

# Housing allocation scheme 2024



**ISLINGTON**

For a more equal future



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A large, light blue outline of a house with a gabled roof, a central door with a doorknob, and a chimney on the right side. The house is centered on a solid blue background.

# Introduction

# Introduction

Every local Housing Authority is required to have a Housing Allocation Policy. This document is the Islington Council's revised Allocations Policy in accordance with the requirements of The Housing Act 1996 (Part VI) as amended.

The Policy (more commonly called an allocation scheme) determines priorities and defines the procedures to be followed in allocating social housing in Islington as well as governing the way in which Islington Council's Housing Register operates.

Islington Council's Allocation Policy is a Choice Based Letting scheme where applicants are able to bid for advertised vacant properties. The Choice Based

Lettings scheme is a partnership between the Islington Council and the majority of the Registered Providers (commonly referred to as Housing Associations) with housing stock in Islington. The scheme makes it easier and convenient for applicants to look for affordable rented homes in one place rather than have to join many different landlords' registers.

Each of these Registered Providers have voluntarily 'signed up' to a common policy to ensure that all applicants applying for social housing in Islington are provided with a single route of access and assessed using a single policy. Where any individual housing association lets vacant properties to which the Council has nominations rights, this policy will apply to any nomination.

Participating Housing Associations have agreed to advertise their available vacant properties through the scheme and in accordance with this policy. That does not prevent an Association for urgent management reasons transferring an existing tenant to another property owned by that association outside of this Policy.

The Policy covers the allocation of the Council's vacant housing stock and the nomination of any applicant under the scheme to be an Assured or an Assured Short-hold tenant of housing accommodation held by any participating Housing Association.

It sets out who is, and who is not, considered for social housing in Islington and how the Council will make this assessment. It covers how applicants can apply for, and access social housing, the priority they will be given, and the order in which any offer of social housing will be made.

It should be noted that in certain circumstances a participating Housing Association might apply their own rules about allocating a property. Where there are rules set by a Housing Association that differ from the common policy the intention is to set this out in a link to the on-line policy.

This is a revised Housing Allocation Scheme and will take effect in respect of all allocations of housing on or after 8 April 2024. The assessment of need and qualifying criteria set out in this policy will be applied to all new and existing applicants from this date. This means that all existing applicants at this date will have to be reassessed for qualification and for priority and all allocations made from this date will also follow the new provisions of the housing allocations scheme. However, no changes will take place relating to the award of the existing priority date of the applicant. Therefore, all existing applicants will retain the priority date regardless of any priority point changes that may take place.

This is the Council's published Allocation Policy and can be viewed online at [islington.gov.uk](http://islington.gov.uk). A copy of the full Policy is also available free of charge, along with a summary document available on-line and in print form (including large print). The summary document is available in community languages.

This document also sets out Islington Council's procedures for determining priorities. In revising the Allocation Scheme, the council has also taken into account the following documents, among other sources:

- 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017)
- Government guidance
- Localism Act 2011
- Section 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004

The scheme is guided by the following principles:

- The overall aim of the policy is to ensure that social housing is allocated fairly and objectively to those in the greatest housing need.
- More generally the policy aims to achieve the following key objectives:
  1. A common housing register which will enable residents in housing need to access social housing across Islington
  2. To provide a high quality service to residents
  3. Meet the legal obligations of the Council, namely to give appropriate priority to residents who fall within the Housing Act "reasonable preference" categories
  4. Help prevent homelessness and offer realistic choice to those with a housing need
  5. Improve local mobility across the London Borough of Islington
  6. To ensure that housing is allocated to those most in need or at risk and to ensure that, as far as possible, resources are targeted at local people;

## Legal Context

7. To contribute to creating balanced and sustainable communities, promote the council's equality principles and be mindful of the communities we create
8. To ensure that every resident is treated fairly and consistently irrespective of race and ethnicity, disability, gender/gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion and belief and age.
9. Be a Policy that is simple to understand, transparent and is seen as fair and accountable by applicants and Islington residents generally
10. It must comply with statutory rules set out under legislation and accompanying regulations and take into account Codes of Guidance issued by central government from time to time
11. The housing allocation scheme contributes to ending homelessness and eliminating rough sleeping
12. The scheme must complement the council's other responsibilities, for example meeting social care needs and minimising financial risk to the council.

This is the Council's Housing Allocation Policy as required by Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. Residents are able to apply for housing to the Council and all applications will be fully assessed.

In developing this policy the Council has followed and fully considered among others the following housing legislation, regulations, statutory guidance, and strategies:

1. The Housing Act 1996, Part 6 as amended by Localism Act 2011 (England)
2. The Housing Act 1996, Part 7 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
3. Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local housing Authorities in England (2012, DCLG) "the Code";
4. Providing social housing for local people: Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England (DCLG, December 2013) "Supplementary Code".
5. Right to Move guidance (DCLG, 2015)
6. Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse (MHCLG, 2018) and Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces (MCLG 2020)
7. Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities (MHCLG, 2018)
8. Plus the following statutory regulations:
  - a. Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997, SI 1997/483;
  - b. Allocation of Housing (England) Regulations 2002, SI 2002/3264;
  - c. Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294 and all subsequent amendments

- d. Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/1869;
  - e. Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/2989.
  - f. The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015
  - g. The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/861)  
In relation to f) above in accordance with the Right to Move statutory guidance on housing allocations for local housing authorities in England (Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2015) a limit of up to 1% of nominations will be set for people looking to move for employment purposes.
9. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
10. The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (SI 2021/665). New immigration route for people from Hong Kong with British National (Overseas) status.
11. The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) and Persons subject to Immigration Control (Housing Authority Accommodation and Homelessness) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I. 2021/1045). Eligibility of people who fled Afghanistan as a result of the collapse of the government for an allocation of social housing

## Regard to strategies

In framing our allocations scheme regard has also been had to the council's

Homelessness Strategy, Housing Strategy, Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Strategy and Tenancy Strategy and the London Mayor's Housing Strategy.

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 scheme 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 accommodation 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).

The scheme must also be framed so as to give additional preference to a person within one or more of paragraphs (i) to (iv) with urgent housing needs who:

- (i) Is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to the person's service;
- (ii) Formerly served in the regular forces;
- (iii) has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable to that service: or
- (iv) is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to the person's service.

### **The Allocation Policy applies when the Council:**

- a) Selects a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation (i.e. in practice accommodation owned by the London Borough of Islington).
- b) Nominates a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation (i.e. in practice accommodation held by another housing authority).
- c) Nominates a person to be an assured tenant or assured shorthold tenant of housing accommodation held by a Registered Provider (commonly referred to as Housing Associations).

