

Customers left in sole occupation of Council stock, having no statutory right to succeed following the death of the secure tenant will, in special circumstances, be considered for a property suitable to their housing need. The *Localism Act 2011* amended the succession rights of people living with secure council tenants in England where the tenancy was created after 1 April 2012. In these cases, a statutory right to succeed is limited to the spouse/partner of the deceased tenant. This has always been the case regarding succession to an assured housing association tenancy.

For secure tenancies created before 1 April 2012, the right to succeed may, currently, be claimed by a member of the deceased tenant's family, subject to certain eligibility criteria.

Succession and under-occupation

Even though a member of the deceased tenant's family may currently have a statutory right to succeed to a secure council tenancy, if they are under-occupying the property the landlord may seek repossession on the grounds that "suitable alternative accommodation"

has been offered. There have been several legal challenges concerning attempts to regain possession of under-occupied properties in these circumstances.

Each case will be considered on its own merits and some of the factors taken into consideration will be;

- the customers relationship with the former tenant,
- length of residency,
- support given/received throughout the duration of residency together with the customers' ability to sustain a tenancy.

Customers falling into this category will be subject to a 3-month time limit, at the expiration of which they will be removed from the housing register or if they wish, be re-assessed according to the standard registration process.

- Existing social housing tenants accepted in accordance with the Right to Move Regulations'.
- Existing social housing tenants living in a bedsit/studio flat in Eastleigh, for a period of 2 years or over will be considered for one bedroom accommodation.

Band 4: Low Priority

Applicants who fall into this category will be households who need to move because:

- Of a low Medical Priority or Welfare Grounds
- Living in tied or Armed Forces accommodation
- Wish to be considered for difficult to let properties (this will normally be sheltered and/or extra care accommodation)
- Applicants who are serving prison sentences and who on release will have a housing need or be homeless and have a local connection to Eastleigh.

Determining Priorities under the Scheme

Priority is awarded within each band by the date the application was placed in that band. This date is known as the priority date. If an applicant is moved up a band the application will be given a date when the increased priority is awarded. This becomes the new priority date. Applicants who are assessed as not in housing need but are of a household type which could be considered for housing which is normally difficult to let, and they wish to be considered for difficult to let properties will be placed in Band 4.

If an applicant has a serious housing problem that requires urgent consideration for re-housing, their application will be reviewed by the Council's Affordable Housing Manager and awarded higher priority, if appropriate.

Household Size and Accommodation Eligibility

The number of bedrooms an applicant can be considered for is determined by looking at the size and structure of the household. The table below details the normal bedroom requirements for typical households:

Household Size	Size of accommodation
Single Person	Bedsit/studio flat/one bedroom property
Couple	One bedroom property
Household with one child	Two bedroom property
Household with two children of same sex *	Two bedroom property
Household with two children of opposite sex; where both children are under 10 years of age	Two bedroom property
Household with two children of same sex, where one sibling is over 16 years of age.	Three bedroom property
Household with two children of opposite sex, where one is 10 years or over. **	Three bedroom property
Household with three children	Three bedroom property
Household with four or more children	Three/four bedroom property
Household with five or more children	Four/five bedroom property.

*Two siblings of the same sex under 16 years of age will be expected to share one bedroom of appropriate size.

**Two siblings of opposite sex, where one is 10 years or over are entitled to separate bedrooms.

Where an applicant states a separate bedroom is required for a carer/s providing overnight care, the Council will assess whether the carer is part of the household.

In exceptional circumstances, Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service will consider allocating properties of alternative sizes to applicants. Such decisions will be made by Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service's Housing Manager.

Applicants in the following circumstances have a priority need:

1. Overcrowded Circumstances

Households will be regarded as overcrowded when they are assessed as needing at least one more bedroom than their current accommodation provides.

For the purpose of defining overcrowding the following factors apply:

- A single person aged 16 or over requires one bedroom.
- A couple require one bedroom.
- Two children of a different sex, where one is aged 10 or over, require 2 bedrooms.
- Children of same sex share a bedroom until 16 years of age.

One room will be classified as a living room; all other rooms (except bathrooms and kitchens) will be classified as bedrooms provided they are suitable as sleeping accommodation.

