



# Housing Allocation Scheme

This document sets out Islington Council's **Allocation Scheme** for allocating Council homes and nominations to Registered Social Landlords.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

# **Contents**

## **Introduction**

Equalities

Discretionary Powers

## **Chapter One: Eligibility**

- 1.1 Applying for housing
  - 1.1.1 Who can join the Housing List
  - 1.1.2 Young people aged 16 and 17
  - 1.1.3 Rent Arrears
- 1.2 The Housing List
  - 1.2.1 Applicants who cannot join the housing list
  - 1.2.2 Unacceptable behaviour
- 1.3 Applications from homeowners
  - 1.3.1 Reciprocal rehousing arrangements

## **Chapter Two: Rehousing Standards**

- 2.1 Size Standards
- 2.2 Splitting large households
- 2.3 Property type

## **Chapter Three: Statutory Homelessness**

- 3.1 Statutory Homeless Applicants

## **Chapter Four: Choice-Based Lettings**

- 4.1 Choice Based Lettings
- 4.2 Multiple Bids
- 4.3 Housing Co-ops, Tenant Managed Organisations (TMO's) and other Landlords

## **Chapter Five: Points Scheme**

- 5.1 Overview of Points
- 5.2 Housing List Points
- 5.3 How points are awarded

- 5.3.1 Residence Points
- 5.3.2 Bedspaces lacking
- 5.3.3 Over-crowded Social Housing Tenants
- 5.3.4 Homeless And Insecurity Points
- 5.3.5 Social Care Quota
- 5.3.6 Community Based Allocations
- 5.3.7 Decants and major works
- 5.3.8 Management transfers
- 5.3.9 Under-Occupation
- 5.4.0 Medical and Welfare Needs
- 5.4.1 Waiting Time Points

## **Chapter Six: Medical Need for housing**

- 6.1 Disability And Medical Needs Scheme
- 6.2 Notes On the Medical Points Scheme
- 6.3 Home Owners
- 6.4 General Housing Requirements
- 6.5 Further Arrangements For Carers

## **Chapter Seven: Wheelchair and Mobility Need for Rehousing**

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Occupational Therapist Assessments
- 7.3 Priority For Assessment With Occupational Therapists
- 7.4 Children
- 7.5 Wheelchair and Mobility Points

## **Chapter Eight: Welfare Need For Rehousing**

- 8.1 Welfare Points
- 8.2 Relationship Breakdown

## **Chapter Nine: Sheltered Housing**

## **Chapter Ten: Social Care Quotas**

- 10.1 Adult Social Services and Children's Services
- 10.2 Supported Housing Move-On

## **Chapter Eleven: Under Occupation Transfers**

- 11.1 Under-occupation Scheme
- 11.2 Under-occupation points

## **Chapter Twelve: Community Based Allocation Policies**

- 12.1 Intra-Estate transfers
- 12.2 Lettings to older applicants
- 12.3 New Generation Scheme
- 12.4 Key Workers
- 12.5 Regeneration Areas

## **Chapter Thirteen: Succession And Inheritance**

- 13.1 Succession of tenancies
- 13.2 Discretionary tenancies

## **Chapter Fourteen: Reviews And Appeals**

- 14.1 Reviews Of Decisions
- 14.2 Appeals Against Points Awards
- 14.3 Appeals Against Offers

## **Chapter Fifteen: Other Local Authorities**

## Introduction

This document sets out Islington Council's Allocation Scheme for determining priorities for allocating Council homes and nominations to Registered Social Landlords. The Allocation Scheme has been revised to comply with the changes made to the law on allocations by the Homelessness Act 2002. In revising the Allocation Scheme, the Council also has regard to the Code of Guidance on the Allocations of Accommodation issued by the Government in November 2002.

The Allocation Scheme sets out the rules for selecting applicants for offers of housing.

Islington Council has decided that the allocations policy should be guided by the following principles:

- It must comply with statutory rules set out under in legislation and accompanying regulations. Regard should also be given to the Code of Guidance issued by Central Government.
- Temporary accommodation costs are reduced by ensuring homelessness is prevented and homeless people and people who are threatened with homelessness are rehoused as soon as practicably possible.
- People are encouraged to work with Islington Council to prevent homelessness.
- Customers considered to be extremely high priority (including decants, under-occupying tenants, management transfers and people with serious medical problems) should be assessed accordingly so that the priority is reflected in their position on the waiting lists.
- It must complement the Council's other responsibilities, for example to meet social care needs.
- It must be simple and fair, so that it is easy for local people to understand and allows staff to fill vacant properties quickly, and ensures equal opportunities for all sections of the community.
- It should anticipate the majority of housing problems so that the need for individual discretionary decisions is minimised.
- Procedures for reviewing decisions on priority or the suitability of offers need to be open and accountable.
- The most serious insanitary or overcrowded housing in the borough must be addressed.

