

Appendix C

Housing Allocation Scheme – London Borough of Redbridge 2017

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1. Introduction to the Scheme and Statement on Housing Choice

a. Background and context

The housing allocation scheme is our policy for assessing applications for housing, deciding which applications receive priority and who the homes that we advertise through our choice based letting scheme will be allocated to.

The housing allocation scheme covers all the Council and housing association homes which the Council has nomination rights to let in Redbridge. We call these "social homes". It may also include, from time to time, some accommodation in the private rented sector which the Council is able to offer to applicants on the housing register to meet housing need.

Under the Localism Act 2011, local housing authorities were able to grant fixed term tenancies instead of the traditional "lifetime tenancies". The Housing and Planning Act 2016 will make it mandatory for councils to offer fixed term tenancies rather than lifetime homes, when the relevant parts of this legislation come into force, except where a statutory exemption applies.

Once fixed term tenancies become mandatory, Redbridge's aim is that these should be for a minimum of 5 years. Where a fixed term tenancy is granted to a family with children, the length of tenancy will be up to the 21st birthday of the youngest child at the point the tenancy is granted. The Council's current intention is that lifetime tenancies will continue to be granted to the over 60's and people with serious permanent physical or mental vulnerabilities, as long as this is allowed by legislation and government guidance. The Council's final policy in relation to security of tenure will be published in its Tenancy Strategy.

There are long waiting times for social housing in Redbridge because the number of households in need is much larger than the number of social homes that become available for letting each year. Households needing family sized accommodation with two bedrooms or more could expect to wait in excess of ten years for social housing in Redbridge at this time. This scheme aims to provide a clear explanation of the process for allocating social homes in Redbridge and why they are let to the families who successfully bid for them.

In the appendix to this scheme, current levels of social housing supply and housing demand on the housing register are provided. These illustrate the scale of deficit between social housing supply and demand. The criteria for awarding priority under this policy target the limited supply at those with the greatest need who cannot afford other accommodation, for example, in the private sector.

Households who do not qualify for a high priority can receive advice about finding alternative suitable and affordable accommodation in the private rented sector. For many, this provides a more realistic housing option, given the long waits for social housing in the area. The Council will continue to discharge its housing duties, such as those under the homelessness legislation, into the private rented sector (subject to affordability), as housing demand cannot be met through social housing stock alone.

When framing this scheme we have to take account of what the law says about allocating social housing. This is mainly contained in Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 and in Government guidance on how to implement the law on housing allocation. At the end of this policy we have provided a list of the main documents, law and policy, which we have considered and we have indicated where you can find them.

As well as meeting the Council's legal obligations this scheme is designed to support local policy priorities in Redbridge as outlined in the Housing Strategy. It will contribute towards the efficient use of our housing stock as well as supporting sustainable communities, and strike a balance between the needs of existing social housing tenants and prospective housing tenants.

Housing is a strategic priority and this policy supports the Council in delivering its strategic housing function. It is one of a number of Council policies that do that, in particular the Housing Strategy 2017-22, the Tenancy Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy. These documents have been considered in the development of this scheme.

The Housing Strategy sets out four key priorities for housing in Redbridge:

- Increasing housing supply
- Meeting housing need
- Working with private sector landlords to improve private sector housing standards
- Being an excellent landlord

This housing allocation scheme is designed, alongside other housing policies, to support the delivery of the key priorities in the Housing Strategy.

It is also part of delivering the Council's core corporate objectives which are described in the Corporate Strategy 2014-18 Ambitious for Redbridge: Moving Forward Together. This provides a commitment to the community to make Redbridge a thriving, prosperous and safe part of London and sets four objectives for doing this:

- Increase fairness and respond to the aspirations of the Borough
- Empower our communities to help shape our Borough and the services we deliver
- Improve the quality of life and civic pride amongst our communities
- Transform our Council in tough times to be dynamic and responsive to the challenges of the future

The overarching priority is to ensure the right homes are allocated to those with the highest levels of housing need. However, the scheme also allows us to support other local policy priorities including, for example, supporting the vulnerable residents of Redbridge and supporting people into work through our approach to allocating homes. We recognise the critical role that the right home plays in helping people to succeed and thrive. It is also important that our process for letting homes is efficient and makes the best use of the limited housing stock. This scheme also contains our lettings policies on use of bedrooms and rules that support under-occupying tenants to move and free up larger homes for overcrowded applicants who need them.

In setting our priorities in this scheme we intend to ensure there is a spread of lettings across the reasonable preference groups (see Legal Requirements, 1b below) and that no

one group dominates the scheme. To help us achieve this, we monitor the number of lettings made to the different groups.

We may also draw up an annual lettings plan, known as the Target Allocation Plan, in order to achieve certain objectives each year. The allocations we make are then monitored against this plan. If monitoring shows that we are not achieving the allocation targets set out in the Target Allocation Plan, we may target additional lettings to specific groups until the targets are met. We will publish the Target Allocation Plan on the council's website.

The process for allocating homes is explained in the scheme and includes our rules about who can join the housing register, the procedure we use for assessing applications, awarding priority, carrying out reviews of our decisions and allocating the homes that are available for letting. We aim to do this in a way that is clear and transparent and can be seen to be fair. We know that we do not advertise enough social homes for everyone that wants or needs one and so it is important that our rules are understood.

b. Legal Requirements

To receive an allocation of social housing the law says you must be both eligible and a qualifying person.

The legislation concerning eligibility is explained later in this scheme but is a legal test, prescribed by the Secretary of State. It means that some people will be excluded from being allocated social housing based on their immigration status.

Qualification criteria are set by the Council through this scheme. The law sets boundaries for us on qualification, for example, we are not allowed to disqualify a former member of the armed forces on the grounds of lack of residence in the local district.

If we believe that an applicant is ineligible or does not meet our qualification criteria, we must write to them and inform them of our decision and our reasons.

The law also says that the Council must give reasonable preference (priority) within its scheme to certain groups of people, as follows:

- People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996)
- People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3)
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability)
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

However, the Council is also allowed to have local reasonable preferences, which respond to the local housing circumstances in Redbridge, for example under-occupying social housing tenants. We are also allowed to award additional preference to some groups.

In awarding preference we can take into account among other things an applicant's, or a member of their households', financial resources to meet their own housing need, any behaviour which affects their suitability to be a tenant and their local connection to the area.

The scheme needs to provide information about how housing needs are assessed, the likelihood of being allocated a property and waiting time. This information needs to support households making informed choices and give applicants an active role in choosing their home. It also needs to provide information about how any decisions on applications can be reviewed, including decisions about eligibility and qualification.

Prior to adopting or making any major change to our scheme we must consult, including with every Private Registered Provider (Housing Association) with which the authority has nomination rights.

c. Housing Choice

Redbridge operates a choice based lettings scheme which is administered through a system called "Choice Homes". This means that you can choose to bid for a property that suits your family's needs in terms of location and type of property. Available homes are advertised and you can place bids for them each week. The advert will provide information to help you decide if you want to bid. The things you can make choices about include:

- the type of property you bid for, for example a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette or studio flat
- the area of the borough you want to live in, and
- whether you prefer to be a tenant of the council or a housing association

There are some circumstances where we limit the choices that some or all applicants can make. This may include the number of offers of accommodation that you are entitled to with certain types of priority (detailed at section 7m). For example, we will need to restrict choice if you:

- have been awarded preference because you have been accepted as homeless
- have applied for discretionary succession to the tenancy of a tenant who has recently died
- you need a type of property that is in extremely short supply (for example, a very large home or an adapted property)
- you need to move as an emergency to escape violence or a high level of risk,
- you have been granted preference as a Council management transfer

If you need a type of property that is in extremely short supply, such as a very large home or a home specially adapted for a disability, then we will have very few properties available, and if you wish to exercise choice we may not be able to rehouse you. If this situation arises we will discuss your options with you. This could apply, for example, if our medical assessment recommends that certain types of housing are unsuitable for you.

If for any reason you cannot live in certain areas of Redbridge as a result of a significant fear of violence or other risk, you must tell us so that we can investigate and ensure we do not offer you a property in these areas.

How long you wait to be rehoused is affected by the choices you make in bidding for homes. If you choose not to bid for properties in certain areas, or on certain property types (e.g. flats) then you will wait much longer than an applicant who bids for all property types and all areas. We want to help you to make an informed choice. Information on the properties that become available, the number of bids received on each property and the successful bidder can be found on the Choice Homes website at <http://www.redbridge-ellc.org.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/2139.aspx>. We also publish information about waiting times on the council's website <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice-and-options/waiting-times-for-housing/>

Generally, when we register your application you are registered for the bed size that meets your housing needs based on the criteria set on bedrooms in this scheme. We do not, for example allow you to bid for a home larger than we have assessed you need because generally we have less larger homes available and we need to ensure they are allocated to households who need accommodation of that size. However, depending on an applicant's circumstances, we may allow them to bid for accommodation smaller than their assessed needs provided it does not lead to serious overcrowding. More details on this can be found at section 7e.

d. Properties let within and outside of this scheme

Within this section we explain what social housing lettings are within this policy and we also detail lettings which take place outside of this policy and its framework.

Lettings within this scheme:

- Allocations of new introductory and secure tenancies of Redbridge council homes
- Nomination to housing associations for an assured or assured shorthold tenancy under the Council's nominations arrangements with that provider
- Transfers of an existing council or housing association tenant to an alternative council home, including management transfers
- Transfers of an existing council or housing association tenant to an alternative housing association home under the Council's nominations arrangements with that provider
- The grant of a new tenancy to an applicant who does not have a statutory right to succeed to a council tenancy (a discretionary succession)
- Tenancies agreed through the Pan London Reciprocal Agreement

Lettings outside of this scheme:

- The grant of a secure tenancy following an introductory tenancy
- Mutual exchanges
- Statutory succession to a secure or introductory tenancy
- Assignment of a tenancy to a person who is qualified to succeed to the tenancy on the death of a council tenant
- A transfer of tenancy under family law (including civil partnership) legislation, pursuant to a court order

- Lettings of temporary accommodation under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996
- Private Rented Sector offers made to households to whom the Council has accepted a homelessness duty and the offer is in discharge of that duty
- Tenancies granted under section 39 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 (compulsory acquisition of homes)
- Tenancies granted under sections 554 and 555 of the Housing Act 1985 (defective homes)
- Family intervention tenancies
- A tenancy let through "housingmoves", the Mayors Pan London social housing mobility scheme

e. Equality

Redbridge is a diverse borough which has a range of different communities who live locally. This allocation scheme supports the aspirations in the Corporate Strategy to "Increase fairness and respond to the aspirations of the Borough and to 'empower our communities'."

