

Leicester City Council Housing Allocations Policy August 2011



Welcome to the Leicester City Council Housing Allocations Policy Manual. This document contains details of the scheme, which Leicester City Council uses for determining priorities for allocating Council homes and nominations to Housing Associations.

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Allocation Policy explains the rules that determine how Leicester City Council allocates social housing properties.
- 1.2 This Allocation Policy guides the principles of how these homes will be allocated in a fair and transparent manner, taking account of both the Council's duty to take account of housing need and its wish to offer as much choice as possible.

The Legal Framework

- 1.3 The Housing Act 1996 (Part 6-Section 167), as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to have an allocations policy for determining priorities and determining priorities and for defining the procedure to be followed in allocating housing accommodation.
- 1.4 This Housing Allocations Policy has been framed to address these requirements, and gives due regard to the requirements of the 'Allocation of Accommodation Code of Guidance for Local Authorities' November 2002, supplementary guidance 'Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Letting' August 2008 and 'Fair and Flexible: Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England' December 2009.
- 1.5 This Policy does not apply to assignments, mutual exchanges or succession of tenancies. In each of these instances, neither the Council nor any of the other Housing Association Landlords are required to identify a new tenant for the relevant property or properties from Leicester City Council's Housing Register.

Statement on Choice

- 1.6 Leicester City Council and Housing Association Partners are fully committed to enabling applicants to play an active role in choosing where and in what type of property and tenure they want to live, whilst continuing to house those people in the greatest need, making the best use of the available housing stock and complying with all relevant legislation.
- 1.7 It is important to realise that the demand for accommodation is higher for some types of property and for some areas than others. In making a decision about the choices available, applicants need to consider their housing need priority against the availability of properties in any given area.
- 1.8 Applicants can determine whether they are likely to be successful before placing a bid as they will be informed of their relative position on the shortlist for that vacancy at the time of making the bid. This enables an applicant to make an informed choice when deciding which property to

apply for and whether social housing is a realistic option in their circumstances.

Equalities Statement

- 1.9 We are strongly committed to fairness and equal treatment for all. We aim to treat all people equally no matter what their race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, cultural and social background, refugee status, sex, sexuality, marital status, age, disability (including learning disability) health (including mental health) or HIV status. We aim to prevent unlawful discrimination and take positive action to promote equal opportunities for all.

Confidentiality Statement

- 1.10 All applications for housing accommodation will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Information held under the scheme will not be disclosed to any third party, except where:
- The individual who is the subject of such confidential information has consented to disclosure to a third party.
 - Leicester City Council is permitted to disclose the information under data protection Legislation.
 - There is a requirement in law to make such disclosures.
 - Leicester City Council considers that the applicant has given consent for any information held on an application to be shared with other social housing landlords, such as Registered Social Landlords, and other agencies.

Choice Based Lettings

- 1.11 Since April 2010 Leicester City Council and Housing Association Partners have introduced a choice based lettings scheme called Leicester HomeChoice. This means available properties are advertised each week and you can apply for those you are eligible for and interested in.

PART 2 REGISTRATION

- 2.1 Although there is no longer a legal requirement to maintain a Housing Register Leicester City Council has chosen to continue maintaining its Housing Register to assist in the assessment of housing need.
- 2.2 The Housing Register is open to all persons who are not statutorily excluded as detailed in the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. In order to apply, a Leicester HomeChoice Housing Register Form needs to be submitted which can be done online at www.leicesterhomechoice.co.uk .
- 2.3 For the purposes of this policy the term 'suspended' will mean that no offers of accommodation will be made to someone who is suspended.

Who Can Apply?

- 2.3 Any person aged 16 years and over may make an application to appear on the housing register only by completing the approved application form.
- 2.4 All applications must have the correct supporting proofs in order for the application to be deemed as complete. Details of the required proofs can be found on the application form.
- 2.5 Applicants who apply with partners are treated as making a joint application and partners are subject to the same tests as applicants
- 2.6 Every person who submits a complete application will have their application considered. This does not mean that everyone who applies will be accepted onto the housing register.
- 2.7 Where a partner does not meet Leicester City Requirement, they will be registered as a joint applicant unless they are ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by virtue of their immigration status or determined locally by Leicester City Council.

Who You Can Include on Your Application

- 2.8 You can only include:
 - Yourself and your partner
 - Children under 18 who are dependent on you or your partner *
 - Your adult sons and daughters who have lived with you throughout their adult lives
 - Your carer who has been assessed by Adult Social Care as providing overnight care
 - Those household members originally rehoused by the City Council from the same application

* For the purposes of the Housing Allocations Policy, a dependent child is defined as being under 18 years and being the natural or adopted child of the applicant or his/her partner, under 18 and subject to a legal residence order or under 18 and in the care of the Local Authority.

Members of a household can only appear on one application for housing.

- 2.9 Where there are exceptional circumstances in the case of adult children or other members of the household who have lived away and now wish to be rehoused as a family unit, consideration will be given to individual cases by the Housing Options Service.

Eligibility

- 2.10 Acceptance onto the Housing Register does not mean that the applicant is eligible for an allocation of housing. Some applicants will be ineligible for an allocation of accommodation, this is described below:
- 2.11 Leicester City Council is required by Statute to decide certain applicants are ineligible for an allocation. Leicester City Council will apply the relevant legislation that is in place at the time of application.
- 2.12 Eligibility for housing assistance can be affected if there is a change in the immigration status of the applicant(s), and therefore, eligibility for an allocation of housing will be kept under review. The applicant is responsible for informing Leicester City Council any change in their immigration status.
- 2.13 The Housing Options Service will determine the eligibility of an applicant, based on immigration status, by applying the legislation and statutory instruments that are in place at the time of the application and the point of allocation.
- 2.14 Under the Housing Act 1996, Local Authorities must consider whether applicants are eligible for housing assistance.

A person or persons will be ineligible if:

- they are a person from abroad who is ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by virtue of being subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 unless of a class of person prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- they are a person who the authority has decided is to be treated as ineligible having been satisfied that they, or a member of their household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority and in the circumstances at the time the application is being considered, they are unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority by reason of that behaviour.

- 2.15 Applicants whose households include a restricted person(s) will not be afforded preference if they are only homeless or in priority need as a consequence of the presence of a restricted person(s).

Unacceptable Behaviour:

- 2.16 The Council may consider the following people to be ineligible; any member of a household who in the previous 3 years has been convicted of or has had legal action (legal action refers to a conviction, or the serving of an injunction, a notice of intention to seek possession, a court order or the revocation of a licence) taken against them in connection with:
- violence, harassment, racial harassment, threatening behaviour or any other forms of anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- 2.17 The decision that an applicant is ineligible for an allocation may occur at the time of joining the Housing Register, at any time during the life of the application, at the time the applicant is allocated a property, or when the applicant has bid and has been short-listed for a property. The Housing Options Service will make the decision.
- 2.18 New applications from people above will usually be unopposed after 5 years have elapsed from the date when the ineligible decision was made. Applications received within 5 years will only be considered if there has been a factual change in the applicant's circumstances and the applicant can prove a change in their behaviour. In instances where there has been no factual change, Leicester City Council will rely on its previous decision.