## **Equalities**

The Council serves a diverse community, and is committed to meeting the needs of that community in the provision of housing allocation, by working in partnership with other housing providers.

The Council will ensure that customers are treated fairly and equally and not use discriminatory practices when allocating housing.

The Council will monitor and analyse how effective the Allocation Scheme is at meeting the needs of Islington's diverse community and use the information obtained to develop future policies and services.

The Council recognises that it is important that everyone who applies for re-housing understands the Allocation Scheme. The Council will produce information leaflets, along with translations, large print and Braille versions that are available for applicants.

## **Discretionary Powers**

The Allocation Scheme cannot cover every eventuality. In special cases with exceptional needs, the **Assistant Director of Housing (Needs and Strategy)** has discretionary power to award additional priority and approve offers of housing, taking into consideration all factors relevant to housing and social needs.

At various sections of the policy reference is made to rules for determining priority and eligibility for housing. In all these instances, subject to any legal constraints, discretionary powers may be used to deal with special cases which may need to be treated in an exceptional way.

## Chapter 1: ELIGIBILITY

### 1.1 Applying for Housing

Any person may approach the Council and ask to join the Housing List. Housing association tenants who live in Islington may approach their landlord, and other people may approach their local council, and ask to be nominated to Islington “under a mobility scheme.” Applicants are required to put their current address on their housing application form.

#### 1.1.1 Who can join the Housing List

The Council can select new tenants or nominate a person to be an assured tenant of housing held by a registered social landlord only in accordance with Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Housing Act 2002. Part VI also applies to the allocation of housing to other types of applicants such as existing Council tenants who are seeking a transfer. However the Council's allocations policy does set out how housing is allocated to such groups.

This section explains what conditions must be satisfied for a household to be eligible to be placed on the Housing List or any other list dealt with under this policy.

Anyone can join the Housing List except those who by law are unable to join.

#### 1.1.2 Young people aged 16 and 17

Applicants aged 16 and 17 who are non-dependant may join the Housing List if they require independent or semi-independent accommodation not provided by social services.

#### 1.1.3 Rent Arrears

Generally Islington Council tenants in rent arrears may not bid for a transfer unless they have permission from Homes For Islington. This general rule will be waived, at the discretion of Homes For Islington if:

- There are urgent grounds for rehousing (for example violence, decant, major works) **and**
- Normally, the tenant has entered into and maintained for **six** months an agreement to pay off the arrears where practicable and where it would be reasonable to rely on this condition.

In making decisions, factors such as the exact level of arrears and the reason why the tenant fell behind with the rent will be taken into account.

Conditions may be attached, for example the tenant can only be housed in same type and standard of property as their present accommodation.

Eligibility for a transfer will normally be cancelled if the tenant fails to keep to agreements regarding paying off the arrears unless there are good reasons why eligibility should be retained.

Where a tenant applies for a transfer and subsequently falls into arrears, their application will be registered but they may not be eligible to bid unless the arrears have been cleared.

## **1.2 The Housing List**

### **1.2.1 Applicants who cannot join the housing list**

People from abroad who are subject to immigration control under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 cannot join the Housing List unless they are either:

- Already a secure tenant of the Council

Or

- An assured tenant of housing allocated to them by the Council.

Or

- Fall in a class of persons set out on regulations made by the government.

People who fall within regulations made by the government as not being eligible to join unless they are either:

- Already a secure tenant of the Council

Or

- An assured tenant of housing allocated to them by the Council.

### **1.2.2 Unacceptable behaviour:**

Generally, applicants, or members of their household who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be Council tenants will not be accepted onto the lists.

Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Failing to pay rent
- Breaching a condition of the tenancy agreement
- Causing a nuisance to neighbours

- Being convicted of using their home for immoral or illegal purposes.
- Making a false statement to obtain a tenancy.
- Causing the condition of the property to deteriorate by a deliberate act.
- Being convicted of an arrestable offence, in or in the vicinity of their home.
- Domestic violence causing a partner or other family member to leave the property.

If a person is disqualified from joining the housing list then by law the Council cannot allocate a tenancy to him or her even jointly with someone else who is entitled to join the housing list.

### **1.3 Applications from Home Owners**

Housing applications from owner-occupiers are initially assessed in line with Housing List criteria.

Generally, homeowners are eligible if it is unreasonable to expect them to resolve their housing need by:

- Selling the property and purchasing another one **OR**
- Adapting their present home.

In determining whether the applicant is eligible, account will be taken of the following factors:

- Whether the applicant can sell their current home.
- The supply of accommodation suitable for the applicant's specific needs on the private market for either sale or rent.
- The expected equity after the proposed sale of the property.
- The applicant's financial circumstances and commitments.
- The applicant's mortgage potential.
- Consideration as to whether the applicant's housing need can be met on the private market outside the borough. Special ties with the borough will be considered, as well as the cost of housing outside the borough.
- Whether the adaptation of the present property is a viable option.