In devising this policy we have complied with the Equality Act 2010 and aim to ensure that no section of the community should be excluded from the benefits and opportunities available through this scheme.

In both devising and applying this policy we have had, and will continue to have, due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization, the need to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between minority groups and others.

An equality impact assessment of this policy was carried out.

f. Advice

If you need advice about this allocations scheme and how it applies to you there is information available on the Council's website at <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice-and-options/apply-for-social-housing/>. You can also use the online guide to registration to go through the process (<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/media/1877/a-guide-to-on-line-registration.pdf>) and the information we need to process your application - <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/media/1885/documents-list-1.pdf>. You can also email us on housing.options@redbridge.gov.uk or call us on 020 8708 4002

You are entitled to a summary of the housing allocations scheme free of charge. You can download a copy from the council's website at <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/media/1876/revised-allocation-policy-2013-0910-word-doc.pdf>. You can also ask for a copy by emailing us at housing.options@redbridge.gov.uk. You can also request a copy at Redbridge Council offices or by calling the Housing Advice service on 020 8708 4002.

The Council provides access to free wifi and computer terminals at Lynton House, in some of our temporary hostels and in local libraries so that housing applicants without their own means of accessing the website can do so. Where one to one support is required to complete an application please contact the service so we can arrange the best means of

helping you complete your application. If you are registered but need assistance with bidding for accommodation there are a number of ways we could support you, including bidding on your behalf. If you contact us, we can discuss how you would like us to help.

g. Complaints

The Complaints process cannot be used to reconsider a decision about how your application has been assessed, such as what priority band it should be given. Other matters that are not assessments, such as delays in completing assessments or mistakes that may arise in the processing of an application should be dealt with through the Council's complaints process. Requests to reconsider a decision must be dealt with through the review process outlined at section 8b.

You can report a complaint online on the Redbridge website www.redbridge.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-about-our-services/general-complaint-form

2. Scheme summary

Table 1 below contains a summary of the priority bandings used within this scheme.

Your band is what determines the priority you are given within the scheme and is the way the scheme ranks the urgency and seriousness of your situation.

In creating the bands we have considered the groups the law says must have reasonable preference and included a number of local priorities, which we are entitled to do to recognise factors which are a particular issue in Redbridge. The aim is that households in band 1 should move quickly and as a result this band should contain only a very small number of households whose situation is the most pressing or serious. Band 2 also contains urgent groups and band 3 is the band containing most households with reasonable preference. Households in band 4 may have no reasonable preference or have a reasonable preference but not meet other qualification criteria, such as residence.

The scheme awards priority based on the highest assessed priority in each applicant's household. We do not add together different priorities affecting a household to create multiple or cumulative preferences which move people up to higher bands.

Table 1

Band	Summary description	
Band 1	Emergency Priority	Need to move is extremely pressing, may have a time limit attached to it or have very grave implications if a move is not possible. Only a small percentage of applicants on the register will be in this band
Band 2	Urgent Priority	Need to move is urgent. Applicants in this band will be experiencing serious difficulties in their current housing requiring a high level of priority
Band 3	Priority	There is a medium level of need and/or urgency. This will be the biggest band which reflects the level of need experienced by most households.
Band 4	Reduced priority	Applicants in this band either have no reasonable

		preference but are still allowed to register (sheltered housing applicants and applicants for low cost home ownership products) or have reasonable preference but do not meet the residence qualification.
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Table 2 below contains a summary of the lettings process in Redbridge. Further detail is provided later in this document, which explain how this works and also explains what some of the exceptions are.

In general, once a household is registered and placed in a band they can bid for homes that are advertised by the Council and our partner Housing Associations. The principle of how homes are let is that all the bids are placed in a shortlist, the highest bid on the shortlist will go to the applicant with the highest band and longest waiting time eligible for that size and type of property. So a band 1 applicant will come higher on a shortlist compared to a band 2 applicant. Two bidders from band 1 will be compared based on their waiting time and the one waiting longest will come first. In band 2 and band 3 households with a community contribution are considered first in terms of allocations within that band, even if others have a longer waiting time. Two households with community contribution would then be compared by reference to waiting time to decide to whom a property should be offered to first.

The table below shows the main steps in the choice based lettings process:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Application	Assessment	Preference	Advertise	Bid	Shortlisting	Allocation
Customer makes an application to the online register	Application is assessed for eligibility and qualification. Qualifying applicants	Applicants who are eligible and qualify are assessed for priority and placed in a band Ineligible or non-qualifying applicants cannot register	Properties are advertised on Choice Homes UK	Applicants bid for available homes	Bids are shortlisted Band 1 – longest effective date first Then Band 2 – Community contribution, longest effective date first Then Band 3 – Community contribution, longest effective date first Then Band 3 – longest effective date first	Property offered to highest priority from the shortlist and then next until the property is let

3. Joining the Housing Register

a. How to apply

All applications for housing must be completed online. This applies to both new applicants and transfer applicants (Tenants of Redbridge council homes or Registered Provider homes). Applicants will be asked to complete an **online Self-assessment Tool** to establish if they meet the criteria for inclusion on the housing register. Applicants will then have the option to complete an **online Housing Application Form**.

All applicants are required to have an email account, which they will be asked to provide when completing the housing application online. Correspondence such as reminders, requests for information, and review of applications will be made by email unless you have requested to receive correspondence by post. It is your responsibility to check your email (or post) regularly in order to be able to progress your application for housing.

If you do not have access to the internet or need assistance in completing the online Self-assessment Tool and/or, the Housing Application Form, including the creation of an email account, then internet service and assistance is available at the following locations:

- Lynton House
- Redbridge libraries (please find details at <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-times/>)

You will be provided with an application reference number which you will be able to use to track the progress of your application either online or by contacting the Housing Advice Centre.

b. Applicants that have an application for homelessness assistance

Where an applicant already has an active housing register application and becomes threatened with homelessness, and the Council accept assistance duty to provide assistance under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, their application will remain active whilst the Council provides assistance pursuant to those duties and until any decision is issued that results in either the Council having no further duty to assist or the Council accepting a full homelessness duty towards the applicant.

Once such a decision is issued, the applicant's housing register application will be reassessed and updated accordingly. Any offer of social housing made under this scheme between a duty being triggered and a decision being issued their homelessness application will be reviewed to ensure their existing priority remains applicable or an equivalent or higher priority is applicable. If this is not the case, the offer may be withdrawn.

Where a person, without an active housing register application, has approached for homelessness assistance they will be advised of their right to apply to join the housing register. Where a full homelessness duty under s193 is accepted, they will be registered on the housing register with the appropriate priority.

c. Documents

Applicants will not usually be required to provide documents to support their application until they are made a provisional offer of accommodation.

If an applicant is made an offer of accommodation, they will be expected to provide all requested documents within 48 hours of the offer being made. Full details of what documents are required will be provided at this time but will broadly cover:

- ID and Immigration documents for all household members on the application
- Proof of address for every year up to and including three years prior to the application being made
- Proof of employment where this affects eligibility or level of priority for housing

Applicants will also be required to provide passport pictures of all household members included on the application, except household members who are below 10 years of age.

Applicants must ensure they have documents available to provide on request. An offer of accommodation may be withdrawn if documents are not provided within 48 hours of being requested.

Although documents will not generally be requested until an offer is made, the Council retains the right to request supporting documents at any time. Documents are likely to be required if an applicant is being assessed for higher priority or where they have been awarded a high priority and are likely to receive an offer of accommodation.

d. Letter to confirm your registration on the Housing Register

The Council aims to assess all housing applications made online within 28 days of the application being received. You will receive written confirmation advising you of your:

- Registration number
- Priority date & registration Date
- The priority awarded to your case

If you are eligible to bid for properties under the Scheme, it will also tell you the size of property you will be allowed to bid (apply) for.

If you are unsuccessful, the letter will inform you of the reason(s) for not accepting your application for housing and advise you of your right to a review (see section 8d below).

e. Changes in circumstances

Once your application for housing has been accepted, it is your responsibility to keep the Council informed of all changes in your circumstances which relate to your household and your housing application. You can update your application online. Offers of accommodation are based on the assessment of the information provided. If this information is not accurate any offer of accommodation is likely to be withdrawn.

Changes you must report include:

- Change of address
- Any change in your household composition e.g. births, deaths, person(s) wishing to join/withdraw from the housing application.
- Change in medical conditions that affect the suitability of your current accommodation or the accommodation you need to move to
- Change in income, assets or savings
- Change in Community Contribution status
- Any change in your immigration status in the United Kingdom
- Change of name
- Any other change that may affect whether you qualify to remain on the housing register or your priority

f. Suspending applications

If your application is suspended it means that you have an application but you cannot bid for accommodation. The Council may suspend your application for the following reasons:

- If you have provided information that may affect your application and which has not yet been assessed
- If you have been asked to provide information but have failed to do so

g. Closing applications

The Council will close housing applications in the following circumstances:

- You ask us to cancel your application
- You have a change in your circumstances which that means you are no longer eligible or no longer qualify
- You fail to update your application as part of a re-registration process during any review of the housing register
- You have been re-housed by another Local Authority or Registered Provider within or outside this Borough
- You accept an offer of accommodation through the Council's housing register
- You are homeless person and have refused a suitable offer of accommodation and the Council's housing duty has ceased

h. False or misleading information on application

By submitting a housing application, you are confirming that the information you have provided is accurate to the best of your knowledge. However, if the Council is satisfied that the application and associated documents you have submitted contains false or misleading information the Council reserves the right to refuse the application, withdraw any offer of accommodation or re-assess the level of priority awarded.

i. National Fraud Initiative

The Council participates in the National Fraud Initiative. This means that details provided on your housing application will be shared with relevant agencies to detect persons who illegally occupy or sublet council and housing association flats and homes.

Making an application for housing based on false representation of your circumstances is a criminal offence, and the Housing Service will seek to recover possession of any fraudulently obtained housing and to prosecute applicants who make fraudulent applications.

j. Contrivance

If the Council is satisfied that an applicant or any member of his household has contrived a situation which triggered a housing need or helped the applicant gain priority then the Council reserves the right to cancel the application or reduce priority.