Rooms measuring less than 4.6 square metres (50 square feet) will not be counted as a bedroom.

2. Homeless Households

- Applicants who are owed a prevention or relief duty or a full duty to be housed under the homelessness legislation and who are placed in accommodation that is not suitable for their long-term needs, or
- Where the lease for their private sector leased property is ending through no fault of their own, or
- Where the Council needs to release temporary accommodation in order to meet local homeless priorities and pressures.
- Households occupying homeless temporary accommodation stock or Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) properties after 2 years will be moved into Band 2.

Severe Disrepair

Where an applicant's home is assessed as being in serious disrepair and is considered unsafe by the Eastleigh Borough Council's Affordable Housing Service but cannot be remedied by the applicant or landlord within a reasonable timescale and housing conditions can be resolved through re-housing.

Assessments will be carried out by Environmental Health Officers having regard to Category 1 hazards under the Housing Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

Existing Social Housing Tenants

1. Existing Social Housing tenants living in the Borough of Eastleigh who:
 - Will release a property required by the Council to meet housing need. (e.g. - tenants in properties previously adapted who no longer require the adaptations)
 - Are under-occupying their property by one bedroom or more and who wish to move to smaller accommodation
 - Are under-occupying their property by one bedroom or more (including starter tenancies) and are suffering or may suffer financial hardship because of reduced welfare payments due to under-occupation. Additional priority may be awarded to applicants in these circumstances.

- Are applicants who have succeeded to a tenancy and who are required to move to smaller accommodation.
- Are living in a two-bedroom flat and who have two children will be considered for more appropriate family accommodation, e.g. a house or maisonette.
- Are living in a bedsit/studio flat for a period of 2 years or over.

Households living in Temporary/ insecure Housing

The following applicants are seen as living in temporary or insecure housing if:

- a) They have been accepted as statutorily homeless by the Council and been placed into temporary housing.
- b) Accepted a qualifying offer of private rented accommodation, which brings the Council's homelessness duty to an end.
- c) They have an Assured Shorthold Tenancy in the private rented sector and do not have the means to resolve their own housing situation.
- d) Are considered to be of 'no fixed abode'.
- e) They occupy Armed Forces accommodation and are close to the end of their service. Applicants with an 'urgent housing need' may be awarded additional priority.

Fixed-term secure tenancies will not be considered to be temporary/insecure housing.

12 Health and Welfare Assessment

An applicant or household member who has a significant health or welfare problem caused or substantially worsened by their existing accommodation and where it could be alleviated or resolved by rehousing, may be awarded priority on health and/or welfare grounds.

The health and welfare of an applicant or a member of their household will be assessed on the basis of the effect of their current property on their condition, and how a different property would improve the applicant's health or welfare. These decisions will be at the managers discretion. A health or welfare issue in this context means a physical or mental illness, disability or incapacity, including behavioural syndromes, problems of physical or mental development and disorders related to drugs and / or alcohol. The assessment is based on a holistic approach, which takes account of psychological and social factors alongside physical issues. To qualify for an award the condition must be made worse by your present housing and your health or welfare must also be likely to be improved by moving to alternative accommodation. Please note that a health or welfare award does not necessarily mean that your application will move into a higher Band.

13. Additional Priority

Additional priority may be given in the following circumstances

1. Fostering

Additional priority may be given to foster carers where their current accommodation is not suitable to accommodate a foster child placement. An example is where an applicant may require a larger property to accommodate one or more foster children. In these cases the local authority will work closely with Children's Services to meet the needs of an approved foster carer.

2. Health and Welfare Assessment

An applicant, who has a need to move to a particular locality in the district where significant hardship would be caused to them or others, if they did not move, maybe awarded additional priority.

3. Armed Forces with Urgent Housing Needs

Additional priority may be given to members of the Armed and Reserved Forces, widows/widowers of Armed/Reserve Forces personnel killed whilst in service and who have an urgent housing need. For example those who need to move urgently because of a life-threatening illness or sudden disability.

4. Emergency Management Transfers

Existing RP tenants in need of an emergency management transfer will be awarded Additional priority and placed into Band 1. (see18.3)

14 Advertising Process

The Council's Affordable Housing Service will arrange for each vacancy to be advertised and will specify the requirements for each property.