Misrepresentation or Withholding Information

- 2.19 It is a criminal offence for anyone to try and obtain accommodation from Leicester City Council by knowingly and recklessly giving a false statement or knowingly withholding information.
- 2.20 Failure by an applicant to inform Leicester City Council of changes to his/her application, or deliberately withholding information relevant to, or misrepresenting his/her housing circumstances, may result in criminal prosecution.
- 2.21 An applicant who has deliberately withheld or misrepresented any information which would be relevant to the assessment of his or her housing circumstances and priority on the Housing Register, will be considered by Leicester City Council to have been guilty of such behaviour and may therefore be considered as ineligible for allocation or receiving a suspension for 12 months on the Housing Register.

- 2.22 Leicester City Council may seek possession of a tenancy that was granted as a result of a false statement and may also attempt to recover any costs incurred.
- 2.23 Applicants have the right to request a review of a decision to give less preference for any of the reasons above.

Family Intervention Project

- 2.24 Families who have been previously been made ineligible due to ASB and placed in the Family Intervention Project Scheme by Leicester City Council Housing Services can be made eligible, once approval has been given by the Head of Service - Housing Division to the Housing Options Service
- 2.25 A fresh application must be submitted supported by written evidence of modified behaviour from the agency involved that will continue to provide support to the applicant in the new tenancy.
- 2.26 If the Council decides a person is ineligible to appear on the Housing Register, it will notify them in writing of the decision and the grounds for this decision, and of his/her right to a review of that decision.

Leicester City Requirement

- 2.27 Applicants to the Housing Register must meet the Leicester City Requirement (local connection) by satisfying at least one of the following criteria:
- Applicants living within the city of Leicester must be able to produce documentary evidence that they have used a residential address within the City as their permanent home for the 12 consecutive months immediately prior to their housing application *.
 - Applicants that have previously lived in permanent accommodation in Leicester City for 2 consecutive years or more out of the last 5 years *.
 - Applicants employed within the city of Leicester who have a contract or a firm offer of employment within the city for a minimum of 12 months.
 - People who are aged over 18 and approved as a homeless person under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
 - Asylum seekers who have been dispersed to the City by the National Asylum Support service (NASS) and whose status changes to that of refugee, or who are awarded exceptional or indefinite leave to remain whilst living in the city.
 - Persons returning from service in the armed forces or prisoners released from prison who meet one of the above criteria prior to them entering service or prison.

- Applicants currently living in unsettled accommodation (e.g. a hostel) within Leicester City who can demonstrate they had previously lived in permanent/settled accommodation in Leicester City for 2 consecutive years or more out of the last 5 years from the last date of their last settled accommodation.

* Hostels, Nightshelters, 'Care of Addresses' & No Fixed Abode do not meet the requirement, as they are not classified as permanent accommodation.

2.28 Applications from people who do not fulfil one of the criteria above will be suspended and placed in Band 5 until: -

One of the above criteria is met; or

Where there are exceptional circumstances, which have been considered by Leicester City Council and a decision made to waive this requirement.

Rent Arrears

2.29 Rent arrears are defined as any housing related debt owed to Leicester City Council, other social landlords or private landlords. This includes the non-payment of rent, court costs, water rates, rechargeable repair debts or other charges such as a 'for use and occupation' charge (mesne profit). This debt applies to current and former tenancies*.

* Arrears from former tenancies with private landlords will only be considered for the 2 years prior to the date the housing application is received.

2.30 This also includes any money paid by Leicester City Council to a landlord in respect of payments given under the Leicester Let and the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme to cover non payment of rent or damages caused by the departing tenant.

2.31 Council tax debt, Housing Benefit overpayments and any other debt that is not property related will not considered under this policy. This also includes any property related debts owing that are covered by a bankruptcy order.

Rehousing with Rent Arrears

2.32 Any applicant on the housing register who has a housing related debt, as defined above, will normally only be considered for re-housing under certain circumstances.

2.33 The criteria for being considered for re-housing with arrears will differ depending on an applicant's level of housing need.

2.34 Band 1 Applicants

Applicants in Band 1, who owe a housing related debt below £300, will be considered for re-housing after entering into an agreement to repay their debt and after establishing the minimum repayment pattern of 12 consecutive weeks.

Applicants in Band 1, who owe a housing related debt above £300, will be considered for re-housing after they have reduced this debt to below £300. They will also be required to enter into an agreement to repay the remaining debt and establish a minimum repayment pattern of 12 consecutive weeks.

The minimum repayment pattern will commence once the applicant is identified as having Band 1 housing need.

- 2.35 Applicants suffering from harassment who owe a housing related debt will not be subject to the re-housing with rent arrears policy. They will however be expected to have entered into an agreement to repay their debt, but their application for re-housing will not be suspended and offers of permanent accommodation can be made.

2.36 Band 2, 3, 4 and 5 Applicants

Applicants in Bands 2, 3, 4 and 5 will be required to pay any outstanding housing related debt in full before they will be considered for re-housing. Their application will be suspended within the Band until a clear account has been confirmed.

The exception to this will be Statutory Homeless applicants are subject to 2.35 above and can be made offers of permanent accommodation. However where temporary accommodation has been provided under a statutory homeless duty and the applicant has failed to keep up to date with their temporary accommodation charges, then these arrears may lead to action being taken to cease homeless duty. In this case the applicant will then fall under the general rent arrears policy appropriate to their band.

Agreements to Repay and Minimum Repayment Patterns

- 2.37 All agreements to repay a debt will be made in line with Leicester City Council's Fair Debt Policy.
- 2.38 Applicants will have to establish a minimum 12 consecutive week repayment pattern. There may be an additional requirement to meet any court orders for rent arrears on a current tenancy.
- 2.39 Repayments will be agreed based on a weekly amount, but the actual repayments can be made on a weekly or fortnightly basis. If an applicant cannot pay weekly or fortnightly we will accept a monthly repayment

agreement. 3 regular monthly repayments will be required before an applicant is considered for re-housing.

- 2.40 If a court order exists for rent arrears on a current tenancy, applicants will be required to bring the court order up to date and then make regular repayments for a further 12 consecutive weeks.
- 2.41 If there is no court order, applicants will be required to make regular repayments for at least 12 consecutive weeks.

Exceptional Circumstances

- 2.42 In exceptional circumstances the normal requirements of this re-housing with rent arrears policy may be relaxed.
- 2.43 Such exceptional circumstances will include situations where re-housing is of paramount importance or where the needs of Leicester City Council's Housing Services are such that it is appropriate to relax the requirements.
- 2.44 Exceptional cases to re-house with rent arrears must be approved by the Head of Service, Housing Services.

Applications from People in Prison

- 2.45 As applicants detained in prison are unable to take up occupation immediately only those applications received from people who are within 28 days of release will be registered.

Applications from People who have Overnight Staying Access to Children

- 2.46 Where a parent does not provide the principal home, but have access arrangements that include overnight stays they will be eligible for a 2 bedroom flat only. In exceptional cases involving a large number of children consideration may be given for a 3 bedroom flat.
- 2.47 Where an applicant has overnight access arrangements, evidence of the arrangement will be required in the form of a Solicitor's letter, Court documents or a Social Worker's letter detailing the arrangement.
- 2.48 Where there is an amicable agreement between parents, a letter from each party concerned will be sufficient if no other form of confirmation is available. Proof of Child Benefit would need to be provided with the confirmation of the overnight access arrangements and a copy of the Full Birth Certificate of the child.