4. Who can join the Housing Register

Any person that asks the Council for housing assistance will be provided with housing options advice. However, only applicants that are **eligible for an allocation of accommodation and/ or are an existing tenant of social housing**, meet the relevant **qualification criteria** and are not a disqualified person, can be included on the housing register.

The Council retains an overriding discretion to allow an applicant to join the housing register in exceptional circumstances, even if the applicant does not meet the qualification criteria or is a disqualified person. This discretion will be exercised by the Head of Housing Needs on request. However, the Council does not have discretion to allow applicants that are ineligible for an allocation to join the housing register.

a. Eligible for an allocation of accommodation

The eligibility rules are set out in section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996, as amended, in conjunction with the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended. These rules are complex and may be amended from time to time. They are summarised below.

The following people will be eligible:

1) Applicants that are subject to Immigration Control

A person that is subject to immigration control will be eligible for an allocation of accommodation if they fall within a category of persons that have been prescribed as eligible by regulations made by the Secretary of State.

The current prescribed categories are in summary:

A: refugees

B: persons with exceptional leave to remain who are not subject to any condition of non-recourse to public funds

C: persons with indefinite and unconditional leave to remain, subject to exceptions for sponsored applicants

D: persons granted humanitarian protection

E: Afghan citizens with limited leave under para 276BA1 of the Immigration Rules

F: persons granted limited leave on article 8 grounds who are not subject to any condition of non-recourse to public funds

2) Applicants that are not subject to immigration control

A person that is not subject to Immigration Control will be eligible for an allocation of accommodation unless:

a) Their only right of residence is one which has been prescribed as not resulting in eligibility by regulations made by the Secretary of State; or

b) They are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area and are not excluded from the requirements of the Habitual Residence Test by regulation 6(2) of the above Regulations.

The eligibility requirements do not apply to an existing secure or introductory tenant or an assured tenant of a registered provider of social housing who is applying for a transfer.

b. Qualification criteria

In order to meet the qualifying criteria to join the housing register, applicants must:

- be aged 16 or over (see section I below); and
- meet the **residence requirements (see section ii below)**, unless an exemption applies;
- satisfy one of the following
 - o meet the criteria to be awarded priority Band 1, 2 or 3 as set out in section 5c; or
 - o meet the criteria to be an '**armed forces applicant**' (see section iii below); or
 - o be accepted as an applicant for sheltered housing (see section iii below)

i. Aged 18 or over

There are particular legal and practical difficulties letting accommodation to 16 and 17 year olds, which have led us to decide not to allocate permanent housing to persons below 18 years of age. We are of the view that these difficulties, and the potential problems and costs which they give rise to, outweigh any reasonable preference a 16 or 17 year old may have for an allocation of accommodation – up until his or her 18th birthday. However we want to allow young people in housing need to accrue waiting time on the housing register from the age of 16, so they can register at that point but will not be allocated a home until they reach 18.

ii. Residence requirements

Applicant must meet the residence qualification criteria set out below in order to join or remain on the housing register, unless an exemption applies.

In order to meet the residence criteria, applicants must have lived continuously in the Borough for the last 5 years. If an applicant moves outside of the Borough, they must notify the Council of their change in circumstances and their application will be re-assessed. If they no longer meet the residence criteria and no exemption applies their application will be closed. The same will apply if they are made an offer of accommodation and are found not to have continually met the residence criteria or qualified for an exemption.

The following exemptions to the residence criteria will apply:

- 1) Applicants that are considered to be an 'armed forces applicant'
- 2) Applicants that are occupying temporary accommodation outside of the Borough, provided by the Council in discharge of an ongoing duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended. This exemption will also apply to any person assessed as part of the household towards whom the Council has accepted a homelessness duty
- 3) Applicants that are being accommodated by Redbridge Children services but their accommodation is located in another local authority
- 4) Applicants that have fled domestic violence and have no local connection (as defined in s199 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended) with any local Housing Authority except one where violence is probable if they return
- 5) Applicants with a right to move under the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move)(England) Regulations 2015 SI No 967
- 6) Applicants who have been awarded priority under any of bands 1, 2 or 3, except persons placed within Redbridge by another local housing authority under their homelessness duties. However, applicants that do not meet the residence criteria will be placed in band 4. Please see section 5c for details of how such applicants will be prioritised if they do not meet the residence criteria

iii. Other qualification criteria

Most applicants will have to show that they meet the criteria to be awarded band 1, 2 or 3 priority (as set out in section 5) in order to be included on the Housing Register. However, this will not apply to armed forces applicants and applicants applying for sheltered housing.

- 1) Armed forces applicants

Armed forces applicants will not have to show they meet the criteria to be awarded Band 1, 2 or 3 before being allowed to join the register.

An applicant will be considered an 'armed forces applicant' if they are themselves, or are the spouse, civil partner or unmarried partner of a person that is, an eligible member or former member of the armed forces.

An eligible member or former of the armed forces is a person who:

- a. is serving in the regular forces or who has served in the regular forces within five years of the date of their application for an allocation of housing under Part 6 of the 1996 Act ; or
- b. has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner where:
 - i. the spouse or civil partner has served in the regular forces; and
 - ii. their death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
- c. is serving or has served in the reserve forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.

2) Sheltered housing

Applicants that meet the criteria for sheltered housing and only want to bid for sheltered housing will be allowed to join the housing register, without the need to meet the criteria to be awarded Band 1, 2 or 3. Details on applying for sheltered housing can be found at section 6.

c. Disqualified persons

Even where a person meets the eligibility and qualification criteria above, they will not be allowed to join the housing register if any of the following disqualifying reasons apply:

c. Placements by another Local Authority under homelessness legislation

Where an applicant or any member of the household included on the application is owed a homeless duty by other local housing authorities under Housing Act 1996 Part 7 s.188, s.190, s.193, s.199A or s.200 and has been placed in Redbridge as out of borough temporary placements will be regarded as non-qualifying persons.

ii. Unsuitable to be a tenant

Where an applicant has been guilty of behaviour serious enough to be considered unsuitable to be a tenant at the time they apply, they will not be allowed to join the Housing Register. The types of behaviour that would be considered include:

- Significant breaches of current or previous tenancies
- Significant and persistent rent arrears
- Anti-social behaviour
- Threats against neighbours, staff or contractors of the Council
- Obtaining a tenancy by deception

This is not an exhaustive list and any behaviour that would entitle a landlord to a possession order under grounds 1 to 7 of the Housing Act 1985 schedule 2 or the absolute ground for possession under s.84A of the same Act would usually be sufficient. Before excluding an applicant the Council will consider the facts of the case, including the seriousness of the conduct, the time since it occurred and the applicant's behaviour since

that time. Any person that is excluded from the housing register on this basis can reapply after 12 months from the date of the Council's decision.

iii. Home ownership and financial resources

You will not qualify to join the housing register if you either have a gross household income of over £90,000 per year, have property, savings, shares, stocks or bonds worth over £150,000 or you already own your own home. In these circumstances, the Council will offer advice to help you make the right housing option.

In exceptional circumstances the Council will not apply this ground of disqualification if it can be demonstrated that the applicant's current property is unsuitable for them and they are unable to reasonably utilise their income and/ or assets to provide a suitable housing option. This discretion will be exercised by the Housing Advice Centre Manager, Homelessness Reviews Manager or Head of Housing Needs.

d. Who can be included on your application?

In order to make effective use of the limited number of homes available through the Council's Housing Register, only certain people can be included on an application. This will be assessed at the start of the application. Whenever an applicant subsequently requests a person be added to their application, that person will also have to meet one of the criteria below. The Council recognises that this may mean that people currently living with you may not be included on your application and that they would not be able to live with you in any accommodation you were offered through the housing register. If you would like to be rehoused with people that do not meet the criteria to be included on your housing register application, the Council can assist with other housing options, details of which can be found at section 9.

The following people can be included on the application:

- The Applicant
- The Applicant's spouse, civil partner or unmarried partner in a genuine and durable relationship

(Partners will be assumed to be in a genuine and durable relationship unless there is evidence that indicates, on balance, that it is not)

- Children under the age of 19

(Only children whose main residence is with the applicant or, the applicant's spouse, civil partner or partner and that are financially dependent on them will be included. Where the applicant is not the parent of the child, proof of guardianship will also be required. Main residence means the person with whom the child spends at least 50% of their time. Where residence arrangements are in place for the child to spend 50% of their time with each parent, the child will only be able to be included on one application unless there are exceptional reasons why a bedroom needs to be available with both parents (e.g. due to serious disability), this will be the parent on whom they are financially dependent. Evidence of residence arrangements, e.g. court Residence Order, may be required. A child will be financially dependent on the person that receives child benefit or child tax credit).

- Any adult relative that is dependent on the applicant or the applicant's spouse, civil partner or partner

(Where an adult relative is dependent on the applicant or the applicant's spouse, civil partner or partner for care and is currently residing with them they may be included on the application).

Evidence of a formal care arrangement will be necessary such as receipt of carer's allowance or social care report).

- Full time carer for any person on the application

(Where someone on the application requires full-time live-in care of an identified carer, that person may be included on the application if no other reasonable alternative care arrangements could be put in place, e.g. the care could be provided by someone else already living with the person who requires care. Evidence that the person is needed to and does provide full-time care will be required).

- Other persons at the discretion of a Housing Options Manager, Housing Advice Centre Manager or Head of Housing Needs

(Where there are exceptional circumstances that warrant the inclusion of a person not entitled to be included on the application according to the above criteria, consideration will be given on a case by case basis. Having lived with the applicant for a long time will not be considered an exceptional reason).

5. Priority on the Housing Register

Our housing register is made up of four bands. These bands are our method of ranking the level of housing need we have assessed in your case, based on the information we have about your circumstances and how the law and our scheme responds to those circumstances.

Band 1 contains those cases we have decided have the highest priority and whose housing needs we assess are an emergency. This band contains a small minority of applicants on the register. The people in this group need to move quickly and therefore cannot form a large group of applicants given the small number of available social homes in the borough. Band 2 contains applicants with urgent needs and is also a high level of priority. Band 3 contains the majority of applicants with a moderate housing need and band 4 mainly contains households who may have a housing need but where priority has been reduced.

Applicants in band 4 will have their applications assessed initially to place them in a band and will be able to bid but will have a lower level of administration of their application commensurate with their lower prospects of rehousing. The principle will be that administration of their application will not take place unless they have a significant change of circumstances that may impact on their banding, assessed bedroom need or they are waiting for sheltered housing.