Exceptional circumstances can be considered, for example, the assessment of the social support and care needs of the individual. Each application with exceptional needs will be assessed on its own merits.

Where the Council does agree to assist with rehousing the applicant must undertake to place their home on the open market immediately. They may not rent their home or make any financial gain while waiting to sell.

(See also section 6.3 for Homeowners with Medical Needs)

### **1.3.1 Reciprocal Rehousing arrangements**

The Assistant Director of Housing (Needs and Strategy) and the Rehousing Manager have authority to consider or decide on requests made by other Councils to re-house a person, including the offer of a reciprocal vacancy for an Islington applicant.

## Chapter 2: Rehousing Standards

### 2.1 Size Standard

This standard determines the size of accommodation that may be offered if an applicant is eligible for housing under the Council's allocations policies.

The housing size standards operated by the Council are:

- a single person can be housed in a bedsitter
- people of the opposite sex, where one or both is aged 10 years or older, should not have to share a bedroom unless they are both over 16 and living as a couple. For example, if two people of opposite sex, both aged under 16 and one aged over 10, share a room 10 points will be given.
- people aged 16 years or older, not living as a couple, should not have to share a bedroom.
- two people aged 16 years or older living as a couple only need one bedroom.
- no more than two people should have to share a room. Children under 10 count as half a person for these purposes. This rule may be waived in exceptional circumstances by the **Rehousing Manager** if necessary for the Council to rehouse a large household, providing statutory overcrowding is not caused.
- a confirmed pregnancy over 24 weeks, supported by details of the Expected Date of Delivery, counts as a child.

In exceptional cases, an **extra** bedroom may be agreed, on medical or welfare grounds, where the nature of a condition suffered by a household member makes it essential to have a separate bedroom.

Customers may bid for properties that are a bedsize smaller than their housing requirements. This decision is at the discretion of the Rehousing Manager or a more Senior Officer.

### 2.2 Splitting large households

There is a shortage of larger properties within the borough for households that need four bedroom accommodation or larger. In these cases, with the household's agreement, consideration may be made to offering two separate properties.

The Council will consider the types of properties required and ensure there is an adult as part of each tenancy.

### **2.3 Property Type**

Ground floor flats, street properties, houses and maisonettes and properties that are suitable for adaptation are in very short supply. The Council will ensure that the few that do become available are available to those in most need of them. Applicants may be selected for these properties on the basis of an assessed need for this property type, not on the basis of applicants' preferences. This applies equally to Council tenants and other applicants for rehousing.

## **Chapter 3: Statutory homeless applicants**

### **3.1 Statutory Homeless Applicants**

Applicants to whom a housing duty is owed under S193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996, or S192 (3) will be placed on the Housing List.

The relevant date for assessing the length of wait will be the date of application for homeless applicants.

## **Chapter 4: Choice Based Lettings**

### **4.1 Choice Based Lettings**

Islington Council operates a choice based lettings scheme called Home Connections. As far as possible, all Council, housing associations, co-op managed and tenant management organisations (TMOS) properties are allocated through this scheme. There may be exceptions including wheelchair adapted properties, mobility units and Sheltered Housing.

The Council reserves the right to make a direct offer of housing in discharge of any of its housing duties where it feels it is necessary to do so. This decision is at the discretion of the Rehousing Manager.

### **4.2 Multiple Bids**

The Council will set a threshold for the number of points needed in order to bid for properties, so that customers do not make pointless bids. The threshold will be kept under review. In November it was 140 points for all bedsize categories.

Applicants may bid for a maximum of three properties in one week unless they have permission from the Rehousing Manager to bid for more.

### **4.3 Housing Co-op's Tenant Managed-Organisations (TMO's) and other Landlords.**

Some landlords, coops and TMOs, due to their specialist nature, may require applicants with certain additional criteria, for example, ethnic origin, disability, income criteria or ability to take part in a co-op. These additional criteria will be included as part of the advertisement.

## Chapter 5: POINTS SCHEMES

### 5.1 Overview of points schemes

In general applicants are selected for rehousing according to a points scheme. Applicants are given points for housing need factors, and these points are added together.

The needs of all individuals in the applicant's household will be taken into account when points are awarded.

Points may be reviewed at any time and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on changes in the circumstances.