The Policy does not apply to the following lettings:

- a) Introductory or probationary tenancies – Where an introductory/probationary tenancy becomes a secure or assured tenancy
- b) Family Intervention Tenancies – Introduced by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, Family Intervention Tenancies are a form of residential tenancy without security of tenure. They may be offered by either a local housing authority or a housing association to anyone who is a tenant of a secure (or assured) tenancy subject to a possession order on the grounds of anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse or anyone who (if they had a secure or assured tenancy) could have had such a possession order made against them.
- c) Succession under S89 of the Housing Act 1985 (secure tenancies), under 133(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (introductory tenancies) or under S90 of the Housing Act 1985 (fixed term tenancies).

- d) Non-Secure tenancies or 'temporary accommodation' – Any accommodation that is provided to meet an interim duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
- e) Temporary decants – Secure or introductory tenants of a local authority or assured or assured shorthold tenants of Registered Providers who need to be moved temporarily whilst major work is carried out on their home.
- f) Demoted tenancies – Following a successful application for a demotion order under sections 14 and 15 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- g) Mutual exchanges between existing tenants under S92 of the Housing Act 1985 or under S158 of the Localism Act 2011.
- h) Assignment to a person who would be qualified to succeed the tenant under S92 of the Housing Act 1985 (secure tenancies) or S134 Housing Act 1996 (introductory tenancies).
- i) Conversion of an introductory tenancy to a secure tenancy under S125 Housing Act 1996).
- j) Transfers of secure or introductory tenancies by a court order made under certain provisions contained within matrimonial, family, children and partnership legislation.
- k) Allocation to a person entitled to rehousing under section 39 of the Land Compensation Act 1973.
- l) Allocation to a person whose home is repurchased under sections 554 or 555 of the Housing Act 1985 (defective dwellings).

### **Offer of Temporary Accommodation or private rented sector offers (PRSO)**

The Localism Act 2011 gave local housing authorities the power to discharge the main homelessness duty with an offer of private rented accommodation, and the

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 allows for the ending of the prevention or relief of homelessness duties through an offer of private rented accommodation available for at least 6 months. For administrative purposes the London Borough of Islington have chosen to offer private rented properties through the Housing Register.

It should be understood, however, that such provision does not involve an allocation within the provisions of Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. Applicants subsequently housed through the PRSO scheme in discharge of the full housing duty will then receive points. This will also include applicants housed into the Private Rented Sector to end the prevention or relief duty contained within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

## Members of the Council, staff and their relatives

Elected Councillors cannot be involved in assessing housing applications or the allocation of housing. However this does not prevent them from seeking or providing information on behalf of their constituents.

Their prime role, as outlined in statutory guidance, is developing and approving future policy and holding officers of the authority to account for their actions.

In order to ensure that the Council is treating all applicants fairly, any application for housing from Councillors or employees of the Homes and Neighbourhoods Directorate of the Council will be assessed in the normal way, but an offer of housing must be approved by the Senior Officer in the Council with responsibility for administering the scheme. Housing Associations will apply their own rules in this respect.

Canvassing is not allowed in any circumstances by or on behalf of members of staff.

In addition, any Officer who knows an applicant personally or is related to the applicant will not be involved in the assessment of the application, in the allocation of a property to that applicant or in a nomination to a Housing Association. The Officer will be required to notify his/her manager of the situation.

Where an application is made from a member of staff within the Homes and Neighbourhoods Department that application must be authorised by the Head of Housing Needs.

## Making changes to the Policy

The Policy cannot be the subject of major changes until a copy of the proposed amendments has been sent to every private registered provider of social housing

and registered social landlord with which the Housing Association in London Borough of Islington have, that is subject to a nominations arrangements, as per section 166A(13) Housing Act 1996. Each provider association will be given a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Any major proposed changes will require a full and detailed consultation process for those potentially affected by the changes and stakeholders. The Council will fully consider good practice guidance to public bodies on undertaking consultation on important policy matters when deciding the appropriate level and method of consultation for any changes.

All major changes must be approved by the Executive at Islington Council.

For minor changes to the policy, decisions will be delegated to the Director

of Housing Needs and Strategy in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Development. They will be able to approve any minor amendments to the scheme not considered likely to affect more than five per cent of lettings, following a report produced by the Head of Housing Needs and provided to the Director of Housing Needs and Strategy.

The Council will notify within a reasonable period, any major changes in policy to those it may affect.

### 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 people are treated fairly and equally and, when allocating housing, ensure that the allocation scheme and its operation do not discriminate unlawfully against any particular group.

The implementation of a clear and consistent allocation scheme goes hand in hand with 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 to the Housing Register are asked to provide details of their protected characteristics 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, translations and copies in other formats on request.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and in particular the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149, Local Authorities are required to give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, in their exercise of a public function.

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Council will ensure that its policy complies with the current equality legislation and with the relevant statutory codes and guidance. The new policy will be subject to a full, detailed Equality Audit before it is adopted and this will be regularly reviewed as monitoring information about the impact of the policy is obtained.

## Policy statement on choice and preferences

The Council wishes as far as possible to give choice to customers who are looking to obtain social housing. This is why it operates a 'choice based letting scheme' to give applicants the best possible choice over where they may wish to live.

The Council also seeks to enable applicants to express a preference over the area in which they would like to live and the type of property they would ideally like. However, all applicants should be fully aware that the Council's ability to satisfy a preference might be severely limited by housing pressures.

The Council will ask all applicants or the lead professional to state those areas where they believe they cannot live due to fear of violence, harassment or domestic abuse. The Council must be satisfied such factors exist and that it should, on the facts, take into account the concerns stated by the applicant in these circumstances.

The degree of choice that the Council is able to offer is limited by housing pressures, the responsibility which the Council has to some groups in urgent housing need and the need to reduce the financial impact of temporary accommodation on the Council.

Demand for Social Housing (Council and Housing Association Housing) in Islington far outstrips supply. It is estimated that only 7% of applicants will be housed through this housing allocations scheme due to the limited availability of accommodation and the growing demand for housing from the reasonable preference groups.

Unfortunately, for most applicants registered the solution to their housing needs will not be met via an offer of social housing made through this Policy. The Council will therefore work with applicants to look at alternative ways of meeting their housing need, mainly through the provision of housing advice, assistance and support.

The Council will therefore support applicants to choose the Housing Option which is best for them including: promoting a wide range of options, such as low cost home ownership, mutual exchanges, and the private rented sector. Furthermore, by providing information and free advice about staying put options such as aids and adaptations and mobility schemes, the Council can ensure that it promotes independent living for all applicants wishing to be re-housed.