This policy does not award cumulative priority. A household's priority is assessed as the highest/most urgent preference within the household. Within each band a household's priority is determined by their effective date. However within band 2 and band 3 are a group of households who, because they also have a community contribution awarded to their application, are prioritised above households in the same band for offers even if they have a more recent effective date. More information about community contribution awards is provided below. How community contribution is treated as part of the bidding process is considered at subsection 5d.

If we do not assess that you have a housing priority when your application is assessed then you are a non-qualifier and will not be placed on the housing register. You will be entitled to advice, information and assistance on how you can take up other housing options that are open to you, for example renting from a private landlord, or applying to

an intermediate rent or low cost home ownership scheme. This information can also be found in our advice pack on the Council's website (please see section 9 Other Housing Options below).

The length of time you have to wait for an offer will depend on the number of properties that are available and the choices that you make.

If your application goes up a band as a result of a change in your circumstances you will retain your effective date (date of registration) unless your application is moved from a lower band to band 1. Given the emergency nature of applications in band 1, the effective date for these applicants is the date they were assessed as band 1 priority. If band 1 priority is removed and a household drops back to a lower band their effective date will revert back to their original registration date, prior to the move to band 1.

a. Banding Summary

The table below is a summary of the priority bands on the Housing Register:

Band	Priority description
Band 1 - Emergency	Urgent regeneration decants
	Emergencies and Management Transfers
	Delayed discharge from hospital
Band 2 - Urgent	Regeneration decant cases
	Urgent medical
	Severe overcrowding
	Under occupation
	Armed forces with urgent housing need
	Redbridge care leavers nominated by People Directorate
	Move on from supported housing and other vulnerable residents nominated by People Directorate
	Releasing an adapted property
	People who have an urgent need to move due to exceptional circumstances
Band 3 - Priority	Owed a homelessness duty by Redbridge Council
	Overcrowding
	Medical need
	Insanitary housing/ disrepair
	Need to move to a particular locality
	Has a housing need but does not meet the residence criteria in this scheme
Band 4 – Reduced priority	Homeless households where there is no accepted homeless duty
	Sheltered applicants without a housing need
	Households with a statutory preference but reduced priority
	Applicants for shared ownership opportunities

b. Who can award priority?

Band 1 priority must be agreed by the Head of Housing Needs or Operational Director of Housing unless otherwise stated in a particular priority band description.

Band 2 priority must be agreed by the Head of Housing Needs, Senior Accommodation Manager, Housing Advice Centre Manager or Homelessness Reviews Manager unless otherwise stated in a particular priority band description

Bands 3 & 4 priority can awarded by a Housing Options Officer, Housing Options Manager or any of the managers detailed for band 2

c. How priority will be assessed

d. Band 1 Priority categories

Urgent Regeneration Decants

Tenants in this situation are living in a property that is due to be demolished as part of a regeneration scheme and there is a defined period of three months, within which they need to move in order to ensure that demolition is not delayed.

Emergencies and Management Transfers

Awarded to applicants who either need to move as an emergency for social welfare or medical reasons or where there is a pressing need for the Council to offer alternative accommodation to effectively manage its housing stock, remedy an injustice or due to important financial or legal reasons.

Where an officer believes an applicant may fall in to this category, they will discuss with their line manager. If their line manager agrees, the officer will prepare a report to be presented at the Emergency Cases Rehousing Panel (ECRP) for a decision as to whether this priority should be awarded.

Examples of the types of cases where this priority *may* be awarded are:

- Exceptional circumstances where the Police request an applicant to be moved due to risk to the applicant or a member of their household or to avoid prejudice to a criminal investigation
- Serious risk to the health or safety of the applicant or a member of their family due to domestic or other violence
- To facilitate a move from an adapted property where this is no longer needed, to general needs housing
- Where an applicant or a member of their household suffers from a serious medical problem which is adversely affected by their current housing situation to such a degree that their health is at a high risk of being severely affected
- Severe disrepair which cannot be resolved within a reasonable timescale and which puts one or more household members at serious risk to their health

The above list is not an exhaustive list and each case will be considered on its merits by the panel.

Delayed discharge from hospital

Will be awarded where an applicant or a member of their household cannot be discharged from hospital within a reasonable timescale due to the lack of any suitable accommodation being available.

Where an officer believes an applicant may fall in to this category, they will discuss with their line manager. If their line manager agrees, the officer will prepare a report to be presented at the Emergency Cases Rehousing Panel (ECRP) for a decision as to whether this priority should be awarded.

ii. Band 2 priority categories

Regeneration decants

Tenants who are living in a property that has been designated for demolition as part of a regeneration scheme within the next 12 months.

The Council's Decant Policy contains information about the other commitments that will be made to residents who need to move as a result of regeneration programmes. This includes information about the home loss and disturbance payments that occupiers are entitled to. If a decant programme is taking place affecting a whole estate or a significant part of an estate the Council may adopt a local lettings plan. This will include the details about moving off estate and returning when development has been completed.

Urgent medical

Urgent medical priority will be awarded where an applicant or a member of their household is assessed as suffering from a serious medical condition which is being seriously affected by their current housing situation and that would be improved by moving to appropriate accommodation.

Assessing applications for priority on medical grounds

The following explanation of how medical priority is assessed is relevant to all levels of priority awarded on medical grounds. However, where the outcome of the following assessment process is that Band 1 should be awarded, this will be presented to the ECRP for a final decision.

Priority on medical grounds may be considered where an applicant or a member of their household suffers with medical conditions or disabilities which are adversely affected by their current housing situation and/ or their current accommodation does not meet essential needs that arise from their medical condition or disability. Applicants will not be awarded priority, irrespective of the seriousness of their medical condition or disability, if their current housing situation is not having an adverse impact on their health or their current accommodation is suitable for their needs. The level of priority awarded will

depend on the extent to which their health or disability is adversely affected by their current housing situation.

Applicants that wish to be assessed for priority on medical grounds, should complete an online medical assessment form and provide any supporting evidence they would like to be considered. The onus is on the applicant to provide the information we need to complete the assessment; the Council will not routinely make its own enquiries, other than to seek advice from the Council's Housing Medical Advisor (CHMA). Information provided by the CHMA is advice only and the decision whether to award priority or not will be taken by a relevant officer within the Housing Service. (see subsection 5b). Where insufficient information has been provided to complete an assessment, the Council will advise the applicant of the further information required.

Where a request for priority on medical ground is made, the Council will confirm the outcome of the assessment in writing within 8 weeks. If you disagree with the outcome of the decision, you can request a review following the review process detailed at Section 8b. The Council will only undertake a further assessment for priority on medical grounds following a decision (or review decision) when it is satisfied there has been a change in circumstances relevant to the assessment or significant new information is available.

Where there may be a need for a specific type of property, regard will be had to any occupational therapist or other medical reports available and we may also seek advice from the CHMA. However, the final decision on essential property requirements will be taken by a relevant officer within the Housing Service. Where you have been assessed as needing specific property requirements, your priority may be reviewed if you persistently bid for properties that do not meet these requirements.

Priority on medical grounds may be considered for applicants living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council but only where this has been provided under s193 of the Housing Act 1996 (whether to the applicant themselves or a person on whose homelessness application they were included). Priority will not be considered where the applicant has been provided with bed and breakfast accommodation (within the meaning of the *Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(England) Order 2003 SI No 3326*) or Council owned hostel accommodation that the applicant has occupied for less than six months. Where only a Band 3 medical priority is warranted, the existing homelessness priority will take precedence.

Where an applicant or a member of the applicant's household's health is being affected by disrepair in their current home, priority on medical grounds will not usually be awarded. However, if the disrepair cannot reasonably be addressed within 6 months, priority may be considered.

Severe Overcrowding

This priority will be awarded where an applicant's household is overcrowded by two or more rooms. Details of how overcrowding is assessed can be found in the description of overcrowding in Band 3 priority below.

Any household that is statutorily overcrowded, after taking in to account any measures that can reasonably be expected to reduce overcrowding such as terminating licence agreements of any non-dependent household members, will automatically be awarded this priority.

Under occupation

Council tenants and tenants of Registered Provider properties for which the Council has nomination rights, that are prepared to move to a property with fewer bedrooms than their current property will be awarded this priority. Details of what size properties applicants with this priority can be found at section?

Armed forces with urgent housing need

'Armed forces' applicants that have an urgent need to move. An applicant will have an urgent housing need if they or a member of their household has a serious medical condition or disability which is being badly affected by their current housing situation and that would be improved by moving to appropriate accommodation or if they are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Armed forces applicants will also be able to be considered for any other priority band reason if that would afford them the same or greater priority.

Redbridge care leavers nominated by People Directorate

This priority will be awarded to nominated applicants who are or were previously looked after by Redbridge Children's Services. Care leavers can be registered from the age of 16 but their applications will be suspended until they are 18 and Children's Services have confirmed they are now ready to move on to independent accommodation.

The Vulnerable Cases Rehousing Panel (VCRP) who will review awards of care leaver preference and requests from Children Services and decide:

- Whether the applicant is capable of managing a tenancy, with or without assistance
- Whether appropriate support for the applicant is in place
- Has additional vulnerabilities or other need which makes social housing the most appropriate housing option
- Whether there are adequate quota priorities available

Care leavers who are currently in care or semi-independent accommodation provided by Redbridge which is not located in the borough will be treated in the same way as homeless applicants placed in out of borough temporary accommodation by Redbridge and will be regarded as exempt from the residence qualification criteria. Once care leavers are no longer being supported by Children's services they can retain care leaver preference only until they find suitable accommodation that meets their housing needs (in the social or private sector). When they are no longer being supported they will also need to meet the residence qualification rules.

Cases that do not meet the criteria to be assisted through the housing register will be offered assistance to access other housing options such as renting in the private sector

Move on from supported housing and other vulnerable residents nominated by People Directorate

Applicants residing in supported housing schemes in Redbridge and being supported by Redbridge Council, that are ready to move on to independent housing can be nominated by People Directorate to be considered for this priority. Cases can also be nominated from the Single Homelessness Pathway hostels and rough sleeping hostels. Cases will be considered at the VCRP who will decide:

- whether the applicant is ready to move on to independent living
- Has an appropriate care package in place
- Has additional vulnerabilities or other needs which mean that other housing options, such as private rented accommodation, would not be an appropriate housing option

Cases that do not meet the criteria to be assisted through the housing register will be offered assistance to access other housing options such as renting in the private sector.

