

Waverley Homechoice

Key Points of Waverley's Choice Based Lettings Allocation Scheme May 2020

Introduction

Waverley Borough Council is required to have an allocation scheme to determine how social housing in its area is allocated. This leaflet summarises who is able to be included on Waverley's housing register and what level of priority is given to those that are.

Social housing in Waverley is in very short supply. The housing service is paid for out of public funds and we work hard to protect these funds from fraud and corruption. In accordance with S.171 of the Housing Act 1996 anyone found guilty of attempting to obtain accommodation by deliberately giving false information or withholding information relevant to their application is liable to be prosecuted and fined up to £5000. The Council will use all available means to prosecute anyone suspected of such an offence.

Ground 5 in schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by S.146 of the 1996 Housing Act) enables a housing authority to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by the tenant or a person acting on the tenant's instigation.

In verifying information provided by applicants the Council reserves the right to check information provided by customers with a commercial data matching service(s).

1. Who can be included on the Housing Register?

To be on Waverley's housing register applicants must:

- be considered to be in housing need **and** have a local connection to Waverley
- not owe Waverley Borough Council or another landlord money
- not own their home or have previously exercised the Right to Buy
- have an annual household income less than £60,000 and savings less than £30,000
- not have been proven to have committed anti-social behaviour, housing benefit fraud or sub-letting of social housing
- not already be a tenant of social housing to which the Council does not have a nomination right
- have a legal right to be included on Waverley's register

2. What are the different levels of priority?

If you are included on the register your application will be assessed and placed in one of 3 bands:

Band A – Highest housing need and strong connection to Waverley

Band B – High housing need and strong connection to Waverley

Band C – Medium housing need and strong or medium connection to Waverley

Discretionary Pool

Some applications that don't meet the banding criteria for band A-C may be placed in a Discretionary Pool. These will include applications from households that the Council is legally obliged to consider and those that the Council may need to house in the future such as those in supported accommodation but who are not yet ready to live independently.

3. Who is priority awarded to?

The table below summarises the main priorities of Waverley's scheme:

| Band | Criteria | Examples |
|----------|---|---|
| A | <p>Highest housing need</p> <p>Emergency and high priority</p> | <p>Medical emergency/disability</p> <p>Exceptional circumstances/urgent welfare grounds e.g. child/adult protection, threats to life etc – supporting 3rd party evidence from Police/Social Services/Health and no alternative options to social housing available</p> <p>Severe environmental health grounds e.g. demolition, prohibition order or extreme disrepair and there are no realistic options to rectify the problem or to secure alternative housing.</p> <p>Emergency Strategic Priorities e.g. permanent urgent decants from Council housing, releasing under occupied (by 2 bedrooms) or disabled adapted social housing and the Council is able to allocate the resulting vacancy, management transfers</p> |
| B | <p>High housing need</p> <p>Urgent need to move</p> | <p>Significant medical hardship/severe social hardship or multiple needs e.g. child/adult protection, domestic abuse, urgent need to move to give or receive essential support</p> <p>Priority overcrowding – 2 or more bedrooms deficient or other exceptional circumstances and all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the issues</p> <p>Social housing tenants in Waverley lacking one or more bedrooms where at least one child is over 10.</p> |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| | | <p>Loss of tied or armed forces accommodation through no fault of applicant and official notice given</p> <p>Young people leaving care and ready for re-housing</p> <p>High priority/strategic lettings e.g. move on from supported housing schemes, less urgent permanent decants of council housing, under occupation of social housing by one bedroom and the Council has nomination rights to the resulting vacancy</p> <p>Reciprocal or mobility arrangements with other Councils, housing associations, police</p> <p>Succession cases where the tenant is under occupying the home</p> <p>Serious health and safety/disrepair issues that cannot readily be addressed by the landlord or through Council enforcement action and where a move to other private rented or other housing is not available/ appropriate/reasonable</p> <p>Armed service or former armed service personnel or their bereaved spouses/partner with a local connection to Waverley, not already benefitting from social housing and assessed as being in housing need.</p> |
| <p>C</p> | <p>Medium housing need</p> <p>Identified housing need</p> | <p>Applicants who need to move on medical and/or disability grounds where the housing circumstances have a significant effect on the medical condition</p> <p>Homeless households e.g. those in temporary accommodation owed S193 duty, other unintentionally homeless households, those sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough and engaging with the Housing Options Team.</p> <p>Other strategic lettings e.g. those in private rented accommodation (Assured Shorthold Tenants) needing to move to more affordable housing.</p> <p>Unsatisfactory or insanitary conditions e.g. those sharing accommodation with household members not included in their application, lack of facilities/disrepair category 2 Housing Health and Safety Rating System hazard (HHSRS)</p> <p>Social / Welfare hardship e.g. moving a household nearer to a source of essential support or to help social services deliver a care plan.</p> |