Some properties may be labelled by the Council's Affordable Housing Service to enable the development of sustainable communities.

For new developments this may include Local Lettings Policies.

Depending on the Council's Affordable Housing Service strategic needs, the labelling of properties may include certain restrictions, e.g. some social housing may only be offered to people who have an assessed support need or for transferring tenants.

The advertisement will usually include details such as the following:

- The Registered Provider (landlord)
- The weekly rent, including all other service charges

- Whether property is a social or affordable rent
- Whether property is let on a fixed term tenancy
- Properties available for cross boundary moves
- The anticipated date the property will be ready for occupation
- The recommended number of permitted occupants
- Any age limits e.g. for households with children, for sheltered accommodation for older/disabled persons or any landlord specific requirement
- Whether the property is restricted by a Planning Obligation under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where offers of tenancies may only be made to applicants with a strong local connection to a rural exception site
- Village vacancies subject to local connection restrictions
- Accessible housing e.g. wheelchair adapted.
- Whether pets are allowed.

Determining between Applications

When determining an allocation or nomination for a vacancy, the Council's Affordable Housing Service will normally consider allocating according to the following rank orders:

- Suitable applicants within Band 1 the Urgent re-housing band (by date order of approval as an agreed critical/urgent case)
- Suitable applicants within Band 2 (by priority date in the band)
- Suitable applicants within Band 3 (by priority date in the band)
- Suitable applicants within Band 4 (by priority date in the band)

A decision of the 'suitability' of a particular applicant will also have reference to the appropriate household size and accommodation eligibility criteria and criteria set out in Section 14.1 of the Framework.

Priority is awarded within each band by the date the application was placed in that band. This date is known as the priority date.

Occupation/Property Eligibility Criteria

For vacancies, the following issues will be considered:

a) Achieving an appropriate balance between the following range of factors:

- management issues (e.g. child density, sensitive lettings, local lettings policies, etc)
- balancing competing levels of demand between different household types
- making best use of available stock
- the design, layout and room sizes of the property
- whether the vacancy is deemed accessible to meet the needs of a disabled person
- the current status of relevant allocations quota
- an applicant's ability to maintain a tenancy (particularly when moving on from supported housing).

b) Assessing what households are eligible for designated property size. If an applicant does not qualify for the vacancy after taking the above factors into consideration, they will not be advised directly, (however can request the reason), that they are unsuccessful and will be skipped on the shortlist.

Applicants who do not meet the advert and preference criteria will be skipped. Preference may be given to larger sized households i.e. a 6 person household may be prioritised over a 5 person household for a large 3 bed property. The advert will clearly reflect any preference criteria being applied to a property.

14.1 Accommodation for Disabled Applicants

Properties which have been designed or have been significantly adapted to meet the needs of disabled people will be prioritised for applicants who require such an adapted property (or someone in their family requires the adaptations). The adaptations will be stated clearly in the advertisement. Disabled applicants (or families with a disabled member) will be considered for other vacancies by virtue of their ranked position on the Housing Register where it is reasonable and practical to adapt that property for their needs.

Managing Choice

Cases awarded critical housing priority (including Witness Protection and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, etc) will not be offered a choice as the need to manage risk will be the primary determinant of any accommodation to be offered. This can be extended where no suitable property has arisen during the 3-month period.

Direct Matching

In certain circumstances the Council's Affordable Housing Service will allocate a property directly to an applicant which is known as a 'direct match'. The advert will clearly state that the property has already been allocated to an applicant with a specific need. Examples of when a direct match may take place include but are not limited to:

- Applicant requires a specifically adapted property.
- Urgent management decant or council compulsory purchase required.
- Applicant is subject to MAPPa or MARAC and requires specific accommodation in a specific area.
- Serving members of the Armed Forces who have 28 days before the expiration of notice in place relating to termination of (Ministry of Defence) MOD service accommodation or notice to leave accommodation provided by the MOD. This is only applicable to applicants with a local connection to Eastleigh.
- Homeless households in temporary accommodation where the Council needs to release this accommodation in order to meet local homeless priorities and pressures.
- Homeless Applicants who have been in Band 2 for a 3 month period and have not successfully secured suitable accommodation.

