

Housing Allocation Scheme

This document sets out Islington Council's Allocation Scheme for allocating council homes and nominations to housing associations.



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Please note:

This document was amended on:

1 December 2010.

The changes are on page 22 (highlighted) and under the heading of 'Discretionary succession' on page 27.

1 January 2011.

Page 23, under the heading '70 points'.

Introduction

This document sets out Islington Council's Allocation Scheme for determining priorities for allocating council homes and nominations to housing associations. In revising the Allocation Scheme, the council also has taken into account the Code of Guidance on the Allocations of Accommodation issued by the Government in November 2002 and the choice based lettings Code of Guidance issued in 2007.

The scheme is guided by the following principles:

- it must comply with statutory rules set out under legislation and accompanying regulations and take into account the Code of Guidance issued by central government from time to time
- the cost of temporary accommodation is reduced by ensuring homelessness is prevented and homeless people and people who are threatened with homelessness are rehoused as soon as practicably possible
- applicants considered to be extremely high priority should be assessed accordingly so that the priority is reflected in their position on the register
- the scheme must complement the council's other responsibilities, for example meeting social care needs
- it must be simple and fair, so that it is easy for local people to understand, allows vacant properties to be filled 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.

The legal framework – giving 'reasonable preference'

Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) sets out that a local authority must design their allocation schemes in such a way as to give 'reasonable preference' to certain categories of people. These are prescribed by the Act and are as follows:

- (a) People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the 1996 Act)
- (b) People owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 or under s65 (2) or s68 (2) of The Housing Act 1985 or who are occupying accommodations secured by any housing authority under section 192(3) of the 1996 Act.
- (c) People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- (d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to a disability).
- (e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

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 that when allocating housing, ensure that the allocation policy does not discriminate against any particular group.

The implementation of a clear and consistent allocation scheme goes hand in hand with careful equalities monitoring. The data collected is used to ensure that the scheme is being operated in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, as well as for the purposes of regular equality impact assessments and subsequent improvements to service delivery. All applicants applying to the Housing Register are asked to provide details of their ethnic origin, age and gender, disability, religion/faith and sexual orientation to enable monitoring to take place. There is no compulsory requirement to provide the relevant information and failure to do so does not affect an applicant's chances of rehousing. However applicants are strongly encouraged to comply and informed of the important purpose this information serves.

The council recognises that it is important that everyone who applies for rehousing understands the allocation scheme. The council will produce information leaflets, along with translations, large print and Braille versions for applicants on request.

Discretionary powers

The allocation scheme cannot cover every eventuality. In special cases with exceptional needs, the Service Director of Housing has discretionary power to award additional priority and approve offers of housing, taking into consideration all factors relevant to housing and social needs.

Housing Options

There are a number of options for securing housing.

Shared Ownership

New build homebuy

What is it?

This scheme is intended to help people who cannot afford to buy a home outright. Through shared ownership an applicant can buy a share in a house or flat from a housing association and pay rent on the part they do not own. An applicant can increase their share if they want, and can eventually own the property outright.

Who can apply?

Anyone can apply, although priority for shared ownership schemes is generally given to existing council and housing association tenants and Islington residents on Islington's housing register. An applicant will only qualify for shared ownership if they can afford to buy part of a property.

How does it work?

Islington Council does not operate these schemes directly, but works with several housing associations to provide shared ownership properties for people in Islington. Most schemes are based on properties specifically built or renovated for shared ownership by housing associations.

Financial example for shared ownership

Table A shows how shared ownership would work on a 25%, 50% and 75% share of a £200,000 property.

Exact figures will vary depending on the schemes, on the cost of the property and will change over time. The example (Table A) is only a guide. The percentage shares are also only examples and other shares of a particular property may be available.

Applicants should also budget £2,000 to £3,000 extra for associated costs.

The mortgage calculation is based on a 5% rate over 25 years.

Further information

W www.bbc.co.uk/homes/property/mortgagecalculator

W www.housingoptions.co.uk

W www.mho.co.uk

Table A

Monthly charges (excluding standard mortgage repayments)				
Share you own	Price of your share	Monthly Rental Payments	Monthly Mortgage Payments	Monthly Service Charge
25%	£50,000	£343.75	£295.63	£80-100
50%	£100,000	£229.10	£591.27	£80-100
75%	£150,000	£156.25	£886.90	£80-100

Social Homebuy

What is it?

Social Homebuy is a low cost home ownership scheme that allows local authority and housing association tenants to either buy a share of or purchase outright their existing home. The minimum initial share is 25% rising to a maximum of 100%. The council or housing association will charge a rent of 3% based on the remaining share not bought.

Who can apply?

To qualify, an applicant must be a council or housing association tenant for at least two years starting before 18 January 2005. If an applicant became a tenant after 18 January 2005 the qualifying period is five years. There must have been no breach of tenancy conditions for two years and no possession order. Applicants will need approximately £3,000-£3,500 to assist with the initial cost such as valuation fees and legal costs.