### 5.2 The Housing List Points

Points are given to applicants on the Housing List as follows:

Applicants who have been resident in the borough continuously for the last six months or have a relevant local connection with Islington (see explanatory note below)	100
For each additional bedspace required	10
Social housing tenants who are overcrowded	15
Sexual overcrowding: where two people of opposite sex have to share a bedroom and one is aged 10 years or older (unless they are either 16 or older and living as a couple).	10
Age overcrowding: where a person aged 16 or older has to share a bedroom with another person (unless they are both 16 or older and living as a couple). This includes parents having to share with their children.	10
Lacking access to facilities: applicants who share or lack more than one of the following: cooking facilities, hot water, cold water, toilet, bathroom	10
Disability or Medical needs (See chapter 6)	20, 50 or 100
Welfare Needs (See chapter 8)	20, 50 or 100
Social Care Quotas	90
Community Based Allocations (up to annual limit)	90
New Generation Scheme 1 Beds	30
New Generation Scheme 2 Beds	90

Homelessness and insecurity	10, 70 or 100
Decants	100 or 200
Major works	60 or 120
Management Transfers	60 or 100
Under occupying social housing tenants - for each bedroom being traded down (plus an additional 100 points for applicants moving from 2 bedroom to 1 bedroom property or an additional 40 points for applicants moving from a 3 bedroom to a 2 bedroom property)	60
Waiting time points, for each year waiting	5% of total excluding waiting time points and residence points.

## 5.3 How points are awarded

### 5.3.1 Residence and other relevant connection with Islington

These points will only be awarded to applicants who are living in Islington, unless they are:

1. homeless applicants towards whom the Council has accepted a long term rehousing duty or applicants who have accepted a private sector housing opportunity to prevent homelessness
2. accepted for rehousing in Islington under an agreement with other local authorities, for example through a mobility scheme or
3. retiring British armed forces personnel who satisfied the residence criteria in Islington when they enlisted or
4. admitted to hospital outside Islington but satisfied the residence criteria at the time of admission or
5. released from prison or other institution and satisfied the residence criteria when they were admitted to prison or institution or
6. following an itinerant lifestyle (confirmed by a care agency) or have assessed care needs that can only be met in Islington.

Applicants who have been placed in Islington by another local authority which has an interim or long-term duty to them as homeless applicants will not be given these points.

### **5.3.2 Bedspaces Lacking**

For each bedspace lacking according to space standard set out in Chapter 2 the applicant is given 10 points.

### **5.3.3 Overcrowded Social Housing Tenants**

The additional points awarded to social housing tenants reflect the fact that overcrowding among families is more acute in social housing than the private sector, and if they help the family to move a unit of social housing will be available for letting to another household.

### **5.3.4 Homelessness and Insecurity**

These points have two purposes: to ensure that people facing homelessness are rehoused before having to go through the homelessness system, and to ensure those who have been accepted as homeless are rehoused. It is important for applicants to understand that applying as homeless does not automatically mean being rehoused by the Council faster than otherwise: if the Council finds comfortable and secure temporary accommodation the priority for rehousing will fall. These points will be in addition to other points, so for example families in hostels may also have points for sharing facilities, and homeless at home applicants will have overcrowding points.

10 points will be given to applicants accepted as homeless who are housed by the local authority in temporary accommodation or people who are living in insecure accommodation and are threatened with homelessness.

100 points will be given to homeless applicants in properties where the lease is about to expire and who cannot be found comparable alternative temporary accommodation.

Homeless families (where the Council has accepted a housing duty) in bed and breakfast, or shared annexes for more than six consecutive weeks from the date of placement and who cannot be found suitable self-contained temporary accommodation will receive 100 points. This does not include families placed in council owned hostels.

70 points will be given where:

- The applicant will inevitably become homeless and the Council will have a rehousing duty (e.g. school caretakers)
- The household is a single person or childless couple requiring studio or one bedroom accommodation and the Council has accepted a housing duty.
- The Council has accepted a homeless duty but is not providing temporary accommodation.

- The applicant is living in a refuge or similar accommodation and the Council has accepted a homeless duty.

### **5.3.5 Social Care Quotas**

Further details are given in Chapter 10 under Social Care Quota. At November 2005 these applicants were awarded 90 points, but this may change.

### **5.3.6 Community Based Allocations**

Up to 90 points may be awarded for applicants who fall into these schemes. Further details are given in Chapter 12.

### **5.3.7 Decants and Major Works**

These points are awarded when a tenant needs to be rehoused to allow repair, clearance, demolition or disposal of their home. The Council has discretion to award 60 points when a property is in a works programme, but rehousing is not immediately required.

Most major works moves will be temporary and the tenant will be required to return to their original property upon completion of the works.

The Council may also award major works or decant points in exceptional circumstances to allow a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) tenant to move where the RSL cannot provide rehousing and the redevelopment is considered to be in the Council's interest.

A higher points value may be awarded with the agreement of the Assistant Director of Housing to ensure a move to allow redevelopment or repair to property in an emergency.

The Council reserves the right to make an offer of housing outside the choice based lettings scheme to applicants who have been unsuccessful at bidding for properties.

### **5.3.8 Management Transfers**

These points can only be agreed at the Council's discretion where it is necessary to move a tenant urgently for their safety or to prevent a major disturbance. They will only be awarded for exceptional cases that fall outside the welfare points scheme, for example when the police require permanent witness protection or in the most severe cases of harassment or violence.