- Applicants granted Left in Occupation status who have been in Band 2 for a 3 month period and have not successfully secured suitable accommodation.
- Former Council tenants who in special circumstances agreed to relinquish their tenancy who have 28 days from which they require alternative permanent accommodation. Also, where an applicant is to be made an allocation of a property directly, there will only be one offer of accommodation to the applicant.

15 Offers of Accommodation

Applicants selected for nomination will be contacted by the Council about the nomination and allocation.

All offers of accommodation made by the Council's Affordable Housing Service will be made in writing, direct to applicants. If applicants do not respond to a formal offer or contact regarding a nomination or allocation within 3 working days it will be assumed they have refused the offer or are no longer interested in that property.

15.1 Vulnerable Applicants/Support Needs

The Council's Affordable Housing Service is committed to ensuring that all residents in the Borough have every opportunity to sustain their homes. The Council's Affordable Housing Service will provide the following details when responding to a request for a nomination from the Council:

- Any tenancy support provided to an applicant.
- Any known involvement by any support agency with an applicant, and
- Any concern that the applicant may need tenancy support even if tenancy support has not been given and there is no involvement of any support agency.

15.2 Joint Tenancies

The conditions set out below relate to the Council's Affordable Housing Service owned properties only; other Registered Providers may have their own policies on joint tenancies, which may differ from the Council's Affordable Housing Service's.

Customers can potentially be granted a joint tenancy where they are a couple and meet one of the following criteria:

- Married
- Civil partners
- Cohabiting (heterosexual or same sex) and able to provide proof of a minimum of 12 months joint residence.

Where the relationship between two customers is other than those described above, a joint tenancy may be granted in certain circumstances only. It should be noted that there are serious and complex consequences attached to being a joint tenant and therefore joint applications should not be entered into without considering fully these consequences. An existing joint tenant, who wishes to apply for housing other than with their current joint

tenant, will have issues surrounding the tenancy that will need to be resolved before LEAF will be able to offer a new tenancy.

The Council can only grant a joint tenancy if both customers are eligible for housing within criteria set down in Part VI of the Housing Act 1996. Information on joint tenancies is available from the Council, Housing Management section.

16 Allocation and Offer Process

Once a completed form or on-line application has been received, the Council will then undertake an assessment of housing need against this Policy. The date of registration, health and welfare needs are taken into account in the assessment. If additional information is required, a Health and Welfare Assessment form will be sent out to be completed.

A letter will be sent to the applicant within 10 working days of receipt of all relevant information, confirming their application reference number, the date the application was registered, their banding and their assessed bedroom need.

Missing Information and Incomplete Applications

If further verification is required, the applicant will be contacted in writing to provide the information necessary to assess their application. Any applicant who does not provide the requested information within 28 days will be assumed to no longer require housing and their application will be cancelled accordingly.

Paper application forms not completed fully will be returned to be completed. On-line applications which are not completed within 28 days will be cancelled.

Once all verification processes are completed, the Council will make an offer of the vacancy to the successful applicant.

Applicants not eligible and do not qualify

If the applicant is considered to be ineligible, they will be sent a letter confirming this and the reason for this decision.

17 Properties not Included in the Scheme

Whilst most allocations will be managed through the choice-based allocation process, there will be some circumstances when it is necessary to exclude vacancies from the process.

Examples of lettings which may be excluded are as follows:

- Alternative accommodation to allow repairs to be carried out
- Temporary accommodation for households who are homeless or may be threatened with homelessness
- Properties awarded for decants to allow for repairs to be carried out
- Supported housing
- Extra-care / Extra Sheltered housing
- Renewal of flexible tenancies

- Conversion of introductory to secure tenancies
- New tenancy granted at current address (for example, joint to sole tenancy)

18 Advice and support

Due to the pressures on social housing, customers can obtain advice and information about a range of housing options. The Council's Housing and Homelessness Team provides a free advice and information service to housing customers and deals with enquiries about the following issues:

- Who can apply for assistance as a homeless person and how to go about this
- Other housing options available, including private sector rented accommodation, low-cost home ownership schemes, and accommodation outside of the Council district
- General housing matters including tenancy problems

The Council will provide all applicants and nominations who are being considered for a home with appropriate advice and support.

