

Proposed Changes to Doncaster Council's Housing Allocations Policy and Recommendations

No	Change	Why?	Public consultation	Recommendation policy change
Change 1	Include incentives for under occupiers of council houses to downsize to a bungalow or flat e.g., enhanced priority.	To increase the number of family houses to re let as we do not have enough for those families in most need. To support our tenants into more affordable and suitable long-term accommodation.	80.60% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 7.04% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.	Award Platinum priority where there is a need for this accommodation Direct Matches can be used where there is a family with a specific need identified. This will maximise the opportunity to increase the number of houses to relet to those most in need.
Change 2	Allocate a proportion of higher demand properties to those with lower needs.	To create balanced and sustainable communities. To give people in lower bands a chance of being rehoused.	74.14% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 7.62% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.	Advertise 5% of properties by management area of the Borough to applicants in the silver, bronze band and transfer list with good tenancy conduct. This will include any allocations through Local Lettings Policies (LLP).
Change 3	Give priority to larger families in a priority band for larger properties (4 bed+ houses).	Only 2% of our housing stock is four bed or larger. There are fewer opportunities for larger families to be rehoused, so if they are in a priority band we should rehouse them first.	66.63% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 11.77% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.	Prioritise all families in the higher priority bands of Gold and Platinum with a 4 bed + housing need to ensure we are giving this additional preference to those most in need.

Change 4	Strengthen the tenancy ready process and the affordability/sustainability of accommodation. Collect more information at application stage to offer targeted support before rehousing applicants who are at risk of tenancy failure e.g. due to affordability issues or previous tenancy failure.	To extend our tenancy sustainability support offer and stop tenants being set up to fail where there are concerns about affordability and sustainability of accommodation.	76.32% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 4.96% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.	Collect more information from applicants at risk of tenancy failure through previous tenancy conduct and/or affordability, who are likely to be rehoused. Ensure information is proportionate and meets General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) principles.
Change 5	Review of priority awarded to Homeless applicants with a priority need in accordance with best practice, e.g. where homelessness cannot be prevented for the unintentionally homeless who are vulnerable.	Prevent delay in Platinum priority being awarded to households where the housing duty owed can only be discharged through a suitable offer of council accommodation. Reduce length of stay in temporary accommodation for these households. Reduce the time taken to be re-housed by awarding the maximum priority.	72.05% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 6.58% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.	Include two additional categories in the Platinum Band relating to homelessness: 1. Where homelessness cannot be prevented and owed a relief duty under Section 189(b) of the Housing Act 1996, in priority need and the local authority is not minded to believe that the household has become intentionally homeless, or the applicant is placed in temporary accommodation under s188, and is unable to access the private rented sector. This is subject to assessment by our Home Options Service. 2. Reapplication to a housing authority within two years of acceptance of a private rented sector offer under section 195A(1), the section

				<p>193(2) duty will apply regardless of whether the applicant has a priority need where: a. a person makes a re-application for assistance within two years of accepting a private rented sector offer under section 193(7AA); and, b. the applicant is eligible for assistance and has become homeless unintentionally.</p> <p>Point 2 is in existing legislation but is not explicit in the current policy.</p> <p>Extend the existing ability to make direct offers after a twenty-eight day period to applicants in the above categories. (Replace policy wording 'will' with 'may').</p> <p>Homeless applicants should make active bids from the first available bidding cycle and case officers reserve the right to make assisted bids on the customer's behalf. This may be outside of the customer's area preferences.</p>
Change 6	Restrict applicants awarded Platinum priority who are moving from supported housing projects into independent living to those where we can nominate homeless people to fill their space. Remove	To open up the referral pathways into supported housing for single homeless cases. Remove the backdate of the priority effective date	<p>61.78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.</p> <p>5.88% of respondents</p>	<p>Restrict to applicants from projects who meet the following criteria.</p> <p>Platinum banding will only be awarded where the applicant's engagement in the 'Resettlement Pathway' is confirmed by the Single</p>