- 2.49 For the purposes of assessing housing need, applicants with this type of access will be considered for overcrowding priority as though the children were living there on a full time basis.
- 2.50 Access to children will only be considered where the person is a parent whether natural or by adoption or has legal residence of a child(ren). This policy does not apply to informal arrangements.
- 2.51 For the purposes of the Housing Allocations Policy, a child is defined as being under 18 years and being the natural or adopted child of the applicant or his/her partner, under 18 and subject to a legal residence order or under 18 and in the care of the Local Authority.

Applications from People who have Equal Access Arrangements to Children

- 2.52 When an applicant claims an equal amount of access, which would result in two potential claims of family accommodation (Note that two applications do not necessarily have to be made, e.g. where the matrimonial home was owner occupied), consideration will only be given to allocate family accommodation to one of the parents.
- 2.53 For the purposes of the Housing Allocations Policy, a child is defined in accordance with paragraph 2.51 above.

Applications from People who have Parental Responsibility of Children following a Relationship Breakdown

- 2.54 Where there is a relationship breakdown and both partners state they have mutually agreed they will each have full-time parental responsibility for some of the children, they will only be considered for family housing where they can evidence they have full-time parental responsibility of the children and Housing Options Service is reasonably satisfied that the relationship has ended.
- 2.55 For the purposes of the Housing Allocations Policy, a child is defined in accordance with paragraph 2.51 above.

Applications from 16 and 17 Year Olds

- 2.56 Applications from 16 or 17 year olds will only be considered in the following circumstances:
- Is a Leicester City Council Care Leaver and a request is made via CYPS Care Leaver's Protocol
 - Is owed the full statutory homeless duty
 - Where there is a joint application, one partner is over 18 years of age

2.57 Only those 16 or 17 year olds approved by the Housing Options Service will have their application registered on the Housing Register and must also have an agreed named trustee over the age of 18 in place for any tenancies held up to the age of 18.

PART 3 THE BANDING SCHEME

- 3.1 In order to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory duties and strategic commitments (as they relate to housing), this policy is structured so as to ensure that households in certain specific types of housing need have a degree of priority over others. This is achieved by operating a banding system based on the level of urgency of their respective housing need.
- 3.2 All households are placed into one of five bands. Those households placed into Band One have the most urgent housing need. Those in Band Two have a higher need than those in Band Three, and so forth.
- 3.3 Within a Band, priority is determined by the date the application was placed in that Band, with the person who has been waiting the longest within that Band having the highest priority.
- 3.4 If circumstances change which results in an applicant moving to a higher priority band, the Band date applies from the date the application is given the higher priority, not the original date of the application.
- 3.5 If circumstances change which results in an applicant moving to a lower priority Band, the date for the lower Band will be treated as either: the date the application first went into that Band, or the date the application first went to a higher Band whichever is earlier.
- 3.6 A household will be placed in the highest band that any member of that household qualifies for. There is no additional recognition of multiple needs within a household.
- 3.7 The banding scheme is outlined in summary form below. Priority is awarded in recognition of an applicant's current housing circumstances and is intended to provide a reasonable preference within the housing scheme and a ranked position relative to other applicants.
- 3.8 Applicants who qualify to appear on the register are awarded priority within the band unless their behaviour or circumstances warrant their application is suspended. The scheme intends that a suspension still confers a reasonable preference to an applicant but at a lower priority relative to other applicants within the band.
- 3.9 Challenges to the assignment of a band should be made using the council complaint system.

No Offers of Accommodation

- 3.10 Applicants will not receive offers of accommodation if their application has been suspended for the following reasons:
 - Do not meet the Leicester City Requirement
 - Have property-related debts (with some exceptions)

- Refused three offers of accommodation (no offer will be made for a period of one year from the date of the last offer)
- Failed a property inspection (LCC tenants only)
- Have provided false or misleading information (no offer will be made for a period of one year from the date of notification that information has been deemed to be false or misleading)
- In prison or a detention centre
- Serving in HM forces and living in HM forces housing and have not been given notice to leave your service accommodation
- Violent or aggressive behaviour towards Leicester City Council staff, its contractors or agents, or towards Housing Association staff (no offer will be made for a period of one year from the date of the incident)

3.11 There is a right of appeal for each of the above set of circumstances.

Deliberate Actions

3.12 Where the Head of Housing Options is satisfied that a housing applicant has either acted unreasonably or has deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to qualify for a higher banding position, they will be placed in the band corresponding to their original circumstance. There is a right of appeal to the Director of Housing Strategy and Options.

Banding Scheme Summary

3.13 Band One

- People in need of urgent re-housing and referred by Adult Social Care or Children's Services
- People in need of urgent re-housing whose properties are directly affected by public redevelopment programmes
- Council and housing association tenants who are currently under-occupying a large property (four bedroom or more) and who wish to move to a property with fewer bedrooms (three bedrooms or less)
- Council and housing association tenants occupying a purpose built wheelchair adapted property who no longer require it
- People suffering from any form of harassment
- Council and housing association tenants who need to move for management reasons
- People whose current housing conditions are having a seriously adverse affect on the physical or mental health of either the applicant or a member of their household
- Children leaving the care of Leicester City Council's Children and Young People's Service (CYPS)

3.14 Band Two

- People who are statutory homeless and are owed the full housing duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996
- People whose homes are deemed to be severely overcrowded (two bedrooms or more short of their assessed need)
- Families living in designated temporary accommodation in the city
- Families who are overcrowded and living in one bedroom accommodation
- People identified as needing urgent re-housing to prevent homelessness
- Single people living in designated temporary or supported accommodation
- People ready to leave residential care supported by Leicester City Council and/or NHS
- People with a care package where Adult Social Care (LCC) assess that a move will assist independent living
- People whose current housing conditions are having a negative affect on the physical or mental health of the applicant or a member of their household
- People leaving the armed forces who previously lived in Leicester but do not have a home to return to and do not qualify as statutory homeless

3.15 Band Three

- People identified by Adult Social Care as ready to leave the care of family or carer
- Single people who have no settled accommodation and are of 'no fixed abode'
- Families needing to move to a particular area of Leicester where hardship would be caused if they do not move
- Families who are living in overcrowded conditions under Leicester City Council's overcrowding standard (one bedroom short of their assessed need)
- Council and housing association tenants who are currently under-occupying a two or three bedroom property

3.16 Band Four

- People who share facilities with other households but have their own bedroom
- People who need to move to, or remain in, a particular area of Leicester to give or receive emotional support from family, friends or others in the community

3.17 Band Five

- People who do not have any of the housing circumstances listed in bands 1, 2, 3 and 4

BAND ONE

3.18 PEOPLE IN NEED OF URGENT RE-HOUSING AND REFERRED BY ADULT SOCIAL CARE OR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Outcome

This is to enable priority rehousing where the City Council has legal duties to certain vulnerable people under the Children Act 1996 and Community Care Act 1990.

Criteria and Evidence Required

A household will be placed in Band One under this criteria at the discretion of the Director of Housing Strategy and Options where Leicester City Council's Adult Social Adult Care and Children and Young People's Services have confirmed a) and b) below.