How does it work?

The discount is currently set at a maximum of £16,000 when purchasing 100% and pro rata if buying a share (for example, a tenant buying a 50% share of their home will therefore receive a 50% of the discount, £8,000.00).

Applicants will receive financial support from the council to assist with legal costs. For example if you own 25% you receive £1,000. The percentage bought depends on the financial support you receive.

Further information

Home Ownership Services

50 Isledon Road

London, N7 7LP

T 020 7527 7724

E homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk

W www.homesforislington.org.uk

Key Worker schemes

Islington Scheme

What is it?

Islington Council operates a Key Worker Scheme that aims to encourage employees to have a long term career within the borough.

Who can apply?

Applications may be considered from children's social workers, occupational therapists, teachers, and nurses working in Islington.

How does it work?

All applications for Islington's Key Worker Scheme must be made in writing to the appropriate human resource department. Accommodation offered through this scheme is linked to the applicant's continuous employment with Islington Council. Tenancies will be non-secure and will be terminated if the employment should cease.

Further information

Rehousing Team

Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonian Road
London, N1 8UY
T 020 7527 4140
F 020 7527 4136
M 0800 073 0536
E rehousing@islington.gov.uk
W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Metropolitan Home Ownership

What is it?

Various schemes are available to help people in certain public sector jobs to buy their first home through shared ownership. Key Workers can also rent housing association properties at affordable rent via the Intermediate Rent Scheme.

Who can apply?

Applicants must be employed in the public sector, in a front line role delivering an essential public service, or in a sector where there are recruitment or retention problems.

How does it work?

Each area has a Homebuy Agent which will give you details of the various schemes available. A Homebuy Agent is a registered housing association that markets housing schemes for key workers across an area. They will deal with applications and assess eligibility for key worker housing. The Homebuy Agent that represents the London Borough of Islington (plus other parts of London) is Metropolitan Home Ownership.

Further information

For more information on home ownership in Islington:

Metropolitan Home Ownership

The Grange, 100 High Street, Southgate
London, N14 6PW
T 020 8920 7777
W www.mho.co.uk

For general information on Home Ownership go to:

W www.housingoptions.co.uk

Chapter Three

The Private Sector

Renting in the private sector

What is it?

Renting in the private sector means that an applicant's rent is paid directly to a private landlord rather than the council or a housing association.

Who can apply?

Anyone can rent from a private landlord. If an applicant is on a low income they may be able to claim housing benefit to cover all or part of the rent.

How does it work?

It is possible to find houses and flats to rent from landlords by viewing the local newspapers where they have sections relating to private rented accommodation.

Islington Council will provide you with advice and support even after you move in.

Further information

Housing Aid Centre

38 Devonian Road, London, N1 8UY
 T 020 7527 2000
 F 0207 527 6307
 M 0800 073 0536
 E advice.housing@islington.gov.uk
 W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Private sector opportunities for homeless people

What is it?

The Private Sector Opportunities Scheme is an incentive to assist landlords to offer housing to homeless people. The scheme also offers advice and support for applicants looking for housing in the private sector. Eligible applicants may not have to pay an initial deposit to the landlord.

Who can apply?

Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness can apply.

How does it work?

A housing officer will assess whether applicants qualify for this scheme and advise where places are available.

Further information

If you have already been accepted as homeless, contact your housing case worker.

Housing Aid Centre

38 Devonian Road, London, N1 8UY
 T 020 7527 2000
 F 020 7527 6307
 M 0800 073 0536
 E advice.housing@islington.gov.uk
 W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Private sector housing grants

What is it?

Grants are available from Islington Council to enable the repair and adaptation of owner occupied and private rented properties.

Who can apply?

You must be an owner occupier, a landlord, a private tenant or housing association tenant living in Islington.

How does it work?

You will need to contact **Residential Grant Support Service** on **020 7527 3104** to ensure your property qualifies for a grant.

Further information

T 020 7527 3104
 E grants.residential@islington.gov.uk
 W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Moving Out of Islington

Moving to other areas

What is it?

Islington Council participates in a range of schemes to promote mobility across local authority areas.

Who can apply?

Anyone on the housing register may apply. Opportunities for rehousing in other areas are very limited, particularly in London and the southeast of the country.

How does it work?

Make an application to Islington Council or make an application direct to any local authorities housing waiting list. Mutual exchange also provides an opportunity to move (see Chapter Five).

Further information

Rehousing Team

Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonian Road
London, N1 8UY
T 020 7527 4140
F 020 7527 4136
M 0800 073 0536
E rehousing@islington.gov.uk
W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Seaside and Country Homes Scheme

What is it?

This is a housing mobility scheme that offers council or housing association tenants the option of moving out of London.

Who can apply?

Social housing tenants approaching the age of 60 years who are able to live independently.

