

Questionnaire for Review of Leicester City Council's Housing Allocations Policy



You can complete this survey online at www.leicester.gov.uk/allocations

Overview

The Council is required by law to have a housing allocations scheme which shows the Council's priorities for allocating homes and procedures they follow in allocating those homes.

The introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 has made changes to housing benefit which will impact on social tenants (council and housing association tenants) from 1 April 2013. The changes will mean tenants of a working age will only receive housing benefit according to the number of bedrooms a household needs.

The Council is proposing that people on the Housing Register will only be allocated the number of bedrooms which would be covered under housing benefit rules.

This will reduce the risk of financial hardship to prospective tenants due to shortfalls in housing benefit.

Why we are consulting

Your views are important to us. This consultation will help the Council to decide what changes will be made to the Housing Allocations Policy.

We would welcome the views of anyone who lives or works in Leicester and of any organisations or professionals with an interest in this issue.

Give us your views

Please give us your views on the proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy by completing and returning this form to the Housing Options Service. The consultation will close on 2 October 2012.

Q1. To help us make best use of the information you provide, please tell us if you are a:

- Member of the public Representing an organisation

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please can you provide your name and contact details:



BEDROOM ELIGIBILITY

We are proposing when determining the number of bedrooms a household needs we will allocate a separate bedroom to:

- Each married or cohabiting couple or single parent
- Any other person aged 21 years or more
- Each pair of children of either sex under 10 years
- Each pair of people of the same sex aged under 21 years
- Any person who cannot be paired

Why are we making this proposal?

This is to ensure that we do not allocate bedrooms above the bedroom criteria used by housing benefit when it determines how many bedrooms a claimant requires. This proposed change will prevent prospective tenants who claim benefits finding themselves in accommodation where housing benefit will be restricted due to under-occupancy thereby causing financial hardship.

Q2. Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes No Don't know

If you would like to say why you gave this answer, please tell us below:

ACCESS TO CHILDREN

We are proposing people who have part week overnight access to their children, will only be considered for the number of bedrooms based on their household who live together on a fulltime basis.

Why are we making this proposal?

Housing benefit will not cover the cost of additional bedrooms where claimants do not have their children living with them on a full time basis. This proposed change will prevent prospective tenants who claim benefits finding themselves in accommodation where housing benefit will be restricted due to under-occupancy thereby causing financial hardship.

Q3. Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes No Don't know

If you would like to say why you gave this answer, please tell us below:

FAMILIES WITH 2 CHILDREN

We are proposing families with two children who are of the age/sex where they can share a bedroom will only be considered for 2 bedroom accommodation.

Why are we making this proposal?

Housing benefit does not cover additional bedrooms where children are of the age/sex where they can share bedrooms. This proposed change will prevent prospective tenants who claim benefits finding themselves in accommodation where housing benefit will be restricted due to under-occupancy thereby causing financial hardship.

Q4. Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes No Don't know

If you would like to say why you gave this answer, please tell us below:

EXPECTANT FAMILIES

We are proposing unborn children will only be considered as part of the household for bedroom eligibility purposes when the baby is born.

Why are we making this proposal?

Under housing benefit rules unborn children are not considered part of the household and housing benefit is not paid for additional bedrooms for unborn children. This proposed change will align our bedroom rules to housing benefit rules. It is generally accepted that most babies sleep in the same bedroom as their parent in its first year and the current Housing Allocations Policy gives additional priority where families are living in one bedroom accommodation.

Q5. Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes No Don't know

If you would like to say why you gave this answer, please tell us below:

UNDER OCCUPATION

We are proposing social tenants who are under-occupying 4 bedroom accommodation or social tenants under-occupying by two or more bedrooms or social tenants under-occupying 2 bedroom accommodation will be given Band 1 priority.

Social tenants under-occupying 3 bedrooms who require 2 bedrooms will be given Band 2 priority.

Why are we making this proposal?

This proposed change will give greater priority to existing social tenants who are under-occupying their homes. Family sized homes released through this additional priority will be allocated to other households on the Housing Register.

Q6. Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes No Don't know

If you would like to say why you gave this answer, please tell us below:

ACCESS, HEALTH, CARE AND SUPPORT ASSESSMENTS

We are proposing consideration is only given for an additional bedroom on health grounds where there is a need for an overnight carer.

Why are we making this proposal?

Housing benefit payments will only cover bedrooms where there is an assessed need for overnight carers. It will not cover payments for other health needs i.e. extra bedrooms for storage of medical equipment or additional bedrooms for behavioural reasons etc.

Q7. Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes No Don't know

If you would like to say why you gave this answer, please tell us below:

UNAFFORDABLE HOUSING

We are proposing people who approach the Housing Options Service on the grounds their current accommodation is unaffordable following a comprehensive assessment will be given Band 2 priority.

Why are we making this proposal?

This is to ensure we give reasonable priority on the Housing Register to people in priority need living in accommodation that has been determined as being unaffordable.

Q8. Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes No Don't know

If you would like to say why you gave this answer, please tell us below:

ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL

We are proposing persons who have previously served in the armed forces will be exempt from the local connection requirement where the application for housing is made within 5 years of their discharge.

Where it is identified they are also in housing need they will be given Band 2 priority.

Why are we making this proposal?

This is to ensure the Council meets statutory guidance to give additional preference on the Housing Register to former members of the armed forces in housing need.

Q9. Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes No Don't know

If you would like to say why you gave this answer, please tell us below:

Q10. Do you think these proposals will have a negative or positive impact on any particular group of people e.g. due to their age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, etc.?

- Yes No Don't know

Please tell us what you think the negative or positive impacts are likely to be and the groups particularly affected:

EQUALITY MONITORING

Age

- Under 16 16 – 24 25 – 34 45 – 54
 55 – 64 65 – 84 85+ Prefer not to say

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities and has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months. Since 2005 people with HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis (MS) and severe disfigurement are covered by the DDA.

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Religion or belief

Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?

- No Religion Christianity Hindu Jain
 Jewish Islam/Muslim Sikh Buddhist
 Other Prefer not to say

Sex

- Male Female Prefer not to say

Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual or straight Gay or lesbian Bisexual Not sure
 Prefer not to say

Ethnicity

- White: British White: Irish White: Gypsy or Traveller White: Any other background
 Dual/Multiple Heritage: White & Black Caribbean Dual/Multiple Heritage: White & Black African Dual/Multiple Heritage: White & Asian Dual/Multiple Heritage: Other
 Asian/Asian British: Indian Asian/Asian British: Pakistani Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi Asian/Asian British: Chinese
 Asian/Asian British: Other Black/Black British: African Black/Black British: Caribbean Black/Black British: Somali
 Black/Black British: Other Other Ethnic Group: Arab Any other Ethnic Group

If you said your ethnic group was one of the 'other' categories, please tell us what it is:

Please return this completed survey to:

The Housing Options Service, Phoenix House, 1 King Street, Leicester LE1 6RN