Referrals will only be considered from Leicester City Council's Director of Adult Social Adult Care and Children and Young People's Services.

- a) it is essential in order to secure a suitable offer of accommodation as soon as possible.
- b) the referring body has agreed to provide any necessary services to enable the applicant to maintain the tenancy that will be created.

Other Information

The Director of Housing Strategy and Options will also have the discretion to extend property type and size over normal eligibility.

Priority is not awarded in order to enable an applicant with sufficient priority (under other banding categories) which will generate a suitable offer in a reasonable timescale, to enhance their level of priority in order to obtain an offer in a specific area.

3.19 PEOPLE IN NEED OF URGENT RE-HOUSING WHOSE PROPERTIES ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY PUBLIC REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Outcome

This is to enable priority rehousing for households whose properties will be directly affected by public redevelopment programmes resulting in the loss of their property through demolition, major refurbishment or compulsory purchase.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Only schemes approved and listed in the recorded minutes of the Cabinet decision will be considered. Households in the private rented sector will need to demonstrate they have lived in the property for a minimum period of 12 months immediately prior to the order being served.

Other Information

Qualifying tenants can be considered for a property which is identical in type and size to their current home in addition to the normal eligibility rules concerning property type and size, except in exceptional circumstances.

3.20 COUNCIL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATION TENANTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY UNDER-OCCUPYING A LARGE PROPERTY AND WHO WISH TO MOVE TO A PROPERTY WITH FEWER BEDROOMS

Outcome

This is to enable priority rehousing for social tenants who are underoccupying properties with 4 or more bedrooms to move to accommodation with 3 or less bedrooms.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Information will be taken from the housing application form to establish which social tenants are underoccupying 4 bedroom or more houses.

Other Information

Qualifying tenants will be able to choose 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms providing it does not create any overcrowding.

Housing Association tenants will be considered if their current home is within the city and their Housing Association has agreed to advertise the vacated home through Leicester HomeChoice.

3.21 COUNCIL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATION TENANTS OCCUPYING A PURPOSE BUILT WHEELCHAIR ADAPTED PROPERTY WHO NO LONGER REQUIRE IT

Outcome

Priority will be given to social tenants who are living in purpose built wheelchair adapted accommodation and who no longer require the use of such accommodation.

Criteria and Evidence Required

The Property Lettings Team or an occupational therapist in Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care will submit a report to the Housing Options Service confirming the property is a purpose built fully wheelchair adapted accommodation and the tenants no longer require the use of such facilities.

Other Information

Housing Association tenants will be considered if their current purpose built wheelchair adapted accommodation is within the city and their Housing Association has agreed to advertise the vacant home through Leicester HomeChoice.

3.22 PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM ANY FORM OF HARASSMENT

Outcome

This is to enable priority rehousing for people suffering from any form of harassment to move to more suitable accommodation after establishing it is unreasonable to stay in their current accommodation.

The Council's aim is to tackle the perpetrator of harassment and support the victim to remain in their home wherever possible. However in certain cases re-housing will be considered as an option.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Housing Services Division will investigate all reported claims of harassment by Leicester City Council tenants. For Housing Association tenants the investigation must be carried out by the relevant landlord and referred to the Housing Options Service for approval if harassment priority is requested. For all other tenures Housing Options Service will investigate reports of harassment.

Priority will only be conferred where severe harassment has been established and it is unreasonable to stay in the current accommodation.

Other Information

There is a distinction between anti social behaviour / nuisance and harassment. Harassment is defined as:

“Personalised, deliberate, unwanted acts of violence (verbal or physical) or other behaviour that is designed to cause harm or damage to people or property which is suffered by individuals or groups of people because of their race, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexuality, HIV status, religious beliefs, disability, age or family circumstances”.

(Housing Committee, 3rd February 1999)

Applicants approved under this criteria will only be entitled to one suitable offer of accommodation in line with their eligible property types with their Harassment priority.

All approved harassment cases will be put on auto-bid citywide, if there has been no suitable offer made within the first 4 advertising cycles of Leicester HomeChoice when priority was given.

If an applicant refuses an offer of accommodation which is deemed suitable by Housing Services (LCC) or Housing Options Service (all other tenants) the harassment priority will be removed.

3.23 SOCIAL TENANTS WHO NEED TO MOVE FOR MANAGEMENT REASONS

Outcome

This is to assist the Council and Housing Associations* to meet the needs of their tenants in specific circumstances and to make best use of their housing stock.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Management priority may be awarded in the specific circumstances described below:

1. Where a non-dependent is living with an OAP that needs to move to more suitable accommodation but is prevented from doing so because of the presence of the non-dependent. Here, the non-dependent may be given Management priority in order to get independent accommodation. In order to qualify for this priority, the non-dependent must have lived with the OAP at the address in question for at least 12 months.
2. Where a single person or couple is left in family accommodation following the death of the tenant and there is no right to succession to the tenancy. Management priority will be awarded in order that the applicant may be offered appropriate accommodation. In order to qualify for this priority, the single person / couple would have succeeded to the tenancy anyway had there not already been a succession on that tenancy (i.e. 12 months residence etc).
3. Where a single person or couple is left in family accommodation following the death of the tenant and a right of succession exists. Management priority may be awarded where the applicant agrees to move to a more suitable accommodation rather than sign for the existing tenancy.

4. Employees of Leicester City Council who occupy accommodation which is linked to their employment and who are retiring through age or ill health or willing to give up that accommodation.
5. Where a Leicester City Council or Housing Association tenant has previously been awarded harassment priority and then has to leave the property for reasons connected with the approval. To avoid accruing large rent arrears when Housing Benefit stops, the tenancy can be terminated and the applicant reapply as a general applicant and awarded management priority.
6. Where a referral is made by staff from the Family Intervention Project confirming the family are ready for rehousing as their behaviour has changed to enable them to be considered as suitable tenants.
7. Where there would be undue hardship arising from the costs of district heating to allow a move to a property with independent heating supply.

Other Information

The above list may be extended at the discretion of the Director of Housing Strategy and Options.

* Tenants of Housing Associations will only be considered where the Association has an agreement with Leicester City Council to provide up to 90% of their vacancies through Leicester HomeChoice.

3.24 PEOPLE WHOSE CURRENT HOUSING CONDITIONS ARE HAVING A SERIOUSLY ADVERSE AFFECT ON THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH

Outcome

This is to enable priority rehousing for households who are living in accommodation which is having a seriously adverse affect on their physical or mental health and moving to more suitable accommodation would solve or alleviate the medical condition.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Assessment of circumstances and the verification source required will be done using the criteria listed below:

Access & Mobility	Housing Circumstances	Verification Source
Applicant or member of household has an acute deterioration of mobility or progressive mobility problems.	Where an Occupational Therapist has said the applicant requires: 1. Fully wheelchair accessible home & their current home is not adapted for their needs. 2. Their bedroom, bathroom & toilet all to be on ground floor or accessible by stairlift / through floor lift & they are all currently inaccessible.	Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care Service
Mental Health	Housing Circumstances	Verification Source
Applicant or member of household has a serious mental health condition.	Where a Consultant Psychiatrist has stated it is impossible to remain in their current home due to the impact on their mental health	Consultant Psychiatrist
Applicant or member of household has an underlying mental health condition.	Where it can be evidenced that a traumatic event (i.e. murder, serious assault, abuse, death etc.) in the associated home or adjacent area is causing the applicant mental distress.	Options / Housing Officers report via management to Divisional Director

General Health	Housing Circumstances	Verification Source
Applicant or member of household has severely lifestyle restricting or terminal illness, e.g. AIDS, Cancer, MS.	Where a Specialist has stated or GP confirms that applicant's current home increases the severity of the illness or has adverse impact on their lifestyle.	Specialist (or GP confirms specialist report)

Other Information

Priority will only be considered if rehousing is needed to solve or alleviate the medical condition.