	<p>the priority backdate currently given to these applicants.</p>	<p>as this is to the detriment of the growing number of statutory homeless single people.</p>	<p>disagreed or strongly disagreed.</p>	<p>Point of Access (SPOA) Team. The SPOA Team will confirm engagement where individuals meet the criteria below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The individual was placed via Home Options and SPOA form at the start of their supported accommodation placement. 2. The individual has successfully completed a period of support. 3. The Individual has an up-to-date rent account and service charge. 4. Local connection rules apply in relation to the allocations policy. 5. The vacancy created by moving the individual on will be made available by the provider to Home Options SPOA Team as part of continued flow through the Supported Pathway. 6. Individuals will not be considered to be engaging in the resettlement pathway if they are refusing other suitable and reasonable move-on options such as PRS or non-commissioned supported accommodation.
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				7. As per the allocations policy an individual's Platinum Banding will be removed if they refuse an offer that is deemed suitable and reasonable.
Change 7	Ensure the priority given to domestic abuse victims reflects the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.	To have a clear rehousing policy in line with best practice.	80.37% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 2.77% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.	Have a planned move on category of Gold Band for applicants who are supported by agencies to find alternative accommodation. Continue to assess those fleeing violence through homeless assessment as per the legislation.
Change 8	Change the way we prioritise people bidding on bungalows and age-designated flats advertised to 50+, 40+ and 30+ to band and effective priority date order to ensure we are rehousing people most in need.	Currently, we prioritise applicants in age order before considering their level of housing need.	75.29% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 8.66% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.	As set out in paragraph 17.10 of the report, on balance it is felt that there is a continuing need to prioritise older applicants aged 60 and over, to access appropriate sheltered housing to maintain their independence, health and wellbeing. Therefore, the recommendation is to continue to give additional preference to applicants aged 60 and over and consider any remaining applicants under 60 in priority by band order and not by age.
Change 9	Amend priority for armed forces to include separated/divorced partners in the Platinum priority band if they have left forces accommodation in the last 5 years and have a housing need that they cannot resolve.	To be explicit in meeting the recommendation to support families moving out of armed forces accommodation.	55.78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 12.93% of respondents	Include separated and divorced partners in both exemption from Local Connection criteria and Platinum priority band as family members.

		Cllr Houlbrook has been briefed.	disagreed or strongly disagreed.	In context, we have low numbers in this band with 5 active as of 01/04/2022 of which all were single people.
Change 10	<p>Review the number of offers to applicants before they may lose their priority or, in the case of Bronze and General Band, may be suspended for 6 months e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One offer for all homeless applicants (in all bands), • One offer for all platinum applicants, • Two offers for all gold applicants • Three offers for all other bands. 	<p>To be consistent on the number of offers to applicants given a priority band. To speed up the rehousing process and reduce the number of refusals. To support homeless prevention and the reduction in length of stays in temporary accommodation and supported housing projects.</p>	<p>55.78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.</p> <p>11.89% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.</p>	<p>Replace the current offer restrictions of 3 offers for all applicants excluding statutory homeless applicants who have 1 offer of suitable accommodation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One offer for all homeless applicants (in all bands), • One offer for all platinum applicants • Two offers for all other bands • A penalty of suspension for 6 months (applies to all bands) • Removal of homeless priority <p>Offers to be reasonable and take into account personal circumstances including caring responsibilities/ access to existing schools etc. in a decision-making framework. This has been amended following consultation to increase transparency, simplicity and introduce a more equitable system that is easier to explain, understand and administer.</p>
Change 11	Amend Doncaster Council's Accessible Housing Register (AHR) policy to include a refusal penalty in line with the revised	Many applicants on the Accessible Housing Register have refused more	59.93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.	Include a refusal penalty in line with Change 10 for Accessible Housing Register (AHR) applicants.

	Housing Allocations policy (change 10).	than 10 offers of accommodation that would meet their assessed needs. To be consistent with other applicants in priority bands. To reduce the time it takes to re let these properties.	9.47% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.	Applicants on AHR are in the Gold or Silver Band. The proposal is for two offers. Offers to be reasonable and take into account personal circumstances including caring responsibilities/ access to existing schools etc. and in chosen areas where nominated for properties or on bids placed by the applicant.
Change 12	Simplify the advertising of low demand properties by promoting schemes we know are harder to let on our website to raise awareness and interest before we have a vacancy.	To reduce the administrative process and identify potential tenants more quickly. To ensure more transparency and provide more information on schemes to enable customers to make informed decisions. To manage customer expectation.	70.21% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 2.66% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.	Promote lower demand schemes on our website with open advertising and flexible criteria when required/ Remove the Open Market list of owners who do not qualify for the Housing Register due to increases in demand, properties are rarely advertised to this list.
Change 13	Be clearer on where we reserve the right to not offer a property e.g. where there is a local lettings policy, a property is not medically suitable, we receive an unsatisfactory reference at confirmation stage etc.	To increase applicants' understanding and manage expectations by giving examples of the reasons why we may not continue with	75.52% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. 2.65% of respondents	Include a section on Right not to offer in the policy include examples such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe Overcrowding • Does not meet identified medical needs

		an offer of accommodation.	disagreed or strongly disagreed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsuitable to live in a sheltered scheme • Does not meet the criteria of a Local Lettings Policy • Property no longer available
Change 14	Include Doncaster Council's right to suspend the housing register and allocations process to respond to an emergency / extraordinary circumstance.	To be able to respond to emergency events that present overwhelming short-term demand on available stock e.g., floods and the pandemic.	<p>67.79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.</p> <p>7.50% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.</p>	Include Doncaster Council's right to suspend the housing register and allocations process to respond to an emergency / extraordinary circumstance. To be agreed by the SLHD Chief Executive Officer and Housing Portfolio Holder.