These points may be reviewed every 3 months.

### **5.3.9 Under Occupation Scheme**

This Council currently operates an Under Occupation Scheme, which encourages tenants who are under-occupying their Council homes to move to smaller homes. The objective of the scheme is to make the most effective use of the Council's limited housing stock by releasing properties for use to households who are living in over-crowded or temporary accommodation.

The Under-Occupation Scheme may also provide a financial incentive (£500.00 per bedroom at November 2005) for applicants who are under-occupying their property.

Under occupying tenants in four bedroom properties or larger who would normally qualify for a one bedroom property may bid for a two bedroom property. This will reduce their priority and may reduce the financial incentive to move.

### **5.1.0 Medical And Welfare Needs**

The points schemes for these factors are set out in Chapters 6 and 8.

#### **5.1.1 Waiting Time Points**

All applicants will receive 5% of their total housing needs points excluding residence and waiting time points for each complete year waiting on the housing register. For homeless applicants this will be for each complete year from the date of issue of the S184 decision.

## Chapter 6: MEDICAL NEED FOR REHOUSING

### 6.1 Disability and Medical Needs Scheme

The Council gives medical points depending on how unsuitable an applicant's current accommodation is in relation to their medical needs. If there is a medical problem, but the accommodation is suitable for the medical needs, no medical points will be given.

There are three medical categories that an applicant can belong to:

Category A 100 points

Category A may be granted to people who have an urgent need to move for medical reasons. This would include people whose life might be at risk due to their housing conditions or who are completely housebound because of the type of accommodation they live in. It will also include bed-blockers in hospitals or similar institutions.

Category B 50 points

Category B may be granted to people whose housing is unsuitable for medical reasons, but whose need to move is less urgent. We look at each case individually to decide whether the medical condition is such that the applicant needs to move on medical grounds.

Category C 20 points

Category C may be granted to people who have been given points for other reasons, and who have a medical condition that is caused or made worse by their housing problems. We give these points in recognition of your medical problem, but your need to move is less urgent than people who have been awarded extra points in Category A or B.

No points are awarded to people whose accommodation is suitable for their medical needs. An example might be an applicant who uses a wheelchair, but who already lives in a wheelchair-adapted flat.

Several people in the same household may have a medical or psychiatric illness, or a disability. The Council will take this into account if it is relevant to your housing circumstances and give further points to households with more than one sick or disabled member. Points will be awarded as follows, with no upper limit for the total number of points.

<b>For the highest category person</b>	<b>100 (Category A)</b> <b>50 (Category B)</b> <b>20 (Category C)</b>
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<b>For the second highest person</b>	<b>20 (Category A)</b> <b>10 (Category B)</b> <b>5 (Category C)</b>
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<b>For other family members</b>	<b>10 (Category A)</b>
	<b>5 (Category B)</b>
	<b>2 (Category C)</b>

For example, if three family members are assessed as having a medical need for a move and one is assessed as Category B and two as Category C, the total award for the household would be 57 points (50+5+2). If one family member who was a Category C is reassessed as Category A then the points would be work out again at 112 (100+10+2).

The medical assessment service will recommend the type of housing that is suitable. Applicants can choose to accept properties from a wider range than recommended without affecting their medical points.

Priority for ground floor accommodation will be given to applicants who have been assessed by the medical officer with a need for ground floor accommodation.

## **6.2 Notes on the Medical Points Scheme**

A “*medical condition*” shall include a physical or mental illness, disability or incapacity including behavioural syndromes such as extreme hyper-activity or autism, problems of physical or mental development and drug or alcohol related disorders.

Points may only be awarded if rehousing is needed to solve or alleviate the medical condition.

Points may only be awarded if repairs or adaptation to the property that will ease the medical condition cannot be reasonably carried out or enforced.

No points may be awarded for a medical condition, however severe, if the present housing can be improved upon or does not affect the medical condition.

Points may initially be awarded based on the information given by the applicant on the appropriate form. Information given by the applicant may be verified by writing to a doctor or other health professional or by home visit.

Where more than one applicant in a given household is eligible for medical points, the needs of all individuals will be taken into account when points are awarded.

Other information provided by Social Care teams will, of course, be taken into account but may not automatically qualify an applicant for the higher points awards indicated above. Comparable bodies such as Islington Women’s Aid may also be asked to provide supporting information.

No points will be awarded if the applicant is not capable of independent living; these cases will be referred to a Social Care Team.

### **6.3 Home Owners**

Medical points may only be awarded to homeowners in the following circumstances:

- **Either** it is physically impossible to adapt the current accommodation to alleviate the medical condition **or**
- It is too expensive to adapt the existing accommodation to alleviate the medical condition **or**
- Adaptations are possible and affordable but would still not render the home suitable for occupation on medical grounds **and**

The applicant cannot afford to buy or rent suitable alternative housing.