How does it work?

The scheme's landlords manage approximately 3,500 bungalows and flats along the coast from Cornwall in the south west, to Norfolk and Lincolnshire in the east and across the countryside from Dorset to Cambridgeshire. The scheme does not guarantee a move and priority is given to tenants who are giving up larger sized properties.

Further information

Rehousing Team

Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonian Road
London, N1 8UY
T 020 7527 4140
F 020 7527 4136
M 0800 073 0536
E rehousing@islington.gov.uk
W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Chapter
Five

Mutual Exchange

Mutual exchanges

Homeswapper.co.uk

What is it?

Applicants who are secure tenants of a council have the right to exchange their home with another secure tenant, or with an assured tenant of a housing association. Exchanges can involve more than two households. Tenants do not need to be registered on the transfer list or have any points to participate in this scheme.

Who can apply?

Tenants must get written permission from their landlord before they exchange and the other tenant must also get written permission from their landlord. Both tenants must sign a "deed of assignment" before they exchange properties.

How does it work?

Most council and housing association tenants advertise their properties through Homeswapper (www.homeswapper.co.uk). When a tenant has found another tenant to exchange with they should complete the mutual exchange form which can be downloaded from the council's website: www.islington.co.uk/housing

Further information

Rehousing Team

Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonian Road
London, N1 8UY
T 020 7527 4140
F 020 7527 4136
M 0800 073 0536
E rehousing@islington.gov.uk
W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

What is it?

Homeswapper is a mutual exchange scheme. Islington Council tenants can register for free. Some housing association tenants may have to pay a small fee to register if their landlord is not part of the scheme.

Who can apply?

Applicants must be a council or housing association tenant; they do not have to be on the council's housing register. Applicants are allowed to swap into a home that is either one bedroom too large or one bedroom too small for their family's need with the permission of your landlord.

How does it work?

This is a web-based scheme only and tenants can register on the web-site at www.homeswapper.co.uk.

Applicants can also view the Homeswapper list at their area housing offices. Occasionally, Islington Council participates in reciprocal arrangements with other local authorities via the choice based lettings Homeswapper scheme.

Homeswapper will carry out searches for possible swaps on a daily basis. When an applicant has found the person they want to exchange with, they must complete the mutual exchange form and return it to their landlord. They must contact the person who is living in the property they want to move into to make viewing arrangements.

Further information

Rehousing Team

Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonian Road
London, N1 8UY
T 020 7527 4140 F 020 7527 4136
M 0800 073 0536
E rehousing@islington.gov.uk
W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Smart Move

What is it?

Smart Move helps to match people living in properties with more bedrooms than they need (underoccupying tenants) with people living in overcrowded homes, to arrange a mutual exchange.

Who can apply?

This scheme is available to Islington Council and housing association tenants only. It is a free service.

How does it work?

The council will advertise the mutual exchange property details of tenants who wish to move to smaller homes on the Home Connections advert each week. The advert is available to view online at www.islington.gov.uk/homeconnections

Further information

If you are interested in a property advertised and it matches your requirements you can express your interest and we will put all the parties in contact with each other.

Rehousing Team

Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonian Road
London, N1 8UY
T 020 7527 4140
F 020 7527 4136
M 0800 073 0536
E rehousing@islington.gov.uk
W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Chain Lettings

What is it?

Chain Lettings is a scheme where you can mutually exchange your home if you are a council or housing association tenant living in Islington.

Who can apply?

Islington Council and housing association under occupying tenants will be eligible to apply for this scheme. This will be of particular interest to groups of two or three exchange partners wishing to consider exchanging homes and requiring a vacancy to complete the chain for the exchange to go ahead.

How does it work?

The council will complete the chain where an under occupier exchanges with an overcrowded Islington social housing tenant. We will offer a more suitable vacant property to the under occupying tenant where required. The under occupying tenant will be eligible for the under occupation grant. However, we will not allow under occupation of the new property.

Further information

Rehousing Team

Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonian Road
London, N1 8UY
T 020 7527 4140
F 020 7527 4136
M 0800 073 0536
E rehousing@islington.gov.uk
W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Sheltered Housing

What is it?

Sheltered Housing is designed to provide a supportive environment to vulnerable or older people. The scheme is made up of individual self-contained properties most of which also have communal facilities. There is a 24 hour emergency on call system.

Who can apply?

Applicants must be aged 55 years or over and have some support needs.

How does it work?

Sheltered schemes are owned and managed by housing associations. Most schemes in Islington are managed by Circle Anglia.

Applicants interested in sheltered housing must apply to the Rehousing Team. They will then receive a visit from an assessment officer who will decide if sheltered housing is suitable for their housing needs.

Further information

Rehousing Team

Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonia Road
London, N1 8UY

T 020 7527 4140

F 020 7527 4136

M 0800 073 0536

E rehousing@islington.gov.uk

W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Supported Housing

What is it?