Releasing an adapted property

This priority will awarded to tenants of Council or Registered Provider properties that are living in adapted social housing that they no longer require who want to move to a home without adaptation. This is a discretionary preference category and the decision as to whether it will be awarded is for the Council, based on whether the property is of a type in acute shortage. The priority will only be awarded if the Council will receive the nomination rights for the property released.

People who have an urgent need to move due to exceptional circumstances

Awarded to applicants who either need to move for urgent social welfare reasons or where there is a pressing need for the Council to offer alternative accommodation to effectively manage its housing stock, remedy an injustice or due to important financial or legal reasons.

This priority will be awarded in similar cases to band 1 (emergencies and management transfers) but that are insufficiently urgent or serious to merit an award of the highest, band 1 priority. Priority under this priority band will be decided by the Head of Housing Needs. If necessary, the case can be escalated to the ECRP to consider Band 1 priority.

iii. Band 3 priority categories

Owed a homelessness duty by LBR

This priority will be awarded to applicants who are owed a duty by the London Borough of Redbridge under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by the Council under section 192(3). This will also apply to any other accommodation duty that s166A of the Housing Act 1996 requires preference to be awarded, following any future amendment.

Overcrowding

Applicants will be awarded this priority if they are overcrowded as defined below.

Definition of overcrowding-

An applicant will be assessed as overcrowded if either:

- the number of rooms they have available to use and/ or a legal right to occupy as bedrooms in their current accommodation is less than the assessed bedroom need of those included on their application; or
- there are insufficient bed spaces in the rooms available to accommodate the applicant's household without forcing two persons to share a room who should not be sharing according to the standard below

Assessing how many bedrooms an applicant has available-

When calculating how many bedrooms the applicant has available the Council will include **any** room that could be defined as a bedroom under Part X of the Housing Act 1985, irrespective of whether it is currently used as a bedroom, unless there is an **essential** need on medical or social welfare grounds for that room to be used for a different purpose.

A studio or a bedroom in a shared house and a room in bed and breakfast accommodation will be counted as one bedroom for the purpose of assessing overcrowding.

If a lodger or other occupant has a licence to occupy a room/s that the applicant or a member of the applicant's household has the right to terminate, any room/rooms occupied by that occupant will be taken in to account when assessing whether the household has sufficient bedrooms.

A single person sharing a bedroom with a person not on their application will be considered overcrowded only once they reach the age of 21 and therefore assessed as needing their own room.

Assessing the number of bed spaces available in a room-

The following details how many people a room of a particular size can be expected to use:

- A room 50 sq foot or more but less than 70 sq foot – 1 person aged under 10
- A room 70 sq foot or more but less than 90 sq foot – 1 person of any age or 2 persons aged under 10
- A room 90 sq foot or more but less than 110 sq foot – 1 person of any age or 2 persons where at least one is aged under 10
- A room 110 sq foot or more – 2 persons of any age

Assessing how many rooms an Applicant requires-

Each of the following will be entitled to one bedroom:

- A married or cohabiting couple
- Persons aged 21 and over who are not in a relationship with any other member of the household
- Two persons aged under 21 unless:
 - at least one is aged 10 or over; and

- they are of different gender

Exclusions to the award of overcrowding reasonable preference-

An applicant will not be considered to have an overcrowding preference when bidding for a property with the same number of bedrooms or less as the number of bedrooms they are currently assessed as having available to occupy.

An overcrowding preference will not be awarded to an applicant that is occupying any temporary accommodation provided by the Council to them or a member of their household in discharge of any of its duties under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. This is because separate priority will be awarded to those that are homeless and/or owed a full statutory homelessness duty and this will not be combined with an overcrowding preference.

However, where an applicant is occupying temporary accommodation provided by the Council but has neither attracted a homelessness preference themselves nor is part of the household (for housing register purposes) of an applicant that has attracted a homelessness preference, they will be awarded an overcrowding preference if overcrowding applies. This will support family members in this situation to make their own housing arrangements and reduce the size of households in temporary accommodation.

Voluntary overcrowding-

In cases where the Council are satisfied that the applicant has only become overcrowded as a result of their own voluntary actions which have worsened their housing situation, their priority will be reduced to Band D (statutory preference – reduced priority). In determining whether voluntary overcrowding should apply, the following factors will be taken in to account:

- where they had moved from
- why they had moved to
- the level of overcrowding
- the resources available to them
- the extent of their attempts they made to secure more suitable accommodation
- prevailing housing market conditions

Medical need

This priority will be awarded where an applicant suffers with a moderate medical condition which is being adversely affected by their current housing situation to a more than minor degree.

For details of how applications are assessed for priority on medical grounds please see the description of medical priority under Band 2 priority above.

Insanitary housing/ disrepair

This priority will be awarded where a property is lacking basic facilities such as bathroom, kitchen, indoor toilet and/ or safe and adequate supply of: cold/ hot water, gas (if

applicable), electricity or heating, or where the condition of the property is poor and cannot be adequately remedied within a reasonable timeframe.

This priority will only be awarded where the Council's Housing Standards Team has inspected the property and provided a report. Priority will not normally be awarded if the property can reasonably be occupied and any significant defects are expected be remedied within six months, All category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Ratings System, except overcrowding and cold, will automatically be considered 'significant'. All other hazards under the HHSRS will be considered on a case by case basis.

Need to move to a particular locality

The priority will be awarded to applicants that have an essential need to move to a particular district in the Borough in order to avoid hardship. This may be to give or receive essential care or to access specialist medical treatment.

Private Rented Sector Offers/ Qualifying Offers and Prevention Offers

Applicants will no longer be awarded priority in circumstances where they have accepted an offer of private rented accommodation under a Prevention, Relief or Full duty. However, applicants that were awarded a priority for accepting an offer of accommodation under the Council's previous Housing Allocation Policy, will be retain this policy.

iv. Band 4 priority categories

Has a housing need but does not meet the residence criteria in this Scheme

Through this category the Council awards a reasonable preference to households with a housing need who do not live locally. Broadly speaking, applicants with a housing need that do not live locally will be prioritised over local residents without a housing need. However, local residents with a housing need will be prioritised over non local residents who also have a housing need, even if it is greater.

This priority will therefore be awarded to applicants that meet the criteria for one or more of the priority bands 1 to 3 but who do not meet the local residence criteria set out in section 4b.

However, applicants that have been awarded one of the following priority bands will be excluded from this provision because the Council has statutory obligations to them:

- Armed forces with urgent housing need
- Redbridge care leavers nominated by People Directorate to the Vulnerable Cases Rehousing panel who continue to be supported by Children's Services
- Move on from Redbridge supported housing and other vulnerable residents nominated by People Directorate to the Vulnerable Cases Rehousing Panel

Homeless households not owed a statutory duty

Applicants that are homeless as defined by s175 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended, will be awarded Band 4 priority if they are not owed a statutory duty under s193 of that Act. This priority will be awarded irrespective of whether the applicant is owed another duty under homelessness legislation or whether they are considered to have a priority need or become homeless intentionally.

When assessing whether an applicant is homeless, the Council will consider whether any accommodation is available for them and anyone that normally resides or reasonably could be expected to reside with them as a member of their family. However, when assessing who can be included on their housing register application for the purposes of an allocation, section 4d of this Policy will apply.

Sheltered applicants without a housing need

The shortage of sheltered housing in the Borough is not as acute as that of general needs housing and therefore some applicants that do not have an assessed need to move, may still be offered this type of accommodation.

If an applicant does not meet any of the priority bands 1 to 3, but are assessed as suitable for sheltered housing, they will be placed in this priority band and allowed to bid for sheltered housing only. Details of how applications for sheltered housing are dealt with can be found at section 6.

Households with a statutory preference but reduced priority

Applicants that have refused the maximum number of offers to which they are entitled and whose applications cannot be cancelled because they met the criteria for the award of a statutory reasonable preference, will be placed in this band for a period of 12 months, after which their application will be re-assessed and awarded whatever priority band is appropriate to their circumstances at that time.

Details of the maximum offer policy can be found at section 7m.

Applicants who have been found to have deliberately provided false or misleading information to support their application or deliberately contrived a situation to improve their prospects of being rehoused will be placed in this band until they have resolved their housing need.

Applicants for shared ownership

Some providers of low cost homeownership options require people that are interested to be registered on the Council's Housing Register. Where this is the only reason for applying to join the Housing Register, applicants will be invited to specify this at the start of their application and will be directed to complete a shortened form which will not be assessed by the Council. Applicants that have been accepted on to the Register for this reason will not be able to bid for properties.

d. Community Contribution

Community contribution is a way for the Council to reward and promote activities that benefit the community. This is not a priority band and applicants will still have to meet the

criteria for one of the above priority bands in order to qualify to join the Housing Register. However, where an applicant does attract a community contribution award, they will be treated as having a higher priority than other applicants within the same priority band that does not have a community contribution. Community contribution will be applied at the short-listing stage but only for those in Band 3. Applicants in other Bands will not be considered for a community contribution.

Applicants will attract a community contribution award if they meet one of the following additional criteria:

- They have been in paid work for at least 35 hours per week for a continuous period of at least 6 months;
- They are a foster carer approved by Redbridge Council;
- They are an adoptive parent for Redbridge Council
- They have been providing at least 35 hours a week personal care to a resident within Redbridge for a continuous period of at least 6 months

Evidence of employment will be required, such as payslips and contract of employment. Confirmation of fostering or adoption arrangements will be sought from the People Directorate. Whilst both paid and unpaid care will be taken in to account, there must be sufficient evidence to show a formal care arrangement is in place for at least 35 hours on a long-term basis. This may be available through Redbridge Adult Social Care assessments that establish a need for this level of care and confirm that the applicant is recognised as providing that care or by receipt of Carers Allowance. Applicants that both provide care and work will be considered to meet this criteria if the total combined hours is at least 35 hours.

6. Sheltered Housing

Sheltered accommodation units are self-contained properties designated for applicants aged 55 or over, although a few schemes are restricted to applicants older than this. Applicants for sheltered housing must be able to live independently with only low level support needs but will have access to assistance such as an on-site warden and alarm to call for emergency assistance. Almost all properties in our current housing stock are located in low-rise blocks, no higher than the 2nd floor and are all managed by Housing Associations in Redbridge.