### **6.4 General Housing Requirements**

1. Where an applicant is rehoused partly or wholly due to a medical assessment, the Council may depart from normal Council policy restrictions on type, size and location of offers where this is justified on grounds of medical need.
2. An offer of accommodation may be withdrawn where medical evidence strongly suggests it would be detrimental to the health and well being of the applicant.
3. Any decision to vary the normal rehousing standards on medical grounds must be approved by the Rehousing Manager or the Housing Medical Officer.

### **6.5 Further arrangements for carers**

Carers who give up their own accommodation in order to live with an applicant will be entitled to be rehoused on the death of the client or the breakdown of the arrangement provided:

- They can show proof of the sale of their former accommodation or termination of a former tenancy.
- They did not receive sufficient funds from the sale of their former accommodation to purchase a property or meet their housing need by other means.

The offer of rehousing may not be in the home occupied as a carer if it is not suitable in terms of size and character.

Applicants may be given an additional bedroom for a carer if:

- Medical evidence strongly suggests that there is a need for a member of the household, who would otherwise be expected to share, to have his or her own room and this will lead to an alleviation of the medical condition.
- The applicant requires personal care by day and night and an additional room is required for a live-in carer. In order to qualify for this position, a carer should live with the applicant on a full time basis and provide care for at least 35 hours per week or has to provide overnight care for more than 3 nights a week. The carer should normally be in receipt of Invalid Care Allowance (ICA), or recognised or employed by, or on behalf of a Social Work team. It may not be appropriate to insist on receipt of ICA if the carer has a job and is earning more than £50 per week, but independent evidence of the care arrangement will still be required. The carer should be a named individual unless care is provided on a rota arrangement made by the appropriate Social Work team, or agents working on their behalf.

## Chapter 7: WHEELCHAIR AND MOBILITY NEED FOR REHOUSING

### 7.1 Introduction

Some housing applicants need to be rehoused because they are permanently and substantially disabled and their present accommodation is unsuitable.

All applicants for Wheelchair and Mobility accommodation will be drawn from the Housing List. Once an applicant is approved as having a Wheelchair and Mobility need for rehousing they will be rehoused according to a separate points scheme as set out in section 7.5.

### 7.2 Occupational Therapist Assessments

Referrals for assessment will be made when the applicant is permanently and substantially disabled and is likely to need mobility or wheelchair housing, and their condition is affected by their current housing.

Medical conditions needing a referral include major strokes, neurological disease including multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, Parkinson's disease, amputees and advanced rheumatoid or osteo-arthritis. The above list is not exhaustive.

When an assessment is required, and based on the occupational therapist's assessment, the applicant may be considered for either:

- **Wheelchair Adapted Accommodation:** Properties specially built or adapted for occupation by a tenant (or a member of their household) who is in a wheelchair **OR**
- **Mobility Adapted Accommodation:** Properties which are purpose built or adapted to accommodate tenants who are disabled by a degenerative medical condition whose functional abilities will (or are likely to) deteriorate, **or** tenants whose mobility is so severely impaired that they are unable to negotiate any stairs or steps.

### 7.3 Priority For Assessment With Occupational Therapists

The following applicants have priority for occupational therapist assessment:

- wheelchair users
- people who are unable to get in or out of bed or use a toilet or commode
- people who are living alone and unable to feed themselves
- people with deteriorating neurological conditions (for example, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease)

## 7.4 Children

The Children Act automatically defines disabled children, including those with childhood specific conditions (e.g. Cystic Fibrosis, Cerebral Palsy) as 'children in need' and places various duties on the Council. Assessment of a child's needs will be in line with both the medical assessment and occupational therapy assessment processes, and in full consultation with the Social Care team.

## 7.5 Wheelchair and Mobility Points

The following points scheme will be used for assessing applications for wheelchair and mobility property:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
Assessed as unable to leave hospital until suitable accommodation found	20
Danger of self harm, for example, suicide, risk of falling down stairs	20
Applicant suffers from a terminal condition	20
Applicant is housebound	10
Care manager advises care package likely to fail because of present housing	10
Unable to access WC	5
Unable to access bathroom	5
Unable to access bedroom	5
Unable to access living room	5
Unable to access kitchen	5
Present home has unreliable lift (i.e. 2+ breakdown per month over 6 months)	5
No lift and above ground floor	10

## **Chapter 8: WELFARE NEED OR HARDSHIP GROUNDS REHOUSING**

### **8.1 Welfare Points**

Information in support of applications for welfare points may be requested from Social Services, external care organisations and other voluntary organisations such as Islington Women's Aid. **Only one award of welfare points will be made for the whole household.**

**100 points may** be awarded to applicants whose welfare needs or to avoid hardship are so severe that the protection of vulnerable adults or children is only possible in a permanent home and where the present circumstances could deteriorate to such an extent as to place family members, particularly children, at risk or in need of residential care unless permanent housing is offered. These points may only be awarded where housing or the domestic situation severely affects the welfare of the applicant.