Supported Housing is accommodation that is provided to help develop and sustain an person's capacity to live independently. The accommodation consists of flats or shared houses where people with support needs can live independently in the community.

Who can apply?

Supported accommodation is usually provided for groups of people who are vulnerable, such as people with:

- mental health needs
- substance misuse problems
- young people
- people with learning difficulties
- people with a history of offending.

How does it work?

Applicants are supported by staff who may be based on site or provide visiting support to the residents. Applicants can reside in supported housing for varying lengths of time, usually up to two years depending on the individual's needs and the type of service they require.

Further information

Referrals Co-ordinator Team

Housing Aid Centre, 38 Devonian Road
London, N1 8UY

T 020 7527 4169

F 020 7527 4188

E referrals.co-ordinator@islington.gov.uk

W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

HomesHELter

Sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic violence

What is it?

If an applicant is experiencing or has experienced domestic violence and is still at risk, the scheme enables them to remain in their home by installing security in their property to prevent the perpetrator from gaining access.

Who can apply?

Any person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness due to domestic violence will be eligible.

How does it work?

An applicant's safety needs will be assessed and the council will then install additional security measures such as solid doors, extra locks and grills. The council can also refer an applicant to other organisations to help you with legal advice.

If you need to talk to someone about domestic violence, contact Islington Women's Aid on 020 8269 2121.

In an emergency always dial 999.

Further information

If you are a housing association tenant contact your landlord.

If you are a Homes for Islington tenant contact your area housing office.

Housing Aid Centre

38 Devonia Road, London, N1 8UY

T 020 7527 2000

F 020 7527 6307

M 0800 073 0536

E advice.housing@islington.gov.uk

W www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Womens Aid

T 0208 2690 2121

W www.housingoptions.co.uk

Housing Register

Applying for social housing

Any person may apply to the council to join the Housing Register. However not everyone will be eligible for housing.

The Housing Register

What is it?

The Housing Register is a list of applicants registered for council or housing association properties. It is governed by Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

Who can apply?

Any one over the age of 16 can apply to join the Housing Register unless they are ineligible because of their immigration status or serious unacceptable behaviour.

Applicants who cannot join the Housing Register

People subject to immigration control

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

- already a secure tenant of the council
- an assured tenant of housing allocated to them by the council
- fall in a class of persons set out on regulations made by the government

Unacceptable behaviour

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

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 register 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 Register.

How to apply

Forms are available from the Islington Council website www.islington.gov.uk/housing or from any of the area housing offices (Homes for Islington).

Applicants approved for rehousing will need to provide satisfactory evidence of identity, and past and current residence for themselves and all household members.

The council will request documentary evidence from each applicant and will carry out enquiries as necessary.

Change of address and or circumstances

It is the responsibility of all applicants to notify the council in writing of any change in their accommodation or household circumstances. It may be necessary to provide documentary evidence to support the change in circumstances. Applications may be suspended whilst the council reassesses the information provided by the applicant.

The reassessment of the application may result in the increase or decrease of points. All applicants will be notified in writing of any changes.

Adding adults to an application

Adults may not be added to an application where this would result in the need for larger accommodation than originally agreed. Adults wishing to join an application must demonstrate a need to join the household.

Rehousing standards

The council's rehousing standards determine the size of accommodation that may be offered.

The housing size standards operated by the council are:

- people aged 16 years or older not living as a couple should not have to share a bedroom
- people of opposite sex where one or both is over the age of 10 should not have to share a bedroom unless they are both over 16 and living as a couple
- no more than two people should have to share a bedroom
- 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.

Applicants may bid for properties that are a bedsize smaller than their housing requirements. This decision is at the discretion of the rehousing manager or the housing options manager.

Splitting large households

With the household's agreement consideration may be made to offering two separate properties to a large household. The council will consider the types of properties required and ensure that there is an adult as part of each tenancy.

Size standard	Size of property
Single person	Bedsitter
Single person or couple with no children	1 Bedroom
Couple or single person with 1 child	2 Bedroom
Couple or single person with 2 children (see points rules below)	2/3 Bedroom
Couple or single person with 3 children	3 Bedroom
Couple or single person with 4 children	3/4 Bedroom
Couple or single person with 5 or more children	4+bedrooms

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

The points table is on the following page.

Explanation of points:

Residence and other relevant connection with Islington

Residence points will only be given to applicants who are living in Islington, unless they are:

- 1 homeless applicants towards whom the council has accepted a long term rehousing duty
- 2 accepted for rehousing in Islington under an agreement with other local authorities, for example through a mobility scheme or

- 3 a) applicants that are serving in the Armed Forces who are either employed or resident in the district will be able to establish a local connection

- b) When considering applications from serving or former members of the Armed Forces who are not currently employed or resident in the district, the council will need to consider whether they have a local connection through previous residence in the district as a result of a former posting in the area while serving in the Armed Forces

- 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.