Expressing a preference over where an applicant would prefer to live does not mean that the Council will be able to meet that preference, or that the Council will not offer suitable accommodation outside of a preferred area.

Specifically, for applicants owed the section 189B(2) Relief of homelessness duty, or the Main section 193(2) duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, or where an applicant has an urgent housing need that must be met immediately, although the Council supports the ability of applicants to express a preference for where they wish to live, the Council is of the view that what is paramount is the need to offer suitable housing, which may not be possible in the location preferred by the applicant.

### Discretionary powers

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

A large, stylized outline of a house in a teal color, centered on the page. The house has a gabled roof, a central door with a doorknob, and a small window to the right of the door. The text is centered within the house's outline.

# Chapter 1 Housing Register

# Applying for social housing

## - joining the Housing Register

Any person may apply to the council to join the Housing Register. However not everyone will be eligible or qualify 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 and Localism Act 2011.

#### Who can apply?

Anyone can approach the council for advice and assistance; however the council does exclude certain categories of people from the housing register.

### Applicants who cannot join the Housing Register

People in the following categories are not eligible to join the housing register.

- **People from abroad**

A person is ineligible and may not be allocated accommodation under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 who is either a person subject to immigration control and is not within a class of persons set out in regulations made by the government or is within a class of other persons from abroad set out in regulations made by the government unless they are:

- already a secure or introductory tenant, or
- an assured tenant of a private registered provider of social housing or registered social landlord.

People in the following categories are not 'qualifying persons' and are not able to join the housing register.

1. **Unacceptable behaviour**

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

Unacceptable behaviour may include:

- 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 indictable offence, in or in the vicinity of their home
- being convicted of a Anti-Social Behaviour offence, in or in the vicinity of your home
- being the perpetrator of domestic abuse, violent, coercive or controlling behaviour towards a resident of the borough.

## 2. Non-Residence

People who are not resident in the borough on the date of application and have not continuously lived in Islington for at least five years from the date they apply for housing cannot join the housing register. Applicants must also continue to live in the borough if they wish to remain on the housing register. Exceptions may be made if they are:

- Resident in a hospital
- Resident in supported housing
- Serving a custodial sentence and were resident in Islington for five years prior to entering hospital/ custody.
- Housed through an agreement with other local authorities, for example through a mobility scheme or following an itinerant lifestyle (confirmed by a support agency) and have assessed care needs that can only be met in Islington.

- Accepted homeless applicants under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996
- Other homeless applicants who have accepted a PRSO offer as a prevention of homelessness
- Moving due to domestic abuse
- An exception will also be made where an existing social tenant needs to move to take up employment or an apprenticeship in Islington where;
  - They are in, or under definite offer of, paid work or an apprenticeship and,
  - have signed, or been offered, a contract of employment or an apprenticeship agreement for a minimum period of 12 months, and
  - will work 16 hours per week on average in Islington, and
  - earn the national minimum wage
  - and where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to that person or others
- An exception will also be made where an applicant :
  - a) Is serving in the regular forces or who has served in the regular forces within five years of the date of their application for an allocation of housing under Part 6 of the 1996 Act;
  - b) Has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner where—
    - (i) The spouse or civil partner has served in the regular forces; and

- (ii) Their death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
  - (iii) is serving or has served in the reserve forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.
- Or in any other exceptional circumstance.
3. **People who own or jointly own or part-own a property which is reasonable for them to occupy. If you recently owned a home you will be asked to provide evidence of the sale and give details of any capital gained from the sale**
  4. **People who are social housing tenants, or joint tenants, of any other local authority or housing association outside of Islington regardless of the type of tenure. Exceptions may be made if you are a Corporation of London tenant living in the borough of Islington or in the circumstances set out above in relation to a need to move to take up employment or an apprenticeship or have a Right to Move.**
  5. **People applying for housing, or for a housing transfer, who have fewer than 100 points under the points scheme (see pages 32-34)**
  6. **Households placed in Islington by another local authority which has an interim or long term duty to them as a homeless applicant.**
  7. **Households who have sufficient financial resources to own or rent accommodation.** Applicants who are considered to have sufficient financial resources to buy or rent suitable accommodation in London Borough

of Islington will not qualify for the register. 'Sufficient financial resources' are defined as sufficient capital to buy; or sufficient income to raise a mortgage to buy, or a combination of both; or sufficient income to rent. How an applicant will be assessed to determine if they have sufficient financial resources is set out below: The income and savings limits set are: a) Applicants who have total savings, investments and/or assets of £ 16,000 or more b) Applicants whose households total gross income from all sources exceeds an annual income of £90,000. 'Sufficient capital' includes any assets or investments even if they are not immediately available to the Applicant, such as any residential or non-residential property that they own or part own anywhere in the world. Valuation evidence of any capital or assets will be required. However, any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces as compensation for an injury or disability on active service is disregarded. Although this qualification rule will mean an applicant cannot join the active bidding register it does not prevent applicants being considered for any Low Cost Home Ownership schemes, such as Rent to Buy, Shared Ownership/Equity, Discounted Market Sale and Starter Homes. Advice can be given on request regarding which Housing Associations or developers are currently operating any of the above schemes and how applications can be made directly to any provider.

Details of how to appeal against a decision on eligibility and qualification for the housing register can be found in **chapter 10**.

## How to apply

There is a limited amount of social housing available each year. We strongly advise that other housing options are considered. Advice and information regarding other options is available at:

**[www.islington.gov.uk/findingahome](http://www.islington.gov.uk/findingahome)**

Applications for housing and for a housing transfer can be made at

**[www.islington.gov.uk/housingapplication](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housingapplication)**

Target timescale for making a decision on an application is within 28 days of the information in support of the application being complete and where the Council has all the necessary information to assess an application. Then a decision will be made and notified on the following, including brief reasons:

- Whether or not to admit the applicant to the Housing Register
- If the applicant is admitted to the Housing Register, what priority points will be given
- That there is a statutory right of review

Information about the average points needed to secure social housing in Islington can be viewed online at:

**[www.islington.gov.uk/findingahome/councilhousing](http://www.islington.gov.uk/findingahome/councilhousing)**

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 we will seek your consent to carry out enquiries as necessary to progress your application.

## 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 deactivated during the period whilst the council reassess 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.

**[www.islington.gov.uk/changeapplication](http://www.islington.gov.uk/changeapplication)**

## Reviewing the Register

Every applicant on the Register will have their application reviewed annually, or more frequently as decided by the Council in order to manage the administration of the register. A letter will be sent to all customers requesting confirmation of their current circumstances and that they wish to remain on the register. If a reply is not received within 28 days of the date sent their application would be cancelled.