Priority will not be awarded for a medical condition, however severe, if the present housing does not affect the medical condition.

3.25 CHILDREN LEAVING THE CARE OF LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

Outcome

This is to enable priority rehousing for young people leaving the care of Leicester City Council's Children and Young People's Services.

Criteria and Evidence Required

A person will be placed in Band One under this criteria where Leicester City Council's Children and Young People's Services has confirmed the young person is leaving their care and is ready for independent living.

A young person who is not yet 18 will require a guarantor/trustee to be identified before they can apply for properties on Leicester HomeChoice.

BAND TWO

3.26 PEOPLE WHO ARE STATUTORY HOMELESS

Outcome

This band is to enable priority rehousing to applicants who are accepted by the HOS as being owed a full housing duty under Part VII of the Housing Act.

Criteria and Evidence Required

All approved homeless cases will have been assessed by officers at Housing Options Service and will have met the following criteria;

- i. the applicant is an eligible person and
- ii. the applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days and
- iii. the applicant is in priority need and
- iv. the applicant did not become homeless intentionally and
- v. the applicant has a local connection with the City of Leicester

Other Information

Applicants approved as statutory homeless will be put on auto-bid citywide on Leicester HomeChoice from the date of approval.

Statutory homeless applicants will only be entitled to one suitable offer of accommodation with their Homelessness priority.

3.27 PEOPLE WHOSE HOMES ARE DEEMED TO BE SEVERELY OVERCROWDED

Outcome

This is to give priority to those households living in accommodation where they are severely overcrowded i.e. households who need a minimum two additional bedrooms to meet their needs.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Information will be taken from the housing application form to establish which households require a minimum of two additional bedrooms using the bedroom standard outlined in paragraph 4.2 against the number of bedrooms the household currently have exclusive use of.

Other Information

In determining the number of bedrooms required where a household is expecting another baby, this will only be taken into consideration when the mother is 20 weeks pregnant. A Mat B1 maternity certificate will be required or a letter from the doctor or midwife confirming pregnancy and the date the baby is due.

3.28 FAMILIES LIVING IN DESIGNATED TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION IN THE CITY

Outcome

This is to give priority to families living in designated temporary accommodation for 2 months and who met the Leicester City Requirement immediately prior to entry to the designated accommodation.

Designated temporary accommodation is a homeless hostel or short term temporary supported accommodation which the family was referred to by the Housing Options Service

Criteria and Evidence Required

Confirmation of two months residence in the designated temporary accommodation or a declaration of homelessness has been made.

Other Information

Supported schemes that provide accommodation under a tenancy agreement i.e. assured shorthold tenancies will not be considered under this priority.

3.29 FAMILIES WHO ARE OVERCROWDED AND LIVING IN ONE BEDROOM ACCOMMODATION

Outcome

This is to give priority to families currently living in one bedroom accommodation who need an additional bedroom.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Information will be taken from the housing application form to establish which households require an additional bedroom using the bedroom standard outlined in paragraph 4.2 and currently living in one bedroom accommodation.

Other Information

In determining the number of bedrooms required where a household is expecting another baby this will only be taken into consideration when the mother is 20 weeks pregnant. A Mat B1 maternity certificate will be required or a letter from the doctor or midwife confirming pregnancy and the date the baby is due.

Persons who have part week overnight access to children and families not living in their own home will not be considered under this priority.

3.30 PEOPLE IDENTIFIED AS NEEDING URGENT RE-HOUSING TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Outcome

This is to give priority to people who occupy accommodation on insecure terms and need urgent re-housing to prevent homelessness.

Criteria and Evidence Required

All cases will be assessed and determined by officers at Housing Options Service.

Priority will only be awarded to people who fall in one of the following categories of people and meet the criteria stipulated below.

- Families with dependent children
- Pregnant Women
- People whose circumstances may give rise to additional consideration following a comprehensive housing needs assessment by a Housing Options Officer (HOO)

People with the circumstances listed below (1-8) must provide evidence of those circumstances to the Housing Options Service.

1. Where, an applicant has received a valid notice to quit which has been confirmed as valid by a Housing Options Officer requiring them to give possession, and, in the case of an assured short hold tenancy, under the accelerated possession proceedings (S21 of the Housing Act 1988), and there is no defence to the application which has been confirmed by a Housing Options Officer and the officer has negotiated with the landlord to reconcile the tenancy on behalf of the applicant. If the notice has been served upon the tenant for acts that could be seen as deliberate i.e. asb, rent arrears, then priority will not be awarded.
2. Where, following a comprehensive assessment by a Housing Options Officer (e.g. affordability assessment), it has been determined that repossession of an applicants tenancy or owner-occupied property is inevitable. Where it is decided that the applicant has worsened their own circumstances by failure to pay rent/mortgage when they could have afforded to do so, priority will not be awarded
3. Where an applicant is in tied accommodation which they are REQUIRED to leave, as confirmed by a Housing Options Officer (the awarding of priority in this circumstance would be dependent on the reasons for leaving i.e. if applicant is choosing to leave tied accommodation, priority will not be awarded). If the applicant is required to leave the tied property due to deliberate acts i.e. rent arrears, ASB or they have lost their employment because of serious breaches of tenancy or licence to occupy conditions then priority will not be awarded.
4. People living in mobile homes, boats, caravans or other movable structures who have no place where they are legally entitled to live in them.
5. People who reside in a household as an excluded tenant or excluded (contract to occupy) or bare (permission to occupy) licensee/lodger and are subject to a notice to quit (where notice to quit is understood as meaning the appropriate notice) by the legal occupier or owner of that accommodation, as confirmed by a Housing Options Officer.

Priority will only be awarded following a full assessment of housing need including a home visit by the Housing Options Officer. In this circumstance the case will be reviewed after 3 months from the date of the award of the priority. If the last settled accommodation prior to the temporary accommodation was lost due to acts that could be seen as deliberate i.e. asb, rent arrears or the applicant deliberately worsened their housing circumstances to gain higher priority then priority will not be awarded.

6. Private tenants who have been served with a legally valid notice that their landlord is seeking a possession order on the

mandatory grounds set out below and where a Housing Options Officer has carried out an assessment and has confirmed a) the notice is valid and b) that in their opinion possession will be inevitable.