Examples of this include:

- Where the applicant is severely vulnerable due to frailty or advanced age and is unable to be placed in a series of temporary units.
- Where the applicant has undergone lengthy and expensive rehabilitation in residential surroundings and is ready to attempt independent living in the community and temporary accommodation would risk undoing the work of the centre or unit. This group includes former mental health quota cases.
- Where the accommodation is required to meet the assessed needs of relevant children and other care leavers under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.
- Where children have been identified as vulnerable and settled accommodation is essential.
- Where it is necessary to move because of the threat of violence or harassment, including domestic and sexual violence. This may include people whose needs have been assessed under the Corporate Harassment Policy.

**50 points may be awarded:**

- Where a person has to move in order to be near a person to whom they give or receive care and support.
- Urgent need for rehousing on welfare grounds or to avoid hardship to self or others, as assessed by Social Services or the Primary Care Trusts. Department.

- Where it is necessary to rehouse people under 13.2 below (Discretionary Tenancies).
- To Council tenants where relationship breakdown has occurred.

**20 points may** be awarded to applicants whose welfare needs or to avoid hurting to self/others are comparable to the following:

- The applicant was a substance abuser and had attended a rehabilitation programme. The applicant may be adequately housed but there is a need to move away from the immediate area where they are vulnerable. These points will not be given in addition to 50 points for undergoing lengthy rehabilitation.
- The applicant's household includes someone with a need for settled accommodation on welfare or medical grounds who cannot reasonably be expected to find accommodation for themselves in the near future.
- The applicant is living in such insanitary conditions that their health or welfare is severely prejudiced, and there are no remedies available to improve the conditions.

## **8.2 Relationship Breakdown**

In general, where a relationship breakdown has occurred between couples and one or both partners is a Council tenant, one or both former partners will be eligible for 50 points providing:

- Both partners have been living at the accommodation since the commencement of the tenancy (irrespective of whether both partners held a joint tenancy)
- There has been no violence or threat of violence
- Under-occupation of the accommodation will not result from rehousing just one of the former partners.

Generally, in cases where under-occupation would result, the Council requires both partners to be housed in suitably sized accommodation. In such cases (and unless there are exceptional circumstances), neither partner will be eligible for housing unless both former partners agree to be housed in suitably-sized accommodation

Under this policy, the term "couples" refers to heterosexual, lesbian and gay relationships.

## **Chapter 9: SHELTERED HOUSING**

An applicant will be eligible for sheltered housing if they:

- meet the requirements of the Housing List
- are of pensionable age and need the support of a warden;
- have the ability to live independently with or without the aid of a Community Care package;
- are able to understand how to use the emergency alarm system and door entry system when the warden is off duty during the evening and weekends;
- do not have a history of anti-social behaviour, for example violence or aggression that is likely to cause harm or injury to other tenants or staff;
- are below pensionable age but are vulnerable because of a physical or mental disability.

## **Chapter 10: SOCIAL CARE QUOTAS**

### **10.1 Adult Social Services and Children's services**

The Assistant Director of Housing (Needs and Strategy) has discretion to agree annual quotas for referrals from Islington Adult Social Services and Children's Services.

Rehousing under these quotas may be in Council housing or through nomination rights to a Registered Social Landlord.

Referrals will be made under agreements with the departments concerned, and applicants must generally meet the eligibility rules set out in Chapter 1. The departments will also agree how much priority should be given to these cases in relation to other applications.

Examples of the groups of applicants who may be assisted under this quota are:

- Young people leaving care
- Foster carers
- Care leavers with young children.

This is not an exhaustive list.

### **10.2 Supported Housing Move-On**

The Assistant Director of Housing (Needs and Strategy) may agree a supported housing move-on quota.

The purpose of this quota is to ensure that residents can move out of supported housing to allow other people to the facilities and support available in the scheme.

Generally, however, move-on needs will be met by reciprocal arrangements with the supported housing providers so the quota will not be used.

## **Chapter 11: UNDER OCCUPATION TRANSFERS**

### **11.1 Under-occupation scheme**

The Assistant Director of Housing (Needs and Strategy) may set a separate target for rehousing under-occupying tenants. Tenants who are under-occupying Council homes are eligible to join the under-occupation scheme if their property can be used to house a homeless family or another housing applicant.

The Under-occupation scheme may also provide a financial incentive (£500.00 per bedroom at November 2005) for applicants who are under occupying their property.

### **11.2 Under-occupation Points**

Tenants eligible to join the under-occupation scheme have their points calculated in the same way as other Housing List applicants, but receive additional points. See Chapter 5 for more details.

Second living rooms are counted as bedrooms for the purpose of pointing under-occupation transfers provided they are self-contained rooms and it is safe to use them as sleeping accommodation.