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 assessed, unless the applicant can demonstrate a need to join the household.

### Making a Housing Register and homelessness application

Where an applicant has a housing register application, and subsequently makes a homelessness application, the housing register application will be re-assessed once the homelessness application has been determined. If a homeless applicant wishes to make a housing register application their housing register application will not be assessed until their homeless application has been determined.

### 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 one bed size smaller than their housing requirements. This decision is at the discretion of the rehousing manager or the housing options manager.

### Size standard

- Single person Bedsit
- 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 2/3 Bedroom (dependent on age/sex of children)
- Couple or single person with 3 children 3 Bedroom
- Couple or single person with 4 children 3/4 Bedroom (dependent on age/sex of children)
- Couple or single person with 5 or more children 4+ bedrooms

### 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.

### Dividing households

A council tenant may request one or more separate properties for their authorised household members. The council will only agree to this request where:

- the tenant and the authorised household members move to one bedroom properties;
- the number of one bedroom properties required does not exceed the number of bedrooms in the original larger home;
- the tenant and household member is rehoused simultaneously

### Shared residency of children

Where children are subject to a shared residency arrangement the children are only considered to need one home of adequate size. Where either parent has a home of adequate size the remaining parent will be assessed as having overnight access only and no additional bedrooms will be agreed for the children.

### Households occupying more than one tenancy

Where a family unit is not currently residing together the assessment will be based on the part of the household that occupies accommodation that provides them with the most suitable housing providing there is a reasonable expectation that they should reside together.

The residency qualification will be based on that part of the household with the longest residency in the borough.

### The points scheme

Applicants are given points for housing need factors and these points are added together. Only one award of points will be made for each housing need, even if the need could fall within more than one category. The needs of all individuals in the applicant's household will be taken into account when points are given. Points may be reviewed upon a change in circumstances and varied upwards or downwards.

Applications which are assessed as having fewer than 100 points will not be included on the Housing Register.

The points scheme is summarised in a table on **page 34**.

### Housing Transfers

Council or housing association tenants seeking a transfer, and living in unsatisfactory conditions and/or needing to move for example because of medical or welfare reasons or because they are overcrowded, generally qualify for inclusion on the housing register and their priority is determined according to the Allocations Scheme.

Low priority transfer cases can be assisted to move through other schemes which already exist to help tenants move both in and out of borough – see chapters 2 and 6.

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

#### Residence points

100 points are awarded to every applicant who has been resident in the borough continuously for the last five years at the date of application or who meets one of the eligibility exceptions listed above.

**There will only be one award of residence points per household.**

#### Waiting time points

Additional points for waiting time are awarded. The additional points are calculated at a rate of 5% per year on all points, except residence points and any previous waiting time points. The waiting time points will only be added to an application from the anniversary of the week that housing needs points are first added to an application, not the date that an application is first made apart from applicants who applied before 2013 who will retain waiting time from the date of application unless there has been a change of circumstance leading to a reassessment.

### Overcrowding

Applicants who have moved into accommodation without the permission of the landlord will not be awarded overcrowding points.

The Council will consider the rooms available to a household and assess the application accordingly.

- 20 bedroom lacking points are awarded for each additional bedroom required by the household.
- An additional award of 30 severely overcrowded points are awarded where the household is lacking two or more bedrooms
- 10 opposite sex overcrowding points are awarded where two people of the opposite sex have to share a bedroom and one is 10 years or older (unless they are over 16 and living as a couple.) Where there is more than one occurrence 5 additional points will be given per occurrence.

### Medical Points

#### Unsuitable housing due to medical condition or disability.

The council may give points if it considers that the accommodation of an applicant or a member of their household is unsuitable because of a medical condition.

Medical priority will be awarded according to the extent to which the health of one or more members of the applicant's household is affected by their housing conditions and the expected benefits of providing alternative housing. No medical points will be awarded if the accommodation is suitable.

A household will be assessed together and one award made for the whole household.

There are three categories of medical priority:

#### Category A

– this gives the maximum 200 points. For this overriding priority examples include:

- In exceptional circumstances for households where a member of the household has an immediately life-threatening, life-limiting or progressive condition which is seriously affected by their current accommodation
- To serving members or former members of the regular forces or reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service
- Applicants ready to be discharged from hospital who: have somewhere to live but their accommodation is unsuitable due to their medical needs and cannot be made suitable through adaptations because of cost effectiveness or structural difficulties or the property cannot be adapted within a reasonable amount of time.

#### Category B

– is an award of 80 points and is for households where a member of the household's current housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on their medical condition. It will not apply where the effect of the housing conditions on health is moderate, slight or variable. Examples include:

- Those who are housebound, or effectively housebound and cannot access the essential facilities in their home and there are critical concerns about their safety, for example through falls due to difficulties with access

- Those whose health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it is likely to become life threatening for example, where an applicant has significant mental health problems which are exacerbated by their accommodation
- Those with disabilities, who have restricted mobility and are limited by their accommodation such that they are unable to carry out day to day activities or have difficulties accessing facilities inside and outside of their accommodation and require rehousing into accommodation suitable for their use
- Those in overcrowded accommodation which puts the applicant at risk of infection, for example, where an applicant is immunocompromised

A household where two members are assessed as being **Category B** will be awarded 200 points.

### **Category C**

– an award of 40 points for a household where the current housing conditions are having a moderate or variable effect on the medical conditions of one or more members of the household. It will not apply where the effect of the housing conditions on health is slight.

Applicants with a severe long term disability who wish to live independently may qualify.

The council's medical advisor may recommend the type, size and location of housing that is suitable including sheltered housing.

An offer of accommodation will not be made where medical evidence strongly suggests it would be detrimental to the health and well-being of the applicant.

### **Accessible Housing Register**

The Accessible Housing Register (AHR) is a way of storing and displaying information about whether a property has level access, has steps or has any adaptations such as a level access shower or stair-lift. When a property becomes vacant, the category and other access information will be displayed on the Home Connections website.

Each property has been assessed according to published building design guidance and allocated a category. These range from fully wheelchair accessible (A) to general needs housing (F).

The AHR category will be displayed in every property advertisement on Home Connections. This will include all wheelchair accessible properties. Disabled applicants will be able to identify properties that are likely to meet their needs and place a bid. The categories are a guide to how accessible a property is likely to be. Successful bidders will still need to view the property before accepting a tenancy.