| | | |
|----------|---------------------------|---|
| | | <p>Armed service or former armed service personnel or their bereaved spouses / partners assessed as being in housing need but no local connection to Waverley.</p> <p>Tied tenants seeking alternative accommodation</p> <p>Overcrowded Social housing tenants living in Waverley lacking one bedroom where all the children are under 10 years old.</p> |
| D | Discretionary Pool | <p>Applicants with a local connection to Waverley in supported housing in Waverley or other local areas but are not yet ready to move on.</p> <p>Other homeless applicants with a legal right be considered for an allocation of housing e.g. intentionally homelessness households</p> <p>Armed service or former armed service personnel with no housing need, with or without local connection.</p> <p>Care-leavers with a local connection to Waverley but not ready to live independently</p> <p>Elderly applicants in need of senior living accommodation where a case can be made for moving closer to family support and the housing needs cannot be reasonably met elsewhere. Alternatively elderly applicants, on a case by case basis, where the senior living vacancies are in less demand.</p> |

4. What is a local connection to Waverley?

a) Strong Connection

Those who have at least five years continuous and settled residence in the Borough of Waverley

To be included in bands A or B applicants must also have a strong connection to Waverley. This requirement does not apply to those already in social housing in the borough and discretion can be applied in exceptional circumstances e.g. fleeing domestic abuse.

b) Medium Connection

Those that fulfil at least one of the following:

- *have lived in the Borough for three out of the last five years*
- *have previously lived in the borough by continuously, by choice, for at least 5 years*
- *be permanently employed in the borough for at least the last 12 months (at least 16 hours a week)*
- *Have a close relative who has lived in the borough continuously for at least the last 5 years. Close relative defined as: adult brother or sister, father, mother, adult son or daughter*
- *Have a local connection through special / exceptional circumstances*

To be in band C applicants must at least have a medium connection to Waverley.

c) Local Connection and the Armed Forces

Following recent Government legislation the following applicants are not disqualified from applying to register for housing due to local connection criteria:

- serving members of the Armed Forces
- former members of the Armed Forces where application is made within five years of discharge
- bereaved spouses or civil partners of serving members of the Armed Forces where the spouse or partners death is attributable to their service and as a result the bereaved spouse or partner entitlement to reside in ministry of defence accommodation ceases
- serving members of the Reserve Forces who need to move due to serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service

5. Who has most priority in each band?

Priority within bands is determined by date. Often this is the date of application. **The application with the oldest priority date in a band will have the highest priority.**

If an application is re-assessed as meeting the criteria for a higher band, the priority date is amended to the date of the assessment for higher priority. This means that someone currently in band C, but assessed as now meeting Band B criteria, will not leap frog ahead of those who are already in band B.

6. How do we assess the size of property you require?

Waverley's allocation scheme reflects the housing benefit bedroom standard which will apply to both private rented tenants and social housing tenants as detailed below:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| One adult or couple | One bed |
| Couple or lone parent with one child | Two bed |
| Couple or lone parent with two children of the same sex under 16 | Two bed |
| Couple or lone parent with two children of opposite sex under 10 | Two bed |
| Couple or lone parent with two children of opposite sex where one is over 10 | Three bed |
| Couple or lone parent with three children | Three bed |
| Couple or lone parent with two children of the same sex where one is over 16 | Three bed |
| Couple or lone parent with 4 or more children | Three or four bed |

The full allocation scheme is available on Waverley's website – www.waverley.gov.uk

If you have any further queries about the allocation scheme please contact 01483 523197.

Please note that just because you may not be eligible to go on the register does not mean we can't offer any help. Our housing options team work hard to provide housing options advice and assistance to Waverley residents. Further details are available at www.waverley.gov.uk/housingoptions or on 01483 523197.