In addition, the Rehousing Manager can award extra points if the property currently occupied has additional features (for example adaptations, ground floor access) that are in demand.

## **Chapter 12: COMMUNITY BASED ALLOCATION POLICIES**

### **12.1 Intra-Estate transfers**

The Council has agreed that all estates are eligible to participate in the intra-estate transfers scheme. An annual quota may be set by the Assistant Director of Housing (Needs and Strategy) for transfers on these estates to be given to tenants already living on them.

### **12.2 Lettings to older applicants**

The Council has designated the following blocks for lettings to older applicants:

Darren Court  
Lexfield House  
Crowfield House  
Romford House  
1-6 The Precinct  
1-3- Henfield Close  
St Mary's Estate (Nicholsfield Walk)

Offers in these blocks will be made in the normal way but only to applicants over 50 years old.

### **12.3 New Generation Scheme**

An annual quota up to a maximum of 50 lettings in 2 bedroom properties and 50 in single person dwellings will be set aside for households living with Council tenants in Council properties, provided that the head of the household (either partner in a couple) has been living as part of a household of the Islington Council tenant continuously for at least 5 years. Priority will be given to overcrowded cases (according to the principles set out in section 2.1).

90 points will be given to applicants who require 2 bedrooms.

30 points will be given to applicants who require 1 bedroom.

### **12.4 Key Workers**

The Assistant Director of Housing (Needs and Strategy) may set a target for rehousing key workers. This may be in Council stock, RSL nominations or in low-cost home ownership schemes. The key workers will be defined by the Assistant Director of Housing (Needs and Strategy).

90 points will be given to applicants under this scheme.

## **12.5 Regeneration Areas**

The Council may agree to special allocations plans in regeneration area. For example, on New River Green priority is given to former tenants of demolished Marquess Estate properties, and priority for the shared ownership to key workers.

## **Chapter 13: SUCCESSION AND INHERITANCE**

### **13.1 Succession of tenancies**

A person can succeed to a Council tenancy on the death of a tenant if they are the tenant's spouse, civil partner **or** they are another member of the tenant's family and lived with the tenant for the twelve months preceding the tenant's death. The spouse or civil partner takes precedence over another family member.

A Council tenancy can be assigned during the lifetime of a tenant provided the person receiving it would qualify to succeed if the tenant were to die immediately before the tenancy was assigned.

A tenancy can only be assigned or succeeded to once.

### **13.2 Discretionary Tenancies**

In certain circumstances the Council will use its discretion to grant the tenancy of a property to people who would have succeeded to the tenancy (under the rules outlined above) if there had not already been a succession. This is known as an inherited tenancy. For example, where a sole tenant dies and is succeeded by their spouse, the tenancy may be given to a son or daughter on the death of the spouse.

The new tenancy will be granted only if it is of the right size and does not have adaptations or features required by people with special needs. For the purposes of this section, "right size" means the household will not under-occupy the property according to the size standard set out in Chapter Two.

Eligible applicants under this section who are under-occupying or occupying an adapted property will be offered rehousing according to the general criteria laid out in Chapter Two. Generally, these applicants will be given 150 points.

## **Chapter 14: REVIEWS AND APPEALS**

### **14.1 Reviews of decisions**

Applicants who wish to challenge a decision of the Council under its allocation procedures should try to resolve the problem informally in the first instance. Council tenants should approach the Transfer Team, and all other applicants should approach the Rehousing Team.

If the applicant is still not satisfied, they may request a formal review if one of the following is in dispute:

- the eligibility of the applicant to join the Housing List;
- removal of an applicant from the Housing List.

Formal reviews are considered by a panel of officers from the Council's Housing, Performance and Property Department. Officers directly involved in the original decision will not take part in the panel decision.

### **14.2 Appeals against points awards**

If an applicant is unhappy about the points awarded, they can ask for the relevant manager to review their points:

- In the case of single homeless applicants, the Manager of the single homeless team will consider the internal appeal.
- In the case of homeless families, the Manager of the casework team will consider the internal appeal.
- For medical points and Housing List points (except for Council tenants), the Rehousing Manager will consider the internal appeal
- For Transfers applicants, the Transfer Manager in Homes For Islington will consider the internal appeal.

### **14.4 Appeals against offers**

Applicants who have been made an offer of accommodation outside of choice based lettings, and believe the offer of housing is not suitable, have the right to an internal appeal. The internal appeal is considered by a panel of officers from the Housing Performance and Property Department of the Council.

## **Chapter 15: OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

Islington Council participates in a range of schemes to promote mobility between local authorities areas. Incoming nominations under these schemes will be awarded points in accordance with their priority and the Council's reciprocal arrangements.

The Council will maintain a separate register of incoming nominees. Allocations will be accepted onto the Housing List according to the date the Council accepted the nomination.

These applicants will be awarded 60 points plus 100 residence points.