### Property access categories

#### **Category A: Wheelchair accessible throughout.**

Designed to allow full use of all rooms and facilities to someone who uses a wheelchair all the time.

#### **Category B: Wheelchair accessible essential rooms.**

Properties designed or adapted to meet the needs of wheelchair users but may not offer full use of all facilities.

#### **Category C: Lifetime Homes.**

(Properties may have internal stairs. Where this is the case, the stairs are likely to be able to accommodate a basic-sized stair-lift.)

Designed to meet the space standards of Lifetime Homes. Main features include a level approach / entrance and wider doorways.

#### **Category D: Easy access.**

(Properties may have internal stairs. Where this is the case, the stairs are likely to be able to accommodate a basic-sized stair-lift.)

Designed with level access to the property door.

#### **Category E: Step free.**

(Properties may have internal stairs. Where this is the case, the stairs are likely to be able to accommodate a basic-sized stair-lift.)

Level access housing but possibly with narrow doors and corridors.

#### **Category E+: Up to six steps.**

(Properties may have internal stairs. Where this is the case, the stairs are likely to be able to accommodate a basic-sized stair-lift.)

May have up to six steps to the home.

#### **Category F: General housing.**

Properties that do not meet the above specifications.

#### **Category G: Not yet assessed.**

Any property we have not yet been able to assess.

### Carers

Applicants may apply for an additional bedroom for a carer if:

- There is an assessed need for a member of the household who would otherwise be expected to share rather than have their own room.
- An applicant or a member of their household requires personal care or supervision by day or night and an additional room is required for a live-in carer. In order to qualify 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 Personal Independence Payments at the middle or highest rate. The carer should normally be in receipt of carer's allowance or the applicant is receiving a package of care following a social work assessment that identifies a need for night time care.

## Welfare points

Welfare points may only be given where housing or other circumstances affect the welfare needs of the applicant or a member of their household.

One award will be made for the household.

Assessments may be carried out in liaison with social services or a support agency or the Social Welfare Panel.

**Welfare category A** is an award of **150 points** which may be awarded to applicants whose welfare needs are so severe that the protection of vulnerable adults or children is only possible in a permanent home and where the present housing circumstances could deteriorate to such an extent as to place household members, particularly children, at risk or in need of residential care unless permanent housing is offered. These points should only be awarded where housing or the domestic situation severely affects the welfare of the applicant.

In general, this very high award will rarely be made. If too many households receive this high award it will slow down the rehousing of the most vulnerable people.

Examples of this include:

- Where a property is declared unfit for habitation or has a category 1 hazard due to damp and mould, as confirmed by the Public Protection team, or Islington Diagnostic Surveyors and which has a severe impact on the household
- Where the applicant or a member of their household is severely vulnerable due to frailty or advanced age and is unable to be placed in temporary housing.
- Where the applicant or a member of their household has a learning disability

and needs to move into mainstream accommodation. This decision will be based on an assessment made by the Learning Disabilities Team. / Disabled Children's Service

- 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.
- Where the accommodation is required to meet the needs of a child in risk of severe harm or fatality due to their accommodation as assessed by Children's Services.
- Where there is a risk of a child within the applicants household coming into Local Authority care or residential care due to their housing situation
- Where it is necessary to move because of the threat of violence, abuse or harassment, including domestic and sexual violence except for council tenants who have been awarded 150 management transfer points
- Households where two members of the households are assessed as being Welfare Category B – see below.

**Welfare Category B** is an award of **80 points** and may be awarded in the following serious circumstances:

- Where an applicant or a member of their household has to move in order to be near a person to whom they give or receive care and support. The applicant should be in receipt of Attendance Allowance or Personal Independence Payments at the middle or highest rate. The carer should normally be in receipt of carer's allowance or the applicant is receiving a package of care following a social work assessment.

- Where the accommodation is required to meet the needs of a child who is in urgent risk of harm due to their accommodation as assessed by Children's Services.
- Where an applicant is experiencing a threat of violence, abuse or harassment that is impacting their living conditions
- Where accommodation is required to meet the needs of a child as assessed in a Child in Need (CIN) plan
- The applicant is living in such insanitary conditions that their welfare is prejudiced, and there are no remedies available to improve the conditions including where there is damp and mould.
- Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service.

**Welfare Category C** is an award of **40 points** may be awarded to applicants whose welfare needs are moderate and 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.
- 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.

- Former members of the regular forces or reserve forces.
- The applicant is living in such conditions that their welfare is prejudiced for example, where there is mould and condensation and limited remedies are available, to resolve the issue.
- Applicants with more than one child in a studio flat.

### Islington Care leavers, adult services and children services

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

The Housing Options manager will make an award of **150 points**. In exceptional circumstances, if rehousing has not been achieved within six months, an additional 50 points may be considered if the applicant has been making realistic bids. This award is instead of, not in addition to a welfare points award.

Care leavers up to the age of 25 may be referred for housing and the Housing Options Manager will make an award of **90 points**.

### Decants and major works

Points may be given when a council tenant needs to be rehoused to allow for urgent, lengthy, and/or investigative repair work which is too disruptive for the household to remain in situ for example subsidence or structural problems, 120 point subject to full surveyor's report, and an estimated timescale of works, such as subsidence, structural problems etc.

- **60 points** for planned works as part of a block or estate upgrade that requires

(temporary) vacant possession

- **120 points** subject to a full surveyor's report and timescale of works

Most moves required due to major works will be temporary and the tenant may be required to return to their original property upon completion of the work. In some instances, a permanent move may be agreed.

Where a council tenant needs to move due to re-development, demolition or disposal of their home 200 points will be awarded.

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.

These points will be reviewed every six months.

### Management transfers

These points are only awarded to council tenants where a move is necessary on management grounds. Points may be awarded as follows:

**150 points** may be awarded:

- Where there is evidence to indicate that the tenant is currently at risk of serious harm from a third party perpetrator(s). For example, risk of possible homicide, serious injury, assault or abuse including domestic or sexual violence.
- Where it can be evidenced that the risks can only be managed effectively by moving the tenant elsewhere

- Where there is a corresponding safety plan in place setting out how the new address will be kept confidential, minimising the risks of the perpetrator (s) finding the victim / survivor
- This award is instead of, not in addition to, 150 welfare points because of the threat of violence, abuse or harassment, including domestic and sexual violence.

These points will be reviewed every six months.

