

Allocation policy changes (31/05/2023)

Existing policy	Amendment	Rationale
Homeowners are not allowed onto the register.	Homeowners who have been awarded a duty under homeless legislation are allowed on the register (will consider circumstances, equity etc.)	If a duty has been awarded under homelessness, a decision has been made that it is not reasonable for them to continue to live in their home, so we need to allow them access to the register
Savings/investments of £21,450 or more cannot go on the register (single and couples)	Changed to £16,000 for total household savings	Falls in line with the threshold used for Universal Credit
Income cap of £45,000 for singles, and £60,000 for couples	Changed to £25,000 for single person without children, and £45,000 for couples or single person with children	Original thresholds were too high, would allow too many people who could afford a private rent onto the register. Falls in line with other policies
Applicants who have financial resources are not allowed on the register.	Applicants awarded a homeless duty will be exempt from the income criteria and allowed on the register but will be given a reduced banding	Homeless applicants are in a reasonable preference category so we should allow them on the register. We are allowed however to give them reduced priority because they have funds (unlikely scenario).
Current residency and past residency criteria: 2 out of the last 5 years (Includes people currently living in an institutions, hospital, or prison outside of our area but were resident prior)	Current residency of 6 out of the last 12mths or 3 out of the last 5 years (Includes people currently living in an institutions, hospital, or prison outside of our area but were resident prior)	Falls in line with the local connection criteria under the homeless legislation. Negates scenarios when a customer has a LC under homelessness but not under the allocations policy
No definition of what a family member is in reference to local connection.	Defined family members as parents (biological/adoptive), adult children, brothers or sisters provided there is regular contact etc.	Rules out any ambiguity

Intentionally homeless not included in the exemption criteria under LC rules.	Intentionally homeless applicants excluded from local connection rules and allowed on under normal banding	We may have people in our TA who are intentionally homeless who should have access to the register (most applicants without a LC are referred to another area before this decision is made anyway so this scenario will not crop up very often)
Applicants with no LC anywhere are exempt from LC rules – does not include those here under the Ukrainian or Afghan re settlement schemes	Added those here under the Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement schemes as being exempt from the LC rules	Most will have a LC by now, but it enables us to allow those who haven't established a connection anywhere yet onto our register
MARAC applicants not included in LC exemption rules	MARAC applicants added to exemption rules for LC purposes	MAPPA and Witness Protection applicants already included. MARAC are high risk victims of DV so should be afforded the same discretion
Debt amounts no more than £500 will not be allowed on the register	Increased to £1000	£500 is too low. That would not even cover one month's rent
Homeless applicants exempt from debt criteria providing repayment plan adhered to	Added clarification that repayments plans will be agreed on a case-by-case basis and that if they fail to set up a plan or adhere to it, they will be given a reduced banding	To incentivise homeless applicants to set up a repayment plan otherwise they lose their priority banding
Unacceptable behaviour section does not mention homeless applicants	Advised that where we owe a duty under the homeless legislation, certain criteria relating to unacceptable behaviour may be waived and the applicants may be allowed on the register in original banding or be given reduced priority. Decisions made on a case-by-case basis	We may create a backlog in our TA if we accept a duty but do not allow the applicant onto our register. It also increases their chances of us preventing or relieving their homelessness when not able to afford or be accepted for a private rent
References South Kesteven website through the policy	Changed to our new CBL website www.SKhomechoice.org.uk	To enable applicants to register via the correct website
Properties advertised on a weekly cycle from Thursday at 00:01 until Tuesday 23:59	Properties will now be advertised as soon as they become available but still on a weekly cycle	To reduce void times and get the adverts out as soon as the property is available to let.
Applicants owed a statutory homeless duty will be subject to auto bid	Clarified this will be for those in main duty, prevention, or relief	To clarify what we mean by a statutory duty and to make sure all applicants under those duties know they will be on an auto bid