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

Criteria	Points	Who is eligible			
		TR	HA	HL	WL
Applicants who have been resident in the borough continuously for the last 12 months or have a relevant local connection with Islington (see explanatory note below)	100	●	●	●	●
Opposite sex 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	●	●	●✘	●
Where there is more than one occurrence, additional points will be given per occurrence.	5	●	●	●✘	●
For each additional bed space required.	20	●	●	●	●
Applicants who are severely over-crowded by two bedrooms or more.	30 (per household)	●	●	●	●
Additionally single applicant with a dependant child or children living in bedsitting accommodation.	15 (per household)	●	●	●	●
Sharing or lacking access to facilities – applicants who share or lack more than one of the following, cooking facilities hot water, cold water, toilet, or bathroom.	10			●	●
Medical Needs	20,50,100	●	●	●	●
Welfare Needs	20,50,100	●	●	●	●
Islington Key Workers scheme	90				●
Islington Care Leaver	90			●	●
Children's Services	150-200	●	●	●	●
New Generation Scheme 1 Beds	30				●
New Generation 2 Beds	90				●
Seriously injured and disabled service men and women	90				●
Homelessness and insecurity	10,70,100			●	●
Decants	100 or 200	●	●		
Major works	60 or 120	●	●		
Management transfers	60 or 100	●	●		
Inherited tenancies	150	●			
Relationship breakdown	50	●			
Under occupying social housing tenants, for each bedroom under-occupying.	80	●	●		
For applicants who are under-occupying by one bedroom 80 points will given plus an additional 70 points.	70	●	●		
All applicants will receive 5% of the total housing needs points excluding residence and waiting time points for each complete year waiting on the housing register.	5%	●	●		●
For homeless applicants, this will be from the date for each complete year from the date of application.				●	

Key

TR: Council tenants

HA: Housing Association Tenants

HL: Homeless applicants

WL: All other applicants

●✘: Except those agreed homeless applicants placed in the councils reception centres

Homelessness and insecurity of tenure

100 points will be given to homeless applicants (where the council has accepted a housing duty) in properties where the lease is about to expire and who cannot be found comparable alternative temporary accommodation. These points are to be given once it is clear that actual eviction is to take place and to remain until the applicant is either housed or placed into further long term temporary accommodation, whichever is the earliest.

Homeless families (where the council has accepted a housing duty) in bed and breakfast, or in 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 reception centres.

70 points will be given to the following homeless applicants (to whom the council has accepted a long term housing duty):

- the household is a single person or childless couple requiring studio or one bedroom accommodation and the council has accepted a housing duty

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

Disability and Medical Needs Scheme

The council may give points, if it considers that an applicant's accommodation is unsuitable in relation to their medical condition. If there is a medical problem, but the accommodation is suitable, no medical points will be given.

Table B shows the three medical categories that an applicant can belong to.

Table B

Category	Description	Points
A	Category A may be given to people who have an urgent need to move because their property is unsuitable due to their medical condition. 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. It will also include any Service Personnel who have been seriously injured or disabled.	100
B	Category B may be given to people whose housing is unsuitable due to their medical condition 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.	50
C	Category C may be given to people who have been a medical condition that is caused or made worse by their housing situation.	20

No points are given 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 physical or psychiatric illness, or a disability. The council will take this into account if it is relevant to the housing circumstances and give further points to households with more than one medical condition. Points will be given as shown in **Table C**, with no upper limit for the total number of points.

Table C

For the highest category person	100 (Category A) 50 (Category B) 20 (Category C)
For the second highest person	20 (Category A) 10 (Category B) 5 (Category C)
For other family members	15 (Category A) 10 (Category B) 5 (Category C)

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 60 points (50+5+5). If one family member who was a Category C is reassessed as Category A then the points would be work out again at 115 (100+10+5).

The council's medical advisor may recommend the type, size and location of housing that is suitable. Applicants may choose to accept properties from a wider range than recommended without affecting their medical priority.

Priority for level access both to the property and within the property will be given to applicants who have been assessed as needing this by the medical officer.

Level access is defined as no steps internally or externally (which the applicant would have to use to access the property).

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.

Wheelchair and mobility need for housing

All applicants who require wheelchair and mobility housing will be assessed by an occupational therapist.

Based on the occupational therapists assessment, the applicant may be considered for either:

- Wheelchair adapted accommodation. Properties specially built or adapted for occupation by a person in a wheelchair OR
- Mobility adapted accommodation. Properties which are purpose built or adapted to accommodate people whose mobility is impaired so that they are unable to negotiate any stairs or steps.