**120 points** may be awarded:

- Where there is no current risk from a third-party perpetrator, but where there are other risks serious enough to jeopardise the sustainment of the tenancy. Examples include (this is not an exhaustive list and each case should be considered on its own merit / evidence):
  - A tenant has a history of being subjected to abuse, neglect or other serious harm at the tenancy. Whilst this is now historic (i.e. there is no current risk from a third party perpetrator) the tenant is experiencing serious and ongoing post-traumatic stress to the extent that the tenancy is in jeopardy
  - A tenant has severe and enduring mental health issues and has developed paranoid / delusional thoughts about the property or neighbours, to the extent that living there is having a serious impact on their ability to manage the tenancy or stay well.
  - Long running neighbour disputes where both parties are equally hostile to each other, where there is a clearly evidenced high level of distress but where the issues are not serious enough on either side to warrant strong enforcement action being taken and where officers can evidence that a move will resolve the issues.

- o to applicants who release an adapted property where such an applicant no longer requires their current home and will therefore be releasing an adapted property by moving and are in unsatisfactory housing within 166A(3)(c)

**60 points** may be awarded for example :

- Where there other, less serious risks or concerns that jeopardise the sustainability of the tenancy and where officers can evidence that a move will resolve the issues (all cases will be considered on their individual merits)

### Points awards from previous allocation schemes

No points from previous Allocation Schemes will be retained.

Upon the introduction of this Allocation Scheme, all applicants will be reassessed.

### Review of points awarded

Applicants who have been awarded a high level of housing points, examples of which are listed below:

<b>Medical category A</b>	200
<b>Welfare category A</b>	150
<b>Management transfer</b>	150
<b>Decant points</b>	200
<b>Directors Quota</b>	150

These will be reviewed periodically and may be removed if the applicant is either not bidding, not making realistic bids or the circumstances have changed.

### New generation scheme

The scheme is open to the adult children of council, housing association and private sector tenants living with their parents in the borough. This scheme is only open to applicants who require studio, one or two bedroom properties.

The criteria for the scheme are:

- applicants must be aged eighteen years or above
- applicants must be living as an agreed member of the household of an Islington resident
- applicants must have lived continuously as an agreed member of the household of an Islington resident for the five years prior to the date of application
- applicants must not have been previously housed by the council

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

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

Additional priority will be given to applicants in overcrowded households through overcrowding points.

### Domestic abuse

Applicants fleeing domestic violence and abuse that have been assessed by MARAC (or any subsequent multi agency arrangement) as needing to move urgently for the safety and security of themselves and or any dependent children. These applicants will be awarded **30 additional priority points on top of all of the other priority points awarded for the identified needs.**

## Supported Housing Move On

**100 additional points** may be awarded to applicants in supported housing where it is in the council's wider strategic interest for these applicants to move on from supported housing

Examples where this may occur include:

- The applicant is in supported accommodation that they no longer need and that the council urgently requires that accommodation for other applicants
- The supported accommodation scheme is closing down or changing use
- The applicant has multiple complex needs and has a demonstrable need for settled accommodation in borough which they cannot reasonably be expected to find for themselves in the near future

## Statutory homeless applicants.

Any statutory homeless duty owed by Islington Council.

This will be defined only as:

- a) People where it has been verified by the authority that they are rough sleeping in the Islington Council area and meet the local connection rules
- b) People owed the prevention of homelessness duty under Section 195 (2)
- c) People owed the relief of homelessness duty under Section 189B (2)
- d) People who were owed the relief duty which has been brought to an end and are then owed a duty under s190.
- e) People who were owed the relief duty which has been brought to an end and are not in priority need.
- f) People who were owed the relief duty which has been brought to an end and are then assessed as being owed a duty under either s193 (2) or s193C (4).
  - 10 points are awarded to;
  - applicants who are threatened with homelessness or are homeless
  - accepted homeless applicants under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996

Applicants to whom the main duty is owed under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 will be placed on the Housing Register.

Accepted homeless applicants in temporary accommodation may also be awarded the following additional points if they fall under one of the following criteria:

- **100 points** will be given to accepted homeless families 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. This does not include families placed in council owned reception centres.
- **70 points** will be given to single homeless applicants assessed as needing studio or 1 bedroom accommodation, where the council has accepted a full housing duty.
- **40 points** will be awarded to accepted homeless households where the applicant needs to move due to financial hardship or where it is in the council's wider strategic interests or it helps the council manage temporary accommodation more effectively.

### Prevention of Homelessness

Applicants who were owed under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 a prevention duty (section 195(2)) or relief duty (section 189B (2)) who have accepted a private sector tenancy solution will be awarded 30 points. Applicants who would normally be offered a section 193 (2) main housing duty and who have accepted a private sector tenancy solution will be awarded **70 points**.

### Service occupiers

Islington Council service occupiers who are retiring due to age or on medical grounds may receive **200 points**. They will be able to bid for any suitable vacancies that meet their assessed housing requirements.

These points will be reviewed every six months.

However, points will not be awarded to:

- Staff who are dismissed from the council's service for disciplinary or competence issues or for unsatisfactory attendance.
- Staff who resign from a post that has tied accommodation with it to take up employment outside the council.

Staff who need 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.

### Reciprocal rehousing arrangements

The Head of Housing Needs and the Housing Options Manager have the authority to consider and approve 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. The council reserves the right to assess their needs on the basis of the home that was lost.

Examples of this include:

- a) Selling a property that is affordable and suitable for the applicant's needs.
- b) Moving from a secure tenancy or suitable private rented tenancy that they are able to afford and maintain to insecure or less settled or overcrowded accommodation.
- c) Requesting or colluding with a landlord or family member to issue them with a Notice to Quit.
- d) Overcrowding property by moving in friends and/or other family members who have never lived together previously and/or have not lived together for a long time, then requesting re-housing to larger accommodation.
- e) Obtaining accommodation that leads to a situation of overcrowding where suitable sized accommodation was affordable.

The above list is not exhaustive. On overcrowding this will ensure that households will not be treated as occupying overcrowded accommodation unless the overcrowding has come about by natural growth/increases due to birth/adoption of a child, a child or children reaching the age of 10 or above, or the addition of other persons to the household with the written consent of the London Borough of Islington. This section does not apply to refugees and former asylum seekers who have no choice about leaving their previous housing for their own safety or to be reunited with their families

### **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 applicants in three bedroom, four bedroom or larger sized properties who would normally qualify for a one bedroom property may bid for a two bedroom property. However this will reduce their under-occupation points.

In some circumstances, it may also be possible for an under occupying household to be approved for a move to two or more properties where the household is releasing more bedrooms than will be occupied under the approved move.

Benefit changes may reduce the housing benefit that tenants of working age and who are under occupying their home receive. Advice and assistance can be obtained from the council.

Points are awarded as set out in the table on **page 34**.