The mandatory grounds for possession, applicable to awarding of priority are:

Ground 1

The owner wishes to occupy the property as his or her home and they previously lived in the property as their principle home, or now requires it for their principle home

Ground 2

The property is subject to a mortgage and is being re-possessed by the lender

Ground 3

Out of season holiday lets, where the tenancy was granted on a fixed term of less than 8 months

Ground 4

Vacation lets of student accommodation

Ground 5

The property is held for use by a minister of religion to perform their duties and the court is satisfied it is now required for that purpose

Ground 6

The landlord intends to redevelop the property

Ground 7

Where the tenant has died, and the periodic tenancy has been passed through a will or intestacy to someone other than a person entitled to succeed to the tenancy

Ground 8

For rent arrears, where both at the date of service of the notice of seeking possession and at the date of the hearing the tenant owes over two months or 8 weeks rent or more. Where ground 8 is applicable (rent arrears) an investigation will take place into the reasons why the rent arrears accrued. Where it is decided that the applicant has worsened their own circumstances by failure to pay

rent when they could have afforded to do so, priority will not be awarded.

7. Where an applicant is residing in a Leicester City Council owned property and is subject to NTQ and is not able to sign for the property. Priority may be awarded by Landlord Services and kept by the applicant for 3 months even after they have left the property if they have no permanent home.

The applicant must be able to evidence they have been residing in the LCC owned property for at least 12 months before the Notice to Quit was given.

8. People leaving prison who are temporarily staying with friends or family upon their release from prison and do not want to access hostel accommodation and met the Leicester City Requirement prior to them entering prison.

Other Information

People who consider they may fall into any of the above categories should book an interview with the Housing Options Service. Following the interview evidence must be provided to the Service and a Housing Options Officer will assess eligibility.

If the insecure accommodation comes to an end, priority will be removed and the applicants housing need will be reassessed from their new accommodation.

Applicants who have been made an offer of accommodation but then have to leave their insecure accommodation can retain their offer if they have moved to other insecure accommodation. If they decline the offer their priority will be re-assessed from their new accommodation.

3.31 SINGLE PEOPLE LIVING IN DESIGNATED TEMPORARY OR SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Outcome

This is to give priority to single people who have lived in designated temporary accommodation for at least 1 month and have been assessed as being ready for independent living/accommodation and who met the Leicester City Requirement immediately prior to entry to the designated accommodation.

Designated temporary accommodation is a homeless hostel or short term temporary supported accommodation which the person was referred to by the Housing Options Service

Criteria and Evidence Required

Confirmation of one month residence in the designated temporary accommodation or a declaration of homelessness has been made.

Other Information

Supported schemes that provide accommodation under a tenancy agreement i.e. assured shorthold tenancies will not be considered under this priority.

3.32 PEOPLE READY TO LEAVE RESIDENTIAL CARE SUPPORTED BY LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL AND/OR NHS

Outcome

This is to give priority to people ready to leave residential care and is supported by Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care and/or the NHS.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Confirmation from Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care or the NHS that the person is ready to leave residential care and move into independent living.

3.33 PEOPLE WITH A CARE PACKAGE WHERE ADULT SOCIAL CARE (LCC) ASSESS THAT A MOVE WILL ASSIST INDEPENDENT LIVING

Outcome

This is to support the Adult Social Care independent living policy.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Confirmation from Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care that the person needs a move to maintain independent living and they have a care package in place.

3.34 PEOPLE WHOSE CURRENT HOUSING CONDITIONS ARE HAVING A NEGATIVE AFFECT ON THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OF THE APPLICANT OR A MEMBER OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD

Outcome

This is to give priority to people living in accommodation that has a negative affect on their physical or mental health.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Assessment of circumstances and the verification source required will be done using the criteria listed below:

Access & Mobility	Housing Circumstances	Verification Source
Applicant or member of household has a housing need linked to a disability or medical condition, which renders the present housing hazardous or extremely difficult to cope with.	Where an OT has said your current home is partially suitable but you require a major adaptation e.g. level access shower or through floor lift.	Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care Service
Mental Health	Housing Circumstances	Verification Source
Applicant or member of household has a mental health condition.	Where a Consultant Psychiatrist or a CPN has stated your current home is having a significant detrimental impact on your mental health.	Consultant Psychiatrist / CPN
General Health	Housing Circumstances	Verification Source
Applicant or member of household has a chronic illness such as severe asthma, emphysema or severe eczema.	Where your Specialist has indicated that the condition of your home and immediate environment is affecting your health subject to confirmation by an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) on the condition of your home or environment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specialist 2. Leicester City Council's EHO or Air Quality Monitoring Unit

Additional Bedrooms	Housing Circumstances	Verification Source
Applicants or member of household who have a severe disease or disability, and require extra space for major items of life sustaining equipment or equipment to promote independence in the home e.g. severe kidney disease (with self dialysis at home or use of kidney machines), severe respiratory disease (with use of oxygen machine at home), etc.	Where your Specialist has indicated that there is insufficient space for essential equipment.	Specialist

Extra bedroom for full-time carer: a need for care that is so great that residential or hospital care would be necessary without a full-time carer.	Where a community care assessment identified there is insufficient space for a residential carer but otherwise home is appropriate.	Leicester City Council's Community Care Assessment (Adult or Children Services)
Applicants or member of household who have severe behavioural problems.	Where your Specialist has confirmed you require a separate bedroom to remedy severe behaviour problems.	Specialist

Other Information

Priority will only be considered if rehousing is needed to solve or alleviate the medical condition.

Priority will not be awarded for a medical condition, however severe, if the present housing does not affect the medical condition.

3.35 PEOPLE LEAVING THE ARMED FORCES WHO PREVIOUSLY LIVED IN LEICESTER BUT DO NOT HAVE A HOME TO RETURN TO AND DO NOT QUALIFY AS STATUTORY HOMELESS

Outcome

This is to give priority to people leaving the armed forces who do not have a home to return to and do not qualify as statutory homeless and previously lived in Leicester prior to them entering service.

Criteria and Evidence Required

All cases will be assessed and approved by officers at Housing Options Service.

Persons leaving the armed forces must have met the Leicester City Requirement prior to them entering service.

BAND THREE

3.36 PEOPLE IDENTIFIED BY ADULT SOCIAL CARE AS READY TO LEAVE THE CARE OF FAMILY OR CARER

Outcome

This is to give priority to people ready to leave the care of their family or carer and into independent living.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Confirmation from Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care that the person is ready to move into independent living from the care of their family or carer.

3.37 SINGLE PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO SETTLED ACCOMMODATION AND ARE OF 'NO FIXED ABODE'

Outcome

This is to give priority to single people who have no settled accommodation and are of 'no fixed abode'.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Letter from the tenant or owner-occupier of the correspondence address confirming the address is used solely for mailing purposes by the applicant.

Other Information

In some instances, a verification visit may be undertaken by the Housing Options Service.

3.38 FAMILIES NEEDING TO MOVE TO A PARTICULAR AREA OF LEICESTER WHERE HARDSHIP WOULD BE CAUSED IF THEY DO NOT MOVE

Outcome

This is to give priority to families needing to move to particular area within the city of Leicester to give or receive daily physical care and support.

Criteria and Evidence Required

A Community Care Assessment from Leicester City Council's Adult or Children Services or an equivalent assessment from another local authority confirming the need of the applicant to give or receive daily physical care and support and the current home is too far away from the support.

Other Information

Applicants will only be able to apply for properties within the allocation area where they will give or receive care and support.