Carers

Applicants may bid for additional bedroom for a carer if:

- there is a need for a member of the household who would otherwise be expected to share to have his or her own room
- applicant requires personal care or supervision by day or 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 have to provide overnight care for more than 3 nights a week. The applicant should be in receipt of Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance care components at the middle or highest rate. The carer should normally be in receipt of carers allowance or receiving a package of care following a social work assessment that identifies a need for night time care. It may not be appropriate to insist on receipt of carers allowance if the carer has a job and is earning more than £95 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.

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 applicant 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.

Seriously injured and disabled service men and women

Any applicant who needs to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which he or she, or a member of their household, has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces.

Welfare points

Welfare points may only be given where housing or other circumstances severely affect the welfare needs of the applicant. Where there is welfare or social issues, these will be assessed by either the council's medical advisor or senior officers. Examples of this may include the need to secure housing for a vulnerable person or where lengthy rehabilitation programmes have been completed and accommodation is an issue.

Assessments will be carried out in liaison with social services or a support agency.

Table D shows the three welfare categories that an applicant can belong to.

Islington Care leaver & children services

The Service Director has discretion to agree annual quotas for referrals from Islington Council Adult Social Services and Children's Services. Rehousing under these quotas may be in council housing or through nomination rights to a housing association.

These points may be reviewed every three months.

Examples of welfare points given are shown in **Table E** below.

Table E

For the highest category person	100 (Category A) 50 (Category B) 20 (Category C)
For the second highest person	20 (Category A) 10 (Category B) 5 (Category C)
For other family members	15 (Category A) 10 (Category B) 5 (Category C)

Decants and major works

Points may be given when a tenant needs to be rehoused to allow repair, clearance, demolition or disposal of their home. Homes for Islington and Partners for Improvement in Islington may determine points awarded (see page 22) when a property is in a works programme, but rehousing is not immediately required.

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

Table D

Status	Description	Points
Category A	Welfare points may be given where the applicant or a member of their household's housing circumstance severely affects the welfare of the applicant. Rehousing may be essential where the applicant or the member of the household is at a serious risk of harm.	100
Category B	Points may be given where the applicant or a member of their household's housing circumstance has an impact on the welfare of the applicant. Rehousing may be desirable but not essential. The applicant or a member of the household will face hardship if they're unable to give or receive support.	50
Category C	Points may be given where the applicant or a member of their household's housing circumstance is affecting the welfare of the applicant. The applicant or a member of the household needs to move to a particular locality within the borough and failure to meet that need would cause hardship to the applicant or others.	20

Homes for Islington and Partners for Improvement in Islington may award points when a transfer is urgently required (see page 22). In some instances a permanent move may be agreed.

The council may also award major works or decant points in exceptional circumstances to allow a housing association tenant to move where the housing association cannot provide rehousing. 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.

Management transfers

Points can only be agreed by Homes for Islington and Partners for Improvement in Islington 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 housing needs points scheme. For example when the police require witness protection or in the most severe cases of harassment or violence.

These points may be reviewed every three months.

Succession

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.

Discretionary succession

In certain circumstances acting as the councils managing agents Homes for Islington and Partners for Improvement in Islington may 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 a discretionary succession.

Where a discretionary succession is agreed consideration will be given to the suitability of the property being occupied. A tenancy will be granted for the occupied property if it is of the right size and does not have adaptations or features required by disabled people and there are no arrears on the applicants account. Right size means the household will not under-occupy the property according to the council's rehousing standards.

Applicants agreed for a discretionary succession that are under-occupying or occupying an adapted property may be offered rehousing in another suitable property.

These applicants will be given **150 points**.

Discretionary exchange

In certain circumstances Homes for Islington and Partners for Improvement in Islington may grant a discretionary exchange between a person who would have succeeded to the tenancy and a tenant who has a right to mutually exchange (**see page 13**).

This discretionary exchange will only be agreed if the exchange meets the housing need of both parties to the exchange.

The discretionary exchange will only be agreed if the applicants have no arrears on their accounts.

Relationship breakdown

Where a relationship breakdown has occurred between couples and one or both partners are a council tenant, one or both former partners will be eligible for **50 points** providing:

- both partners have been living at the accommodation for the past twelve months
- there has been no violence or threat of violence (the perpetrator of violence or threat of violence will not be given points)
- under-occupation of the accommodation will not result from rehousing just one of the former partners.

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

Joint tenancies

In certain circumstances Homes for Islington and Partners for Improvement in Islington may consider giving relationship breakdown points for other joint tenants seeking to become sole tenants.

Statutory homeless applicants

Applicants to whom a duty to be housed is owed under the Housing Act 1996 will be placed on the Housing Register.

Service tenants

Islington Council employees who have held service tenancies for five years and are required to move will be given decant points. They will be eligible to bid for any suitable vacancies that meet their housing

requirements. They will qualify if they:

- are due to retire on the grounds of ill-health
- have reached pensionable age
- have been made redundant and the council has a contractual obligation to assist with their housing
- have no other accommodation available and they would be accepted under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996
- die in service and their spouse or other members of the family have lived with the employee in the property for twelve months prior to the employee's death.