### **Housing association and other council tenants living in Islington**

Applications from housing associations and tenants of other councils living in Islington 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.

If the housing association and the 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 an Islington Council or housing association tenant applies for a transfer and is registered but subsequently falls into arrears, they may not be permitted to bid unless the arrears are cleared.

## The points scheme

The description of criteria below and in the table on page 34 is given in brief summary only and is to be read in the context of the wording of the scheme as a whole.

Applicants who are resident in the borough or who are granted an exception under non residence criteria receive **100 points**. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants

Opposite sex overcrowding; where two people of the opposite sex have to share a bedroom and one is 10 years or older (unless they are over 16 and living as a couple receive **10 points**. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants (except those in reception centres)

Where there is more than one occurrence **5 additional points** will be given per occurrence. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants (except those in reception centres)

For each additional bedroom required, **20 points** will be given. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants (except those in reception centres)

Severely overcrowded points

An Additional **30 points** for households lacking 2 or more bedrooms will be given. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants (except those in reception centres)

Applicants sharing or lacking access to facilities i.e. cooking facilities, hot or cold water or toilet will be given **10 points**. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants (except those in reception centres)

The number of points given for medical needs depends on the which of the three categories (details are on page 22) the applicant comes under. **The points awarded are 40, 80 and 200**, this applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants

The number of points for welfare needs are also explained in more detail on page 25. **The points awarded are 40, 80 and 150**, this applies to:

- Transfer tenants

- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants

Islington care leavers will receive **90 points**, this applies to:

- Housing Register applicants

Applicants with a discretionary tenancy receive **150 points**. This applies to:

- Housing Register applicants

Applicants working for Islington's Children's Services are entitled to **150 or 200 points**. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants

Applicants on the New Generation Scheme with 1 bed properties are awarded **20 points**. This applies to:

- Housing Register applicants

Applicants on the New Generation Scheme with 2 bed properties are awarded **90 points**. This applies to:

- Housing Register applicants

Statutory homeless applicants are awarded **10, 40, 70 or 100 points** (page 29 has further details). This applies to:

- Homeless applicants

Applicants that come under Prevention of homelessness are awarded either **30 or 70 points** (page 30 has further details). This applies to:

- Housing Register applicants

**100 or 200 points** are awarded for decants. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants

Tenants with major works taking place are awarded **120 points**. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants

Where a move is necessary on management grounds, **60, 120 or 150 points** may be awarded (page 27 has further details). This applies to:

- Transfer tenants

**30 points** are given to applicants fleeing domestic violence and abuse. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants
- Housing Register applicants
- Homeless applicants

**100 points** may be awarded to applicants in supported housing. This applies to:

- Housing Register applicants

For under occupying social housing tenants – **80 points** are given per bedroom under occupying. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants

Under occupying tenants in two bedroom properties get **150 points**. This applies to:

- Transfer tenants
- Housing Association tenants

Under occupation dependents will receive **100 points**. This applies to:

- Housing Register applicants

## Chapter 1: Housing Register

### Key

**T:**  
Transfer

**HA:**  
Housing Association

**HR:**  
Housing Register

**H:**  
Homeless

Criteria	Points	Who is eligible			
		T	HA	HR	H
Applicants who are resident in the borough or who are granted an exception under non residence criteria	100	Y	Y	Y	Y
Opposite sex overcrowding; where two people of the opposite sex have to share a bedroom and one is 10 years or older (unless they are over 16 and living as a couple.	10	Y	Y	Y	Y*
Where there is more than one occurrence additional points will be given per occurrence	5	Y	Y	Y	Y*
For each additional bedroom required.	20	Y	Y	Y	Y*
Severely overcrowded points Additional points for households lacking 2 or more bedrooms.	30	Y	Y	Y	Y*
Sharing or lacking access to facilities i.e. cooking facilities, hot or cold water or toilet.	10	Y	Y	Y	Y*
Medical needs	40, 80, 200	Y	Y	Y	Y
Welfare needs	40, 80, 150	Y	Y	Y	Y
Islington care leavers	90			Y	
Discretionary tenancy	150			Y	
Children's Services	150 or 200	Y	Y	Y	Y
New Generation scheme: 1 Beds 2 Beds	20 90			Y Y	
Statutory homeless	10,40 or 100				Y
Prevention of homelessness	30 or 70			Y	
Decants	100 or 200	Y			
Major works	120	Y			
Management transfers	60, 120 or 150	Y			
Domestic abuse points	30	Y	Y	Y	Y
Supported Housing move on	100			Y	
Under occupying social housing tenants – points per bedroom under occupying.	80	Y	Y		
Under occupying tenants in two bedroom properties.	150	Y	Y		
Under occupation dependents	100			Y	

\* Except those in reception centres

## Choice based lettings

Islington Council operates a choice based lettings scheme (CBL) 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 such as sheltered housing.

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?

The council will set thresholds for the points above which applicants will be able to bid and may set annual quotas for applicants in local priority categories. These will be established for each bedroom size and will be reviewed annually by the Service Director of Housing Needs and Strategy based on supply and demand levels. Any changes will be published in the Annual Lettings Plan.

### How to Bid

The Council's housing stock is let through a choice based letting scheme, Home Connections. Properties are available weekly and applicants will have to bid for properties, in order to be considered.

Applicants cannot bid for properties larger than their assessed need. However, applicants will be able to bid for a property with one less bedroom than their assessed need where this would improve their current housing situation.

The Council will shortlist applicants with the highest points who have bid on a property and invite them to a viewing. After a viewing the property will be offered to the applicant with the highest points. If the applicant with the highest points refuses the property it will be offered to the second highest bidder.

If an applicant has the same amount of points as another applicant, the Council will allocate the property according to the date of their application.

Where a property has been advertised with a restriction, only applicants who meet the criteria will be shortlisted for the property. For example, applicants under 50 would not be considered for an over 50's block.

Ground floor properties suitable for applicants with a ground floor medical recommendation (awarded by the council's medical advisor) will be allocated to applicants with this assessed need.

The Council will provide information about the number and types of homes, and current vacancy rates, to help customers to make an informed choice. The more flexible applicants are in their choice of areas and property types, the sooner they are likely to be successful in being offered a property that meets their need.