Extra care sheltered housing is provided for households who need higher levels of support. In order to be allocated extra care accommodation households need to be assessed by the appropriate Team within Adult Services as meeting the criteria for extra care. Extra care vacancies will be advertised to applicants assessed as suitable for extra care only and will be allocated through a Panel co-ordinated with Adult Social Care.

a. Applying for sheltered accommodation

If you would like to be considered for sheltered accommodation you will need to complete the online application form and confirm you would like to apply for sheltered accommodation. Applicants cannot be considered for sheltered accommodation and general needs accommodation at the same time.

Where an applicant is applying with a spouse or partner at least one of them must be aged 55 or over. Applicants with high support needs are likely to be unsuitable for sheltered accommodation but may be considered for extra care sheltered accommodation.

Where necessary a home visit will be carried out but this will not usually be needed for applicants that live outside of the Borough.

b. Prioritising sheltered applicants

Applicants for sheltered housing will be assessed against the same priority band criteria as general needs applicants and shortlisted for accommodation in the same way. Applicants that do not meet the criteria for any priority within bands 1-3 can still apply and will be placed in band 4.

c. Financial circumstances

Section 4ciii of this policy regarding income and assets does not apply to applicants for sheltered accommodation. Instead, for such applicants, if the Council considers that as a result of the income and/or assets of the applicant or their spouse or partner, they would reasonably be able to rent or purchase suitable accommodation for themselves, they will be awarded priority Band D, irrespective of any other need that they have to move. This is because the Council considers those that have a housing need and cannot provide accommodation for themselves should be prioritised ahead of those that can.

A decision to reduce priority on this basis will be taken by the Housing Advice Centre Manager, Homelessness Reviews Manager or Head of Housing Needs.

d. Assistance with bidding

Applicants that find it difficult to bid for accommodation independently can be assisted to do so, including by requesting bids are automatically placed or arranging for another person to bid on their behalf. Full details of the assistance available can be found at www.elcchoicehomes.org.uk

7. Bidding for Homes

a. Choice Homes Scheme (Choice Based Letting – CBL)

Redbridge is part of Choice Homes UK which enables all applicants who are eligible, to bid (apply) for properties that meet their needs.

The Choice Homes Scheme is a 'choice based' lettings system whereby the Council advertises available properties and invites applicants to bid for them. This enables applicants to choose where they want to live. The majority of properties will be offered in this way to the applicant with the highest priority who bids for them. However, some properties that become available will be offered directly without being advertised.

The 'Choice Homes Scheme' is operated by the Choice Homes UK (CHUK). They manage this on behalf of the London Borough of Redbridge and its consortium partners. CHUK is a not for profit company set up on behalf of its members to offer more choice to customers seeking affordable housing.

The London Borough of Redbridge is in partnership with the landlords listed against the Choice Homes UK who have agreed to operate a regional lettings system.

b. How properties are advertised

The properties are advertised weekly:

- Through the Council website
- Through the Choice Homes Website (www.ellcchoicehomes.org.uk)

If you are housebound, you can contact the Housing Advice Centre so that details of the properties you can bid for can be sent to you.

c. What type of properties are advertised

We advertise Council and Registered Provider owned properties that become available. Type of properties would include:

- General needs accommodation (mainly flats or maisonettes for applicants without mobility problems)
- Sheltered Accommodation (self-contained properties within communal establishments with or without wardens on site for those aged 55 or over)
- Adapted (accessible) accommodation (mainly for those with severely restricted mobility)
- Extra care housing for older people with higher needs

Property details such as size (number of bedrooms), type (flat/house), rent, location, accessibility (e.g. lift, wheelchair access), floor, access to garden, type of heating and landlord will also be advertised.

d. Which properties can I bid for?

Tenant Seeking Transfer (T)	If you are a Council Tenant you may bid for properties that are labelled in the property advert as (T) .
Priority Homeseeker (PH)	If you are accepted on to the Housing Register and are not owed a homelessness duty by the London Borough of Redbridge you may bid for properties labelled in the property advert as (PH) .
Homeless Homeseeker (HH)	If you are accepted on to the Housing Register as an applicant owed a homelessness duty by the London Borough of Redbridge you can bid for properties labelled in the property advert as (HH)

e. What size of accommodation can I bid for?

Assessing how many rooms an Applicant requires

The Council uses the bedroom standard to determine how many bedrooms an applicant can bid for.

Each of the following will be entitled to one bedroom:

- A married or cohabiting couple
- Persons aged 21 and over who are not in a relationship with any other member of the household
- Two persons aged under 21 unless:
 - at least one is aged 10 or over; and
 - they are of different gender
- Any remaining person that cannot be paired as above
- Any person that has been assessed as requiring their own bedroom on medical or care grounds.
- Where needed to enable fostering?

Larger households and bidding for smaller sized accommodation

The shortage of large family sized accommodation is particularly acute and waiting times are therefore substantially longer than for smaller sized accommodation. For this reason, families assessed as requiring 3 or 4 bedrooms can request to be allowed to bid for a property one bedroom smaller than their assessed need. This will normally be agreed by the Council as long as it would not result in the applicant becoming statutorily overcrowded in any accommodation they are offered. It will not be agreed where an applicant has been assessed as overcrowded and agreeing this would result in them bidding for the same size accommodation they already have use of. This decision will be taken by a Housing Options Manager.

Circumstances in which normal rules on size of accommodation do not apply

In some cases the normal rules on what size accommodation an applicant can be considered for does not apply, either for reasons of fairness to the applicant or for reasons of effective Council stock management.

Applications agreed for a move from social housing due to a management transfer or as a result of their property being decanted will be considered for the same size accommodation as they currently occupy.

Given the importance of releasing larger sized family accommodation, applicants that are over occupying their current accommodation by at least two bedrooms will be allowed to bid for a property one bedroom size larger than their assessed need.

f. Specialist accommodation

There are some homes that have are designed for specific groups of people, either because of age, disability or other features. When these homes are being advertised we will state in the advert for the property that they are for particular groups of applicant. This includes sheltered housing for the elderly, extra care housing, and homes suitable for disabled people. It might also include Housing Association homes designed for specific

groups who may be disadvantaged or have special needs. Houses with gardens may also be designated or prioritised for families with children under the age of 14.

We will only let the property to a household that meets the criteria for the property.

If no one bids who meets the criteria for the property we will contact households who did not bid to identify an appropriate household for the property who can make the best use of it. This is done, for example, to prevent disabled adaptations not being used or being removed from properties, given the cost of installing such adaptations and the level of need for them.

When an applicant is matched to an adapted home their suitability for the property will be considered based on recommendations from the Council's Occupational Therapy Service, however, the final decision on whether to allocate accommodation is for the Housing Service.

Other types of specific property, e.g. adapted properties may be ring fenced for applicants that have been assessed as needing them. In circumstances where there are no applicants on the Housing Register needing an adapted (accessible) property, to make better use of stock the Council will make such properties available to other applicants.

g. How to bid

Properties are advertised every Friday on the Choice Homes website. A downloadable document of the properties you can bid for is available from this website and can be printed of on request at Lynton House and the Orchard Housing Office.

You can bid for two properties that are advertised and are available to your particular applicant category. You must make bid(s) before the closing date, which will be stated in the property advertisements. It is important that you bid for properties that you are prepared to live in. If you bid successfully and subsequently refuse the property if we offer it to you, then this may lead to a penalty as detailed elsewhere in this policy.

Bids can be placed by telephoning the bidding hotline, online at the Choice Homes website (www.ellcchoicetohomes.org.uk) or by text. Applicants that have difficulty placing bids can request bids for suitable properties are automatically placed.

h. How properties are allocated under the Choice Homes Scheme

A majority of offers are made through the Council's Choice Based Lettings scheme, Choice Homes. However Direct Offers are made in some circumstances, which are set out below.

When bidding closes, bids for each property will be automatically sorted by the applicants' level of priority and then their effective bidding date. The process of ranking is called short-listing.

Cases meeting the bidding criteria are ranked as follows:

- The applicant with the highest priority band (from Band 1 to 4)
- If two or more applicants have the same priority band, the applicant from these with a community contribution (for applicants in band 3 only)
- If two or more applicants have the same priority band and cannot be separated

by community contribution, the applicant from these with the oldest effective bidding date

If the applicant who has been offered the property refuses it, the property will be offered to the next person in line in accordance with the above formulation.

i. Direct offers

The London Borough of Redbridge believes that applicants should be able to exercise choice about the homes they are offered as far as possible. However, in limited circumstances, it is necessary to make an offer of accommodation directly to an applicant. The property will still be advertised but the advert will contain the words "this property has been designated for a direct offer". If the property is refused by the person/ persons it is directly matched to then we will consider shortlisted bidders. A direct offer might not be made if an applicant has arrears of £250 or more, however, applicants will be informed of this and given the opportunity to clear them.

Below is a description of the circumstances in which a direct offer may happen.

i. Applicants in Priority Band 1

All applicants within this priority band will be made a direct offer of accommodation as soon as a suitable property becomes available if they have not successfully bid for a property within 3 months.

ii. Applicants in Priority Band 2

All applicants that have been awarded priority band 2 as a person ready to move on from supported housing or are leaving care will be made a direct offer of accommodation as soon as a suitable property becomes available if they have not successfully bid for a property within 12 months prior to the date of having to leave their current accommodation.

If more than one applicant is waiting for an offer after the date a direct offer was due, offers will be made in turn according to who has the highest priority and then who has waited the longest (any community contribution will not apply).

iii. Adapted properties

Some properties that are highly adapted may not be appropriate to advertise and may need to be matched directly to a person with specific mobility needs.

iv. Sheltered accommodation

Some sheltered properties may be allocated directly. One example may be where an applicant assessed as suitable for sheltered is threatened with homelessness and offering accommodation is likely to avoid the need to provide temporary accommodation under s193 of the Housing Act 1996. This discretion will be exercised by the Head of Housing Needs, Housing Advice Centre Manager or any officer to whom their duties have been delegated, or the Emergency Cases Rehousing Panel.

v. Reciprocal arrangements

Applicants that have been agreed for an offer of accommodation under an agreed reciprocal arrangement will be considered for a direct offer. Decisions as to whether to agree applicants for a move will be taken by the Manager of the Allocations team or Senior Accommodation Manager.

vi. Homeless applicants

Applicants that have been awarded Band 3 priority as a homeless applicant and have been accommodated in temporary accommodation under s193 of the Housing Act 1996 for a long period without bidding may be made a direct offer of accommodation if it is deemed likely they would have successfully bid for accommodation had they been placing bids. This discretion will be exercised by the Head of Housing Needs, Housing Advice Centre Manager or any officer to whom their duties have been delegated, or the Emergency Cases Rehousing Panel.

vii. Other direct offers

It is impossible to set all of the circumstances in which it may be necessary to make a direct offer of accommodation and there will be times when a direct offer needs to be made out of turn in order to react to emergencies or unusual circumstances. The Council retains the discretion to make a direct offer to any person on the housing register, where a direct offer is required and/or needs to be made ahead of other applicants waiting for a direct offer due to urgency or best use of Council resources. This discretion will be exercised by the Head of Housing Needs, or any officer to whom their duties have been delegated, or the Emergency Cases Rehousing Panel. Clear records of the reasons for this decision will be placed on the applicant's housing file.

j. Sensitive lettings

Occasionally, due to the particular circumstances of a vacant property, it may be necessary to let the property 'sensitively'. This means that whilst the Council will prioritise cases in the usual way, some applicants may be bypassed for the accommodation irrespective of their priority. For instance, this may happen where there has been a history of anti-social behaviour at a particular property and, to promote a cohesive local community, it is necessary let the property in a manner that reduces the risk of this reoccurring.