Staff who leave their post because they are appointed to a non-residential post within the council will qualify for rehousing provided they have been in residential service for a continuous period of three years or more.

Staff who needs to move to another property because their service tenancy is unsuitable in terms of size or facilities may apply for a transfer in the same way as other council tenants. A transfer will be considered provided they can remain in the post at another property.

Applications from homeowners

Homeowners are eligible to join the Housing Register and will be assessed in line with the points scheme.

Homeowners will not be given Islington residence points unless it is considered unreasonable for the applicants to purchase or rent any other suitable accommodation.

Where an applicant is offered 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.

Applicants who do not live in the borough

Applicants living outside Islington at the time of applying will be assessed according to the same criteria used for applicants living within Islington. However, the points awarded for residents in the borough will not be given.

Reciprocal rehousing arrangements

The housing options manager or the rehousing manager has authority to consider reciprocal rehousing requests made by other councils or housing associations.

Applicants who have deliberately created unsatisfactory living conditions

The council will consider whether an applicant has exacerbated their housing circumstances. If the applicant has lost the accommodation as a result of a deliberate act or omission, the council reserves the right to assess their needs on the basis of the home that was lost.

Under-occupation scheme

The objective of the scheme is to make the most effective use of the limited housing stock by releasing properties for use to households who are living in overcrowded or temporary accommodation.

The under-occupation scheme may also provide a financial incentive 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. Applicants who are in three bedroom properties may bid for two bedroom property. However this will reduce their priority and the financial incentive to move.

Discretionary priority points may be given to under-occupiers to release family size accommodation.

New generation scheme

This is an initiative aimed at reducing overcrowding and preventing homelessness. The aim is to give applicants the opportunity to remain at home until they are housed if it is likely that they would present to the council as homeless.

The criteria for the scheme are:

- applicants must be aged eighteen years or above
- applicants must be living continuously as a member of the household of either an Islington Council or housing association tenant in Islington for at least five years
- proof of residence will be required for the last five years

Additional priority will be given to applicants in overcrowded households through overcrowding points. This scheme is only open to applicants who require bed sitters or one or two bedroom properties.

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

30 points will be given to single applicants or childless couples who require a bedsit or one bedroom.

Choice based lettings

Housing association and other council tenants

- Applications from housing association and other council tenants are considered in the same way as Islington Council tenants if the housing association or council confirm in writing that Islington Council will be given nomination rights to the vacated property and there is a demand for housing in that area.
- If the housing association and other council does not agree to grant the council nomination rights as outlined above the application will be assessed in accordance with general housing register procedures.

Rent arrears

Generally, Islington Council or housing association tenants in rent arrears may not be eligible to bid for a property unless they have permission from their landlord.

Where a council or housing association 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.

Islington Council operates a choice based lettings scheme called Home Connections. As far as possible all council, housing association, co-op managed and tenant management organisation (TMO) properties are allocated through this scheme. There are 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 is necessary to do so.

The council may refuse bids from applicants if the property does not meet their assessed housing need or, to avoid any potential risk to the applicants or others.

Who can bid?

Applicants with **120 points** or more will be eligible to bid for any properties advertised under our choice based lettings scheme. Applicants may bid for up to three properties in one week.

Where a property has been advertised with a restriction, applicants who meet the relevant criteria will be prioritised for the property. For example level access properties may be required for applicants with an assessed need for these types of properties. In these instances preference will be given to applicants requiring a level access on medical or disability grounds.

Property type

Applicants may be selected for ground floor flats, street properties, houses and maisonettes and properties that are suitable for adaptation only. This applies equally to council tenants and other applicants for rehousing.

Sensitive lettings

The council reserves the right to participate in sensitive lettings where it is considered to be necessary for the effective management of the stock.

A sensitive letting will take account of the needs of the applicant and other residents.

Accepted homeless households in temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation may be cancelled or alternatively a decision may be made to suspend the application if the applicant:

- fails to pay rent
- fails to honour an agreement to repay any arrears accrued
- fails to make a housing benefit claim or fails to provide supporting information for a claim already made.

Exceptions to this policy may be agreed, depending on the applicant's circumstances or the particular circumstances of the applicant's household.

Applicants in supported housing

Applicants in supported housing may be restricted from bidding until they have been assessed as being capable of independent living. They may also be considered for accommodation in the private sector.

Applicants not bidding

The council will review all applications where no bid has been placed on a regular basis. Applicants will be contacted to make sure that they understand how to bid and to ensure that they will be able to make future bids.

Homeless applicants who have sufficient points may be made a direct offer of suitable housing in any area. If they refuse the offer the council's duty to them can be ended.

Cross borough moves

Islington works in partnership with other local authorities and housing associations.