The Council will support existing customers with accessing choice-based lettings schemes if they need to transfer, mutual exchange services, debt and money advice services, or specialist support.

The Housing Options Team can be contacted:

- via the Customer Service Centre by telephone on 023 80688000
- by email: housing@eastleigh.gov.uk
- by post at: Housing and Homelessness Team, Eastleigh Borough Council, Upper Market Street, Eastleigh, SO50 9YN

19 Complaints and appeals

Customers have the right to appeal if they are unhappy with the Council's Affordable Housing Services decision to refuse their nomination/application. This will be managed through the Council's Affordable Housing Service appeals process. The Council's Affordable Housing Service decision at appeal is final and customers may not raise a complaint regarding the decision made at appeal. Customers have the right to complain about other aspects of the letting's process if it is within the scope of the complaints policy.

19.1 The Right to Review

Applicants have the right to request a review of any aspect of their housing application assessment made by the Council's Affordable Housing Service when assessing their application for housing, under the Housing Act 1996, Part 6. This includes decisions regarding eligibility, qualification, and housing need assessments.

19.2 The Review Process

An officer senior to the person making the original decision and who was not involved in making the decision will carry out the Review. A request for a Review must be made within 21 days of the decision providing the reasons for the Review. The Council's Affordable Housing Service has discretion to extend the time limit if it considers this would be reasonable. If further information is needed, the applicant will be invited to write or, if unable to do this, make oral representation. The applicant may also appoint someone on his or her behalf to do this. If the reviewing officer finds that the original decision did not take relevant information into account, they will refer the case back for re-consideration. The applicant will be notified of the Review decision within 56 days of the request for a Review.

20 Complaints Procedure

If an applicant is dissatisfied with any aspect of their application, other than where a review can be made, they should follow the Council's Affordable Housing Service published complaints procedure, available on Council's Affordable Housing Service's website or on request.

The Local Government / Housing Ombudsman

If an applicant is not satisfied with the action taken by the Council and has exhausted the complaints procedure available, they can send a written complaint to the Ombudsman. The Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
Phone: 0300 061 0614 Fax: 024 7682 0001
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN
Phone: 0300 111 3000 Fax: 020 7831 1942 Email: infor@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.ihos.org.uk

21 Related Policies and Procedures

- Rent Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Compensation and Redress Policy
- Appeals procedure

22 Data Protection

The Council are committed to protecting and respecting the privacy of personal data. As a registered Data Controller (Reg. no. Z7118863) it complies with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR).

More information on how the Council collects, uses and keeps your personal information, and how it protects privacy can be found in our [Record of Processing Activity](#) (ROPA). The corporate privacy notice provides general information about the council's personal data processing activities overall. As the range of services the council provides is so varied, it has also produced individual [privacy notices for each service area](#), to explain specifically how data will be used within each service.

23 Equality & Diversity

23.1 Equality and diversity are of fundamental importance to services provided regardless of a person's protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, religion pregnancy and maternity, race, belief, or sex). All must be treated with respect. The Council treats everyone it houses, serves, and employs, fairly, and encourages others to do the same.

23.2 The Council provides information that is clear, accessible, and in an appropriate format (such as translated into another language, or in large print on request). Where appropriate, Council Officers will assist residents, by, for example, helping to complete paperwork. These policies ensure residents are treated in a fair and efficient manner.

24 Monitoring and Review

24.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly, to incorporate legislative and regulatory amendments and changes, best practice developments, or to address any operational issues with the procedure. Input and approval will be sought from our residents (via the [Residents Committee or similar](#)) prior to making any substantive changes. This is in line with our Corporate Values and is intended to ensure our policy continues to meet the needs and aspirations of our residents.

The Council will monitor the performance of our lettings service by:

- Returns to local authority partners
- CORE reports
- Consultation with tenant panel

25 Document History and Approval

Identity and Version Control

This document is the final approved version and will be a controlled document with an individual assigned to version review/amendment.

DRAFT