3.39 FAMILIES WHO ARE LIVING IN OVERCROWDED CONDITIONS UNDER LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL'S OVERCROWDING STANDARD (ONE BEDROOM SHORT OF THEIR ASSESSED NEED)

Outcome

This is to give priority to families who are overcrowded and who need one more bedroom to meet their needs.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Information will be taken from the housing application form to establish which households require one additional bedroom using the bedroom standard outlined in paragraph 4.2 against the number of bedrooms the household currently have exclusive use of.

Other Information

In determining the number of bedrooms required where a household is expecting another baby this will only be taken into consideration when the mother is 20 weeks pregnant.

3.40 COUNCIL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATION TENANTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY UNDER-OCCUPYING A TWO OR THREE BEDROOM PROPERTY

Outcome

This is to give priority to social tenants who are underoccupying 2 or 3 bedroom properties to move to accommodation with less bedrooms.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Information will be taken from the housing application form to establish which social tenants are underoccupying 2 or 3 bedroom properties.

Other Information

Housing Association tenants will be considered if their current home is within the city and their Housing Association has agreed to advertise the vacated home through Leicester HomeChoice.

BAND FOUR

3.41 PEOPLE WHO SHARE FACILITIES WITH OTHER HOUSEHOLDS BUT HAVE THEIR OWN BEDROOM

Outcome

This is to give priority to people who do not have a tenancy or own their own home and who are living with family/friends, are not overcrowded but who wish to move to their own accommodation.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Information will be taken from the housing application form to establish which people share facilities with others other than those in the applicant's household.

Other Information

Priority will not be given to tenants or owner occupiers who have exclusive use of their own self contained accommodation.

3.42 PEOPLE WHO NEED TO MOVE TO, OR REMAIN IN, A PARTICULAR AREA OF LEICESTER TO GIVE OR RECEIVE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS OR OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Outcome

This is to give priority to people needing to live in one specific area of the city in order to give or receive care and support on emotional grounds from family/friends/community.

Criteria and Evidence Required

Applicants wishing to be approved under this allocation will need to demonstrate a specific connection with the chosen allocation area where they have a reasonable expectation of support from one of the following:

- Family
- Friends
- Community

This does not include support from voluntary or statutory bodies, as they are generally able to provide support citywide.

The level of proof required would be a signed statement of support from the person/community link.

Other Information

Applicants will only be able to apply for properties within the allocation area where they will give or receive care and support on emotional grounds.

BAND FIVE

3.43 Outcome

To allow the letting of homes for which there are no expressions of interest from Bands 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the week they are placed on Leicester HomeChoice.

Criteria and Evidence Required

People who do not have any of the housing circumstances listed in bands 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be placed in this band. This also includes people who do not meet the Leicester City Requirement.

Information will be taken from the housing application form to establish whether there are any housing circumstances that merit consideration for a higher band.

PART 4 ALLOCATION CRITERIA

- 4.1 The Council has rules which determine the type and size of accommodation for which applicant households are eligible. This takes the general approach of maximising occupancy and makes best use of an otherwise limited stock of properties.

Size of Accommodation

- 4.2 When determining how many bedrooms a family is eligible for, the following criteria will be used:

A separate bedroom is allocated to:

- Each married or cohabiting couple or single parent
- Any other person aged 21 years or more
- Each pair of people of the same sex aged 0-20, provided the age gap between the two is no more than 10 years
- Each pair of children under 7
- Any person who cannot be paired

Exceptions

- Families with foster children will be allocated the number of bedrooms as recommended by Children and Young People's Services
- Individual Housing Associations will have their own arrangements
- Where there is a recommendation from an appropriate professional that a separate bedroom is required e.g. a person currently sharing who requires own bedroom due to mental health problem as confirmed by a Consultant Psychiatrist
- A household member who is pregnant, the unborn child will be treated as if the child were already born when it has been confirmed the household member 's pregnancy is over 20 weeks

Property Types

- 4.3 The eligibility criteria for property types will vary according to the size and type of property.

4.4 Houses and Maisonettes of any size

These are categorised as family accommodation and will only be let to applicants who have their children living with them on a permanent, full time basis. Exceptions can be made, for example where children are on university courses and live away during term time.

4.5 2 and 3 Bedroom Flats

These are also classed as family accommodation, however they can be allocated to applicants who have overnight staying access to children or other households without children.

4.6 Bedsits and 1 Bedroom Flats

Bedsits are deemed suitable for single people whilst 1 bedroom flats are suitable for childless couples and single people.

4.7 Ground Floor Bedroom Flats

All ground floor bedroom flats are designated for people with mobility issues in the first instance where it has been recommended by a health professional that ground floor property is needed for mobility issues.

All other eligible people would be considered in the second instance.

4.8 Sheltered Accommodation

These were formerly known as Warden Assisted Accommodation and are designated for applicants aged 60 years or over in the first instance. However, any applicant aged 50 years or over can apply and be considered for sheltered accommodation.

4.9 1 Bedroom Bungalows

In areas listed in Appendix 1, allocations will only be considered to those people 60 years and over.

In areas listed in Appendix 1, allocations will be considered to those people 60 years and over in the first instance and if no suitable person can be identified then the age limit will be reduced by 5 year age bands until a suitable person can be identified. The minimum age criteria will be 40 years.

4.10 2 and 3 Bedroom Bungalows

These are not age restricted and are designated in the first instance to people needing ground floor accommodation due to mobility issues as recommended by an occupational therapist or health professional.

Any other family household requiring a 2 or 3 bedroom bungalow will be considered after the above.

4.11 Adapted Accommodation

In order to make best use of housing stock, accommodation that has been purposely built or adapted for disabled people will in the first instance be restricted to those people with such need.

4.12 Age Designated Accommodation

Certain properties in addition to all unadapted one bedroom bungalows and sheltered accommodation are reserved in the first instance to people 60 years and over. These are detailed in Appendix 1.

Where a suitable person 60 years and over cannot be identified the age band will be reduced by 5 year age bands until a suitable person is identified.

Tenants in Band 5 cannot move to 'like for like' accommodation.

4.13 Large Homes Released Through Underoccupation

Large homes (4 bedrooms and over) released through underoccupation will be allocated in the following order:

1. To social tenants (LCC & Housing Association tenants in Leicester) who are severely overcrowded i.e. lacking two or more bedrooms on the Housing Register.
2. To other severely overcrowded households on the housing register (as defined above) living in their own accommodation.
3. To all other households on the register under normal allocation criteria.

The exception to the above will be if there is a statutory homeless household at the top of the list or the home released is an adapted property then normal allocation criteria would be followed.

Pet Restrictions

4.14 There are some properties let by Leicester City Council that have special restrictions that are incorporated within the conditions of tenancy.

4.15 Tenants of certain accommodation are not permitted to keep on the premises any large pets, including cats and dogs.

4.16 Accommodation where this condition applies is as follows: -

- All tower blocks
- All sheltered accommodation
- All accommodation on the St Peters Estate
- West Court
- Three storey flats on the Mowmacre Hill Estate
- Aikman Avenue flats
- Wiltshire House
- Three storey flats on Braunstone Frith
- Beatty Avenue Flats

- 100 Welford Road Flats
- St Leonard's Court Flats
- Martindale & Grisedale Flats
- Beaucastle Grove Flats

Families with Two Children

- 4.17 Families with two children who are of the age/sex where they can share a bedroom can choose to be considered for 2 and 3 bedroom properties. This applies also to families with one child expecting another.