Where a potential sensitive let has been identified, an Area Housing Manager will make this request in writing to the Head of Housing Needs, setting out the reasons why the property needs to be let sensitively. If the request is agreed, the property will be advertised indicating that it will be let sensitively.

The decision whether to bypass an applicant that would otherwise be offered the property will be taken by the Allocations Manager or Senior Accommodation Manager and reasons will be recorded.

k. Local Lettings Plans

When new build social homes are let we may agree a local lettings plan for the scheme. This may be housing developed as part of the council's new build programme or by a

Housing Association. Local lettings plans may also be put in place to support dealing with certain housing management issues on particular estates, blocks or localities. We may also need to do it to respond to funding requirements set by the Greater London Authority for some schemes, for example where the funding requires a particular percentage of tenants to be working. The principle reason for a local lettings plan is to ensure a good mix of tenants that helps to build a successful local community and reduce the chances of housing management problems.

Any plan we develop is likely to consider a range of factors including:

- the mix of working and non-working households
- child density both in terms of number of children and age ranges
- age profiles for tenants
- factors relating to ethnicity and community cohesion
- factors relating to vulnerability and support services,
- the levels of community facilities provided

When we create a local lettings plan we will tell you about the plan and what it says when we advertise the homes from the scheme. In order to achieve the targets set in the plan we may have to homes to lower band if there is no one suitable in the highest bands.

I. Annual Lettings Plans

Redbridge will produce and publish an Annual Lettings Plan which will set annual targets for property types across priority bands. It may also set specific rehousing targets for specific preference groups in order to ensure that groups who we consider have particularly pressing demands for housing in that year are rehoused. For example if an estate regeneration was taking place it may set targets to ensure a certain percentage of lets were made to that group.

The outcomes against the plan will be monitored through the year and the Council may target lettings to certain groups through the advert where it appears that targets will not otherwise be met. Where this happens applicants who meet the targeted group will be prioritised above other groups, irrespective of their priority band or waiting time.

m. Restrictions on choice – number of offers

While we aim to provide choice there are circumstances when we need to limit the range of choices that you can make because of the lack of available social housing.

The following are only entitled to **one suitable offer** of accommodation through this allocations scheme:

- Emergencies and Management Transfers awarded by Emergency Cases Rehousing Housing Panel
- Applicants awarded band 1 priority to prevent a delayed discharge from hospital
- Redbridge care leavers nominated through the Vulnerable Cases
- Accepted homeless households owed a duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 or other homeless applicants in temporary accommodation
- Applicants awarded preference to move on from supported housing through the Vulnerable Cases Rehousing Panel

- Social housing tenants that need to move to enable major works to be carried out
- Homelessness prevention preference
- People in exceptional circumstances approved by the Head of Housing Needs

These cases are only entitled to one offer to reflect either that their circumstances have been awarded priority which is an emergency or because they have been treated as a priority exception through a quota arrangement or senior officer/panel assessment.

Where the One Offer Policy applies, you will receive one offer of a suitable property from a successful bid or direct match. If you refuse an offer then your application will be cancelled. You have the right to request a review of the decision. If you request a review your application will be suspended whilst the review is carried out. If the offer is upheld as suitable then your application will be closed. You will be disqualified from the housing register for a period of 12 months after which you can re-apply and your case will be assessed as a new application.

Households with urgent medical priority or who are being considered for properties which are exceptionally scarce including disabled adapted properties are entitled to a maximum of three suitable offers and will be treated in the same way as one offer cases when the third offer is refused.

8. Annual reviews, reviews of decisions and reviewing the policy

a. Reviews of the Housing Register

Your application will be subject to periodic review to ensure that the information the Council holds about you is still accurate and that you still wish to be active on the housing register. When an application is due for review, you will be asked to complete an online re-registration form confirming your current details. Failure to complete this form may result in the closure of the application.

It is the Council's intention to review applications on each anniversary of their registration. However, from time to time it may be necessary to conduct a bulk review of all or a group of applications on the housing register.

b. Reviews of decisions

If we make a decision on your application that you do not agree with you can ask us to carry out a review of that decision.

The decisions on which we might carry out a review are:

- Whether you are eligible to join the housing register
- Whether you qualify to join the housing register
- How much priority we award to your application (i.e. what band we place you in), including the recommendations of a medical assessment or outcome of a Panel assessment
- The assessment as to what type of accommodation you can bid for
- A decision to reduce the level of priority awarded to your application
- Whether we award your application a community contribution
- The suitability of an offer of accommodation
- A decision to remove your application from the housing register and close your case

Review requests must be made within 21 days of us making a decision on your application. We prefer to have your review request in writing because this provides us with a record of your request but also tells us the reasons you disagree with the decision that we have made. If you need support to submit your review request we can discuss it with you over the telephone or face to face to record the reasons you are asking for a review.

Reviews will be carried out by an appropriate officer who did not make the initial decision.

When we carry out a review we may make further enquiries in order to help us make a decision. You should however make sure that you have provided us with any information you want us to consider that we have not seen so far. Review requests will normally be considered and a decision made within 56 days of us receiving your request for a review. If the review is going to take longer than this time we will tell you how much longer it will take and explain the reasons we need more time. Once a review decision is reached, no further assessment will take place unless there is a change in circumstances or substantially new information become available.

Where the outcome of the Review is a recommendation to award Band 1, this will be presented to the ECRP, unless the decision under review was made by this panel, in which case it will be presented to the Operational Director of housing for a final decision.

Where a review is requested of a decision taken by a panel or by the Head of Housing Needs, an independent reviewing officer will be appointed to investigate and make recommendations to be presented to the Operational Director of Housing who will make the final decision.

c. Reviewing the Allocation Policy

There is not fixed period within which the Housing Allocations Scheme needs to be reviewed. However it does need to be consistent with the law, National and Council broader policy objectives, local levels of need and housing supply. It is therefore unlikely that a policy would remain in place for more than five years without change.

Where we make minor amendments to policy, that do not require consultation (for example updating contact information) we will publicise that change and the date it was made on the Redbridge website along with the new version of the document.

Substantive changes to the Policy need to be approved by the council's Cabinet after formal consultation.

9. Other housing options

Our officers can give you advice about your housing options. They can also give you advice about how likely you are to be offered a Council or Housing Association home. It is very difficult to tell you how long you may have to wait for a property as this will vary depending on how much priority we have assessed that you should have, your current waiting time compared to others, where you want to live and the size and type of property you are looking for. If you are looking for a smaller home and you are prepared to consider all areas and property types then in general your wait will be shorter than for those waiting for a larger home or someone who is only able to live in a certain type of property

in particular locations. There are for example some areas where we do not have any properties of certain sizes and types so you will have no chance of being housed in that area.

This section sets out alternative housing options for homeseekers who are on a low income or are Council or Housing Association tenants. While housing needs are often resolved by moving to alternative accommodation, there are also opportunities to resolve housing problems that mean you do not need to move. This might, for example be by getting help to with repairs or dealing with disputes with you landlord.

Because there is not enough social housing available for everyone who needs and wants it you are strongly recommended to look at all the housing options which might be suitable to improve your housing situation. Even if you are in a high priority band you may still wait a longer period for a social home than it would take to find something suitable through another route. The best way to consider your options is to speak to one of our housing advisors who can reviews the options that might meet your housing needs with you. If you are a Housing Association tenant your landlord should be able to provide you with information about how you can move to an alternative home and may be able to offer you further options, not detailed here.

a. General Housing Options

Your options may include:

- A private rented home – Over 23% of housing in Redbridge is let in the private rented sector. For many households who wish to live in Redbridge it is the easiest option given the limited social homes in the area, particularly if you are not in a position to buy a home. A range of private rented housing is available in Redbridge, generally only homes let at or around Local Housing Allowance level (housing benefit thresholds) are affordable for most households on welfare benefits or low salaries. You should always get advice if you are unsure if you can afford a particular home in the private sector so you do not take on a tenancy you cannot afford. You can contact local lettings agents and use the local newspaper papers to find privately rented properties. There are also lots of resources on the internet and you can get information on the Redbridge website at <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice-and-options/how-to-rent-private-accommodation-and-other-options/>.
- Low cost home ownership - These are housing schemes that help you to buy a home of your own. FIRST STEPS is the official intermediate housing programme from the Mayor of London helping low and modest income Londoners to buy or rent at a price they can afford. On the FIRST STEPS website you can find all the properties in one place. FIRST STEPS is the best place to search for Shared Ownership properties in London - www.shareto-buy.com/firststeps. There are income requirements so you need to look at the eligibility guidelines to see if you qualify. You may also want to look at the Government's www.helptobuy-london.co.uk/ scheme which has other options.
- Homefinder UK – This scheme provides housing options in other areas for homeless households when the Council has accepted a homeless duty. It may enable you to move to a new social home in another borough or different part of the country. You can find information at homefinderuk.org.