The Home Connections scheme encourages movement within the participating boroughs as a method of offering more choice to all applicants. From time to time, local authorities will advertise properties and applicants will be able to place bids as long as the properties meet their assessed housing need.

These properties will be known as cross borough moves. Applicants will be short-listed in accordance with the allocation policy of the borough in which they have placed their bids.

Lettings to older applicants

The following blocks are designated for lettings to older applicants:

- Darren Court
- Lexfield House
- Crowfield House
- Romford House
- 1-6 The Precinct
- 1-30 Henfield Close
- St Mary's Estate (Nicholsfield Walk)

Offers in these blocks will be made in accordance with the allocation policy but only to applicants over 50 years of age.

Community Lettings

Where new or renovated accommodation is provided as part of a regeneration scheme, the council may decide to reserve 20% of the available properties for applicants who live in the same ward area and are eligible to bid on the Home Connections scheme. In some cases, tenants who moved away from the area as a result of the regeneration programme may also be included. These properties will be advertised in Home Connections. Where a special lettings plan has been applied to a development this will be included in the property advert.

The aims of this approach are:

- to assist residents to maintain and develop ongoing connections with the area and contribute to the sustainability of the community
- to help address overcrowding and under-occupation within the local community.

Community lettings schemes are approved by the Service Director of Housing.

The types of schemes to be included:

- a group of properties available for letting at the same time will be identified as being suitable for community lettings. Usually these will be newly built housing association properties located in regenerated areas within the borough

- for 20% of available properties priority will be given to applicants living in the same ward with the rehousing points to bid for accommodation. Applicants will then be short-listed in the normal way.
- special lettings plans that give priority to applicants living in specific blocks, estates, or localities may be agreed at the planning stage and will be implemented at the allocation stage.

Homes adapted for wheelchairs are generally excluded from these schemes.

Intra-estate transfers

The aim of this initiative is to enable tenants who want to stay on the estate to remain there.

20% of all available void properties on estates will be prioritised to tenants on the particular estate who are eligible to bid and who would like to be housed within the estate. Applicants will then be short-listed in accordance with the allocation policy.

Housing co-ops, tenant managed organisations (TMOs) and other landlords

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

Internal reviews

Internal reviews of decisions

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

Update of applications

The council will contact applicants periodically to ensure the information held on applicants is up to date.

Applicants are expected to provide adequate information in order for their applications to be processed. Without this their application will not be processed.

False or misleading information may leave the applicant at risk of prosecution.

If applicants circumstances change after they have applied the council may suspend or remove them from the Housing Register.

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

- the eligibility of the applicant to join the Housing Register
- removal or suspension of an applicant from the Housing Register.

A panel of officers from the council's Housing and Adult Social Services department considers formal internal reviews. Officers directly involved in the original decision will not take part in the panel decision.

Review of points awards

If an applicant is unhappy about the points given, or a reduction in their points, they can ask for the relevant manager to review their assessment.

Review against offers

Applicants who have been made an offer of housing outside of choice based lettings, and believe the offer of housing is not suitable, have the right to an internal review. The internal review is considered by a panel of officers from the Housing and Adult Social Services department of the council.

Applicants on the waiting list who subsequently make a homeless application

If the council decides that the applicant is homeless and a rehousing duty is owed, the applicant will have to decide whether to pursue a waiting list or a homeless application. The applicant will only be eligible to bid under one application.

Applicants should also be aware that if the council or housing association grants a tenancy as a result of false information given by the applicant or someone else on their behalf, the landlord will take court action to repossess the property.

Complaints

Islington Council operates a three-stage complaints procedure about the way in which the council implements its services. Complaints are dealt with according to the following procedure:

- **Stage 1:** This is investigated by the manager of the service about which the complaint is made. A written response will be sent within ten working days from the date the complaint was received by the department. For more complex enquires requiring further investigation a holding response can be sent informing the customer of the date they can expect a full response.
- **Stage 2:** This is investigated by the housing complaints and appeals manager. A written response will be sent within a maximum of ten working days from the date the complaint was received.
- **Stage 3:** This is investigated by a corporate complaints officer.

If after Stage 3 investigation the complaint remains dissatisfied, a complaint should be made to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Further information

Further details are provided in Islington Council's Corporate Complaints leaflet, which can be obtained from

Corporate Complaints Department

Town Hall, Upper Street,
London N1

T 020 7527 2000

W www.islington.gov.uk



If you have any questions/comments or would like this document in large print or Braille, audiotape or in another language, please contact 020 7527 4175.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই তথ্য গুলো আপনার নিজ ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে 020 75274175 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Chinese (Traditional)

如果你想要這資料的中文本, 請致電 020 75274175 聯繫。

Somali

Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd macluumaadkan oo ku qoran luqadaada fadlan la xidhiidh 020 75274175

Turkish

Buradaki bilgilerin Türkçesini istiyorsanız, lütfen 020 75274175 numaraya telefon edin.

Cora Nicholls

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