Downsizing Bedrooms

- 4.18 Applicants can choose to select fewer bedrooms than the policy deems as required.

- 4.19 Where an applicant chooses fewer bedrooms the following will apply:

- They remain eligible for the size of property dictated by the policy and will be considered for both the original size of property and the one with fewer bedrooms requested.
- Applicants can downsize by up to two bedrooms providing it does not create statutory overcrowding.

- 4.20 Families with children cannot downsize from 2 bedroom to 1 bedroom accommodation.

- 4.21 Applicants cannot downsize to the same size as their current accommodation, where they have been awarded overcrowding priority.

Appeals

- 4.22 Unless differently prescribed by legislation, statutory instrument or court ruling, a period not exceeding 21 days will be allowed for the applicant to lodge an appeal or request a review of the decision. This does not affect the applicant's right to initiate legal proceedings.

- 4.23 A more senior officer to the officer who made the initial decision will conduct the appeal or review.

- 4.24 The aim is to investigate and provide an outcome for each appeal or review within 28 days of receiving the request. Where this is not possible the applicant will be informed of the delay and given an approximate indication of when they may expect an outcome.

- 4.25 Exception to this are:

People made ineligible

The review process for persons made ineligible from the Housing Register is outlined in writing to applicants.

Homelessness Cases

The statutory review process for persons given an unfavourable homelessness decision is outlined in the decision letter in line with current legislation.

Annual Review

- 4.26 All applicants will be sent a letter asking if they wish to remain on the list, 12 months from the date of their original application and then 12 months from each re-registration.
- 4.27 Applicants will have 1 month to respond. If they do not respond within this time, their application will be cancelled.

Cancelled Applications

- 4.28 Applications will be cancelled in the following circumstances:
- The applicant asks us to do so.
 - The applicant does not respond to a review letter.
 - The applicant does not respond to an offer letter or other correspondence within 7 working days or within the deadline stated in the correspondence.
- 4.29 Applications that have been cancelled can be reinstated up to 3 months after the date of cancellation. Applicants will need to reapply with a fresh application after this period.

3 Offer Policy

- 4.30 All applicants accepted on the Housing Register are entitled to receive three offers of accommodation with their full priority. An offer of accommodation will include an offer of a Leicester City Council secure tenancy, introductory tenancy or a nomination to a Housing Association (tenancy type may vary).
- 4.31 An applicant who refuses a third offer of accommodation within 12 months of refusing their first offer will be suspended on the Housing Register for 12 months.
- 4.32 All applicants have the right to appeal against the decision to suspend their application after three offers.

Property Condition (LCC Tenants Only)

- 4.33 A Leicester City Council tenant who has failed to meet their obligations to maintain aspects of their current home may be considered as having behaviour affecting their suitability to be a tenant of the Council or a Housing Association and have their application suspended.
- 4.34 All offers of accommodation to tenants are subject to, their current home meeting acceptable standards as verified by a Voids Officer in the case of Leicester City Council tenants.
- 4.35 Where the tenant has failed to meet the acceptable standard, any offers of accommodation will be withdrawn and their application suspended until such time the home meets the necessary standard.

PART 5 LEICESTER HOMECHOICE

- 5.1 Leicester City Council's housing stock will be let under a choice based lettings scheme called Leicester HomeChoice. The scheme is a partnership between Leicester City Council and member Housing Associations.
- 5.2 All properties will be allocated via Leicester HomeChoice and are advertised on a weekly basis. This may be extended on occasions due to public holidays.
- 5.3 Applicants have to bid for properties they wish to be considered for and are eligible for.
- 5.4 Where a property has been advertised with an eligibility restriction, only applicants who meet the relevant criteria will be shortlisted for the property. For example, a property advertised as having adaptations such as a level access shower will only be considered for applicants with such need.
- 5.5 At the end of the advertising cycle a shortlist will be drawn up from all the eligible applicants that have applied for a property. The offer of accommodation will be made to the person in the highest band. If there is more than one applicant in the band, the offer will be made to the applicant who has been waiting the longest within that band. If the applicant with the highest priority refuses the property it will be offered to the next highest bidder who meets the eligibility criteria and so on.

Direct Offers

- 5.6 In limited circumstances the Council may allocate properties directly to applicants outside of the Choice Based Letting Scheme. Illustrative examples of Direct Lets are as follows:
 - Where an allocation is required to ensure protection of the public for example following a request made by a multi-agency public protection panel meeting.
 - Where a customer has been referred as part of the Witness Protection Scheme.
 - Where a Leicester City Council tenant's home is being repaired and they need to be moved from the property on a temporary or permanent basis.
 - Where a targeted offer is made to an applicant living in a Council clearance area.
 - Where there are exceptional circumstances that merit priority rehousing associated in managing risks, emergencies and making best use of management stock.

APPENDIX 1 ALLOCATION OF 1 BEDROOM BUNGALOWS

Areas where bungalows will be allocated to people 60 years and over

Abbey Rise
Braunstone South
Coleman Road
Evington & Goodwood
Rowley Fields
Stocking Farm
Tailby
Victoria

Areas where bungalows will be allocated to people 60 years and over in the first instance and if there is no demand reducing by 5 year age bands to 40 years

Braunstone Frith
Braunstone North
Eyres Monsell North & South
Gilmorton
Montrose
Mowmacre Hill
Netherhall
New Parks East & West
Rowlatts Hill
Saffron North & South
Thurnby Lodge
West Humberstone & Morton

APPENDIX 2 AGE DESIGNATED ACCOMMODATION

Areas where all one bedroom flats/bedsits will be allocated to people 60 years and over in the first instance and if there is no demand reducing by 5 year age bands until let

Abbey Rise

376-398 Thurcaston Road

Beatty Avenue

Beatty Avenue Flats

Beaumont Leys

Fowler Close

Belgrave & Rushey Mead

All ground floor flats

Braunstone Frith

Dupont Gardens

Braunstone South

Ainsworth Walk
Bennett Walk
Blackmore Drive
Buchan Walk
Chesterton Walk
Dickens Court
Galsworthy Court
Gaskell Walk
Walpole Court

Charnwood

Charnwood Estate Flats
(only 1 & 2 bed flats)
Curlew Walk
Dunlin Road
Fieldfare Walk
Kestral Close
Kingfisher Avenue
Kingfisher Walk
Redwing Walk
Sandpiper Close
Stonechat Walk
17-31 St Saviours Rd (odd no's)

Evington & Goodwood

Gisbourne Court Flats
Goodwood Road Flats
High Street Flats

Eyres Monsell

Hillsborough Close Flats

Humberstone Village

Humberstone Village Flats

New Parks

Kerrial Gardens

Mowmacre Hill

Colsterdale Close

Netherhall

St Mary's Court

Rowlatts Hill

Ambassador Road
Rowlatts Hill Road

Saffron South

Goldhill

St Andrews

St Leonards Court
100 Welford Road

St Mark's

St Mark's Estate Flats

West End

Kate Street Flats