- Staying where you are now but getting help to make the property more suitable for your needs - If your property is in a poor state of repair or you are having problems with your landlord we may be able to help. You can get advice about the condition of your property from the Council's Housing Standards team and on the Council website <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/housing/private-rentals/private-landlords-responsibilities/>. You can also talk to a housing advisor. If you are experiencing domestic violence, racial or sexual harassment or violence or other forms of risk we will work with you to try to identify the best solution for you. This may include giving you support to remain in your current home and excluding the perpetrator as well as considering the options for a move through the emergency rehousing provisions in this scheme. If you are experiencing domestic violence you should seek advice from the Housing Advice Service, your Housing Officer if you are a council tenant or your landlord if you are a Housing Association tenant.

b. Options for social housing tenants

If you are Council tenant (or a tenant of a Housing Association in some cases) you may have some other options:

- A mutual exchange - This is where an existing Council tenant agrees to swap homes, with the Council's consent. There are rules about the size of home you can move to. If you are an existing tenant you should consider registering for a mutual exchange even if you need a different size property to the one you are in now. Further information can be found at the following link on the Council's website <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/home-swapping/> or by talking to your housing officer at the Orchard Housing Office.
- Seaside and Country Homes - This scheme offers mobility to people living in Council and Housing Association homes in London who want to move to seaside and country towns. It is open to single Londoners aged over 60, or couples where at least one partner is aged over 60. This scheme is also currently available on a pilot basis to accepted single (or couple) homeless households who are 60 or over, information can be found at - www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/renting/seaside-and-country-homes.
- Housing Moves – The London Mayor's Housing Moves scheme allows Council or Housing Association tenants from London boroughs to transfer to available homes in another London borough. Information can be found at www.housingmoves.org/. Accordingly up to five per cent of the properties that become available to the Council for re letting or nomination each year, subject to local priorities, will be made available through the scheme to tenants from other boroughs. The decision as to which vacancies will be put forward to the operators of the scheme for applicants from other boroughs will be made by the Allocations Manager or more senior officer as applicable. The decision as to which applicant will be let the property will be made in accordance with the scheme's eligibility and prioritisation criteria. The council closely monitors the volume of moves both into and out of the borough, under the scheme, within a policy objective of ensuring they achieve balance, or very near balance, at any given point in time. For more information on the *housingmoves* scheme see: www.london.gov.

- Under occupation - The Council provides help and financial assistance for Council tenants who wish to move to smaller accommodation. This includes a personal rehousing service from a specialist Housing Options Officer; reimbursement of your removal costs; a cash incentive payment for every bedroom given up; arrangement and payment of disconnection and reconnection of white goods and telephone; a discretionary payment for some decorations and minor alterations in the new home; access to the Redbridge Handyperson Scheme; and paid redirection of post.
- Extension and de-conversion - Subject to funding and suitability of the accommodation, the Council may carry out extensions or de-conversions to alleviate overcrowding.
- Financial Assistance - The Council provides financial assistance in the form of grants and loans to help vulnerable homeowners to remain in their own homes. Homeowners and tenants renting privately can apply for assistance for adaptations, major and minor works and energy efficiency.
- Freespace Scheme for Older Owner Occupiers - This scheme offers options to older owner occupiers who are under occupying their current home including funding to convert large properties into two self-contained flats. This allows the owner to remain in the property, while leasing the second flat to the Council; or the option to move to a more suitable size accommodation and lease their property to the Council. The Council will help the owner find alternative accommodation or offer Council accommodation in the form of sheltered accommodation or a one bedroom flat.

If you are already homeless, or think you be at risk of losing your home, you should contact the Council's Housing Advice Service. It is important that you talk to us as soon as possible because we may be able to help you to keep your current home, at least for a while whilst you look at your housing options. Homeless household do not get top priority on the housing register, they are assisted with housing options support but have to wait on the housing register for a social home in the same way as other households in other types of housing need. If we prevent you becoming homeless you may be entitled to some priority because we have prevented your homelessness. If you do become homeless, you may face a long period of time in temporary accommodation before being housed through the housing register and in some circumstances we will offer your private rented accommodation to discharge the homeless duty rather than make you a social housing offer.

c. Options summary

A summary table which shows what options may apply to you is shown below:

	Households and Tenure				
Housing Options (subject to eligibility)	Forming a new house- hold	Renting Privately	Home owner	Council Tenants	Housing Association Tenants*

Moving Home	Low-cost Home Ownership Schemes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Private Rent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Mobility Schemes	X	X	X	✓	✓
	Mutual Exchange	X	X	X	✓	✓
	Under-occupation Schemes	X	X	X	✓	✓
	Redbridge Freespace	X	X	✓	X	X
	Sheltered Housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Extra Care Sheltered	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Supported Housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Remaining at Home	Extension/ De-conversion	X	X	X	✓	X
	Financial Assistance: Repairs, Aids & adaptations	X	✓	✓	X	X
	Aids & adaptations	X	X	X	✓	✓

Redbridge Freespace	X	X	✓	X	X
Floating Support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* Housing Associations may also have other housing options for their tenants and home seekers

c. Employment, Education and Training Advice

Not all housing options are affordable, however, employment and training could improve the chances of securing a home that is suitable. Skills and employment is an integral part of the housing options and advice provided by the Housing Service.

Homeseekers are encouraged to use [Housing and Employment Destinations \(HED\)](#), an online tool that helps you to explore different housing options based on income level and employment opportunities that are open to them. To use this tool please visit www.ellchoicehomes.org.uk.

[Work Redbridge](#) is an online hub that provides information on how to access work, training, volunteering, and self-employment in Redbridge. It is also designed to provide support in areas such as CV writing and interview skills. For more information visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/workredbridge or email workredbridge@redbridge.gov.uk for information on outreach programmes.

10. Relevant Decision Makers and Panel Processes

a. Relevant decision makers

Decisions on eligibility, qualification and preference are made by a Housing Options Officer, Housing Options Manager or Homelessness Prevention Manager.

Review decisions are made by a Housing Options Officer, Housing Options Manager or Homelessness Prevention Manager.

Reviews of a Decision made by a panel or by the Head of Housing Need are to completed by the Operational Director of Housing.

b. Panel Processes

Certain decisions, largely described at section 5, relating to priority banding are made by Panel Assessments. There are three key panels -

- The Emergency Cases Rehousing Panel (ECRP) – makes decisions on the award of band 1 priority to emergency and management transfer cases and cases relating to priority

awarded to delayed discharge from hospital. They also make decisions on the award of urgent direct offers to sheltered housing applicants as described above.

- The Vulnerable Cases Rehousing Panel (VCRP) – Make decisions on the award of band 2 priority to care leavers and vulnerable adults, including those moving on from supported housing
- The Extra Care Sheltered Panel (ECSP) – make decisions on priorities for the allocation of specialist units that provide extra care support services, generally for older people.

The ECRP is chaired by the Senior Accommodation Manager. Other representatives on the panel include the Area Housing Manager from Housing Management, Allocations Manager, Housing Advice Manager and a registered provider representative.

The ECSP is chaired by the Housing Advice Manager. Other representatives on the panel include a representative from People Directorate, Allocations Manager, Senior Accommodation Manager and a registered provider representative.

The ECSP is run and administered by Adult Social Care. A representative from Housing Needs and Housing Management attend this Panel

Panels meet monthly. Cases submitted to the Panel for consideration must be accompanied by a full business case for the award of priority or other relevant decision which should be submitted to the Allocations Manager 7 days before the Panel Meeting. Where appropriate a service will be permitted to attend and make oral representations to the Panel. Each Panel will be supported by a terms of reference and will be minuted to provide an audit trail of the decisions and reasons. A written reason for the panel decision will be provided for each referral within 7 days of the Panel meeting.

Where a case is exceptionally urgent and cannot wait until the next scheduled panel a virtual Panel will be convened within 48 hours in order to provide urgent decisions.

11. Appendices

a. Key documents

Housing Act 1996, Part VI

Localism Act 2011

Allocation of Accommodation: statutory guidance for local housing authorities in England 2012.

Homelessness Act 2002

Housing & Planning Act 2016

Providing Social Housing for Local People” December 2013

Laying the foundations: A Housing Strategy for England 2011.

Draft London Housing Strategy 2017

Corporate Strategy: 2014-18 Ambitious for Redbridge: Moving Forward Together

Redbridge Housing Strategy 2017-22.

Redbridge Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018.

Redbridge Tenancy Strategy 2013 and Draft Strategy 2017/18.

Equality Act 2010

Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2017

Allocations Scheme equalities impact assessment
 Mobile Homes Act 1983
 National Planning Policy Framework for traveller sites
 Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended in 2000)

b. Housing Need and Housing Supply in Redbridge

The housing register as at 1st June 2017 showing main preferences:

	Total Applicants on the Register	Applicants with 1 or more preference	Preference due to Homelessness	Preference for Medical	Preference overcrowding	Preference Severe overcrowding	overcrowded Redbridge Council tenants
Studio or 1	2332	1749	408	236	927	-	9
2	3059	2786	971	91	1456	1	57
3	2226	2075	782	64	1029	-	152
4	660	630	266	23	286	-	51
5+	186	175	82	5	75	3	8
Total	8463	7415	2509	419	3773	4	277

The Council's Housing Stock list as at 31.03.2017:

Studio	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds	Grand total
446	1362	1333	1216	92	16	4465

Social Housing Let's during 2016/2017:

Bed Size	Number of lets	Breakdown				... of which direct lets	... of which were sheltered	Total lets to Homeless applicants	Total lets to Over Crowded applicants
		Council (LBR)	Housing Assoc. (HA)	LBR New build*	HA New build *				
Studio	26	22	4	-	-	9	7	6	9
1 bed	123	67	56	3	6	55	48	37	20
2 bed	88	52	36	20	12	3	-	51	11
3 bed	45	34	11	-	7	5	-	25	10
4 bed	8	6	2	-	2	3	-	1	4
5 bed	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	291	182	109	23	27	75	55	120	55
%age total lets change	-14.42%	-8.54%	-24.30%	-	-	-29.24%	-31.25%	-14.89%	+7.84

*New build properties up 44.44% on last year.

41.23% total lets went to applicants with homeless preference

50.84% of General Needs*(not sheltered) lets went to applicants with homeless preference

Average Waiting times Homeless Applicants only:

	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	5 Bedrooms
Average wait 2016/2017	6 years 3 months	9 years 10 months	9 years 7 months	13 years 1 month	-	-
Average wait 2015/2016	5 years 3 months	8 years 5 months	9 years 8 months	13 years 7 months	16 years 3 months	-

Average Waiting times All Applicants:

	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	5 Bedrooms
Average wait 2016/2017	5 years 7 months	7 years 1 month	8 years 1 month	11 years 1 month	9 years 5 months	4 years 4 months
Average wait 2015/2016	4 years 8 months	6 years 5 months	8 years 7 months	11 years 10 months	17 years 1 month	-