No section detailing what documents applicants will need to provide	New paragraph added informing applicants what documents will be required to assess their application	Transparency around what each applicant must provide for both applicants and staff administering the policy
Band 1 awarded with the documented approval of the service manager	Homeless applicants awarded a Band 1 can be authorised by a senior officer or above	To allow delegation for authorise homeless bandings
Relief and prevention cases awarded banding proving they have a LC	Removed the LC statement	All prevention and relief applicants go on the register regardless of LC
Statutory overcrowding not included	Add a Band 1 definition of stat overcrowding	Standard in all policies
Prevention applicants awarded Band 3	Prevention applicants now awarded Band 2	Need to be banded higher than non-priority cases who are in Band 3
Mental health not covered under medical examples in band 1 or Band 2	Added mental health to medical need under Band 1 and Band 2	To make sure we are considering people with mental health conditions as well as physical conditions
Band 2 overcrowding section does not include those who need an extra bedroom due to medical need	Added paragraph advising that we may consider certain households as being overcrowded where a household member needs their own room for medical purposes	We receive a lot of applications from households whose family members cannot share for medical reasons, so we need to include this specific scenario in the policy
Band 2 overcrowding section states children can share up to any age if same sex unless 10-year age gap and one is 16 years	Changed to same sex can share up to aged 16. Over 16 needs own room (same as benefits)	Falls in line with other policies
Band 2 overcrowding section did not cover scenarios involving non-binary/other possible scenario's	Added in a sentence stating there may be other scenarios not covered and each case will be discussed on its own merit	To cover cases which do not fit into our standard categories for overcrowding purposes
Low level overcrowding includes a bullet point stating two children of same gender sharing a room, and at least a 10-year age gap or one is 16 years old.	Removed and changed wording to: Low level overcrowding – The applicant's household has been assessed as being overcrowded by 1 bedroom.	Not required.
People living in insecure accommodation not included	Added those living in insecure accommodation to Band 3	To cover those who are NFA, received notice, sofa surfing etc prior to making a homeless application
Prevention and relief applicants awarded Band 4 if they have worsened their circumstances	Removed	Intentionality/worsening of circs is not looked at under homelessness until relief duty has ended therefore we should not penalise an

		applicant prior to this decision being made
No reduced priority criteria	<p>Added a section in Band 4 which includes applicants who have been awarded a reduced priority due to rent arrears/finances/unacceptable behaviour</p>	To allow certain households onto the register but with a reduced banding (mentioned above)
Pregnancy section advises when an unborn baby is recognised	<p>Re worded pregnancy section as this was very confusing and removed checking property eligibility at 27 weeks.</p> <p>Unborn recognised at 20 weeks for overcrowding purposes. If no other housing need and unborn not yet at 20 weeks, applicant will not qualify.</p> <p>Applicants with an identified housing need, not related to pregnancy but expecting first child, will be considered for family accommodation once pregnancy reaches 20 weeks</p>	To clarify when we take an unborn baby into account as existing wording was very confusing
Family accommodation definition	Removed	Problematic to define family accommodation in this way
Decision to bypass	Added sentence stating this will be decided by a senior officer of above	Clarification in policy over who will make the decision
Auto Bid for Band 1 applicants	Removed auto bid for those in Band 1 that are not homeless applicants	They should be given the opportunity to bid themselves
Offers – unable to contact	Added in a sentence stating any unsuccessful attempts to contact homeless applicants will count as an offer being made	Clarity over offers to homeless applicants and what happens if we cannot get hold of them
Reviews will be done by Service Manager	Included someone who has designated authority as well	To give team leader and senior officers flexibility to do the reviews
Glossary and sections	Removed	The glossary and sub sections are not needed and make the document longer than it needs to be
Armed Forces – Band 1	<p>Removed and changed to an additional preference category.</p> <p>Any applicant who is or has been in the Armed Forces and</p>	Existing draft policy places all Armed Forces into Band 1 regardless of their housing need. The covenant is not about them being given

	<p>satisfies the criteria will be given additional preference in the banding they have been awarded. For instance, if they are in Band 2 for overcrowding, they will be given additional preference when shortlisting.</p>	<p>preferential treatment, therefore giving them additional preference in their allocated band is a fairer approach.</p>
Refusals No clarification on number of offers for prevention/relief cases and consequences of refusal.	<p>Clarified that prevention can have two offers, if refuse 2nd offer, then they will be demoted to a Band 3</p> <p>Relief and main duty will have one offer, demoted on refusal and duty discharged</p>	<p>Outlines consequences of refusal of homeless offers more clearly and number of offers permitted</p>
Bidding cycles	<p>Changed the wording of bidding cycles to state properties will be advertised when they become available for a week. Also clarified how maximum number of bids are monitored</p>	<p>To prevent extended void times by advertising properties when they become available.</p>
Did not include a banding definition for families with young children living in flats higher than ground floor	<p>Added banding definition to Band 3</p>	<p>We receive many applications for households with babies/young children living in flats with no stairs who are struggling to cope so added a new definition to cater for this group. Not a blanket policy – each case discussed on own merits</p>
Property eligibility table not accurate and section did not explain how decisions are made	<p>Updated the table and explanatory bullet points added</p>	<p>To reflect what properties we do and do not have and what we can offer. Provides clarity over how decisions are made.</p>