### 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.

Applicants who

- persistently bid and do not attend viewings
- applicants who consistently accept and later refuse properties
- or applicants who fail to bid for more than twelve months

may be removed from the Housing Register. These applicants will be required to reapply if they consider they still have a housing need. Any decision to remove an applicant from the housing register is subject to review (**see chapter 10**)

### Allocations outside Choice Based Lettings

There may be circumstances where for urgent operational or financial reasons there is a need to make an offer of housing outside the Choice Based Lettings (Supported Choice) and, in exceptional circumstances, outside of the priority points and date order criteria set out in this policy (Direct offer) so not all properties that become available will be advertised and offered through the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) process and not all properties will be allocated by priority points and date order.

### Supported Choice

The council may operate supported choice lettings to any applicant or group of applicants which include:

- Accepted homeless applicants who have been awarded points at or above the threshold at which applicants are able to bid,
- Applicants who are vulnerable and need support in accessing accommodation.

Where supported choice lettings are made an applicant will be given access to the choice- based lettings system for a minimum of four weeks. If they are not successful within this time they will be made an offer of a suitable property based on their assessed need for accommodation.

Failure to accept the offer may result in points being removed from an application.

Where an applicant owed any statutory homelessness duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, refuses a written offer of suitable accommodation made through this policy, the homelessness duty owed to them will be discharged and they will lose any priority status afforded to them because of that duty owed to them.

In these circumstances unless they have another reason to be awarded priority points under this policy, they will no longer be allowed to remain on the Housing Register. If they have another housing need reason to be awarded priority points under this policy then this will take place, but they will no longer be owed any priority point's award for being owed a statutory homelessness duty as that duty would have been brought to an end when they refused the suitable offer of accommodation.

A statutory homeless duty means:

- a) The prevention of homelessness duty under Section 195(2)
- b) The relief of homelessness duty under Section 189B (2)
- c) Where the relief duty has come to an end and an applicant is then owed a section 190 intentionally homeless temporary accommodation duty to provide them with a reasonable opportunity to secure alternative accommodation for occupation (section 190(2) duty),

- d) The section 193(2) Main Homelessness duty or the section 193C (4) 'reduced' section 193 duty Note where it has been decided to refer the case to another authority at either the 'Relief Stage' or at the 'Main Duty stage' of their homeless application, an applicant will not receive any priority points for being owed any homelessness duty as the Council will owe no duty (other than, depending on the circumstances) an interim accommodation duty. Being owed an interim accommodation duty pending the outcome of a local connection referral does not qualify an applicant to be owed points as defined by a-d above.

Where the Council has ended any statutory homeless duty and is exercising its power to provide accommodation pending a review decision (section 188(3) power) no statutory duty will be owed by the Council unless the outcome of any review is a positive for the applicant. Therefore where a review has been requested any point's priority for being owed any of the homelessness duties set out in a-d above will be removed.

### Direct Offer

In certain circumstances the council may make a direct offer of suitable accommodation outside of the CBL scheme in circumstances where in its discretion it considers it is necessary or appropriate to house a registered applicant otherwise than through the choice-based lettings process. This includes:

- Applicants who need to move urgently so that repair or redevelopment work can be completed.
- Applicants living in a property larger than they need and the property could be used to house another household in housing need. Where adult children are living in the property and are not moving to the smaller property, the council may also make them a direct offer of a property to meet their assessed needs at the same time.
- Applicants who have been assessed as needing Sheltered Housing.
- Where the council has agreed to provide accommodation under the National Witness Mobility Scheme, the Safe and Secure Programme or the North London Domestic Violence protocol or Pan London Domestic Violence protocol.
- Reciprocal requests from other social landlords.
- It is in the council's wider strategic interests to move an applicant or it helps the council manage the housing stock more effectively or efficiently.
- To facilitate a three way (or greater) mutual exchange. Mutual exchanges are not an allocation, but where the Council is satisfied that to do so would make best use of its housing stock and support the needs of the tenants involved, rather than a direct swap

(assignment) taking place, the Council may make available a property for a three-way exchange

- Urgent housing need situations where it would not be reasonable in the circumstances to wait for the Choice Based Lettings process to take place
- Offers to persons who the council has a duty to rehouse under section 39 of the Land Compensation Act 1973.
- Where a vacant adapted property or a property designed to disability standards becomes available the Council may need to offer that property to an applicant whose disability needs best matches that property regardless of the date they were registered
- Other examples include cases where an applicant is subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or presents a risk to themselves or others

An offer of accommodation could be in any area of Islington that the Council has assessed is suitable and safe for the applicant to live in.

All offers of accommodation outside of the Choice Based Lettings scheme or outside priority points and date order will be authorised by the Head of Housing Needs or in their absence a senior officer for the Housing Needs service and a detailed report will be produced monthly for the Director of Housing Needs and Strategy to scrutinise and check the balance of lettings via Choice Based Lettings versus other offers.

## Bidding and Offers

### Property type

Ground floor properties, wheelchair accessible homes, and properties that are suitable for adaptation, including those built to Lifetime Homes standard, are in very short supply.

The council will ensure that the limited supply of these property types that do become available for letting will be offered to those residents in most need of them.

Applicants will be selected for these properties on the basis of an assessed need for this type of home, and not on the basis of applicant's preferences. This applies equally to all housing list applicants.

### 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.

### 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.

### Lettings to older applicants

There are blocks in the borough which are designated for lettings to older applicants.

Offers in these blocks will be made in accordance with the allocation policy but only to older people.

### When exceptions will apply to allocation by priority points and waiting time

In some circumstances an offer may be made to an applicant outside the usual procedure. This is where there is an urgent need for an individual household to be housed, to enable sensitive lettings to take place or where there is an operational or financial need to house certain categories of applicants such as to comply with the Council's Annual Lettings Plan and any quotas contained within it. See the section on Choice for full details of when an offer may be made outside of the Choice Based Lettings process, or outside of the priority points and date order process.

### Annual Lettings Plan

The Council will produce and publish an Annual Lettings Plan; this will set annual targets for property types across priority points. The Head of Housing Needs will draw up the Annual Lettings Plan every January. The Annual Lettings Plan will be published on the Council's website. The Head of Housing Needs is responsible for monitoring the Annual Lettings Plan. If monitoring shows that outcomes are not as per the Annual Lettings Plan the Council reserves the right to implement a quota system and adjust the Annual Lettings Plan to ensure that it meets its strategic and or statutory obligations. This power is reserved to the Executive Member for Housing and Development in consultation with the Director of Housing Needs and Strategy to approve. The Housing Allocations Scheme is also monitored to make sure that allocations made reflect the housing need, and meet with the requirements of legislation. This scheme will be reviewed internally periodically to ensure that its aims and objectives are met.

### New homes local lettings policy

#### New homes on council estates

The council is committed to ensuring that its new homes are meeting the needs of the local community by prioritising existing secure council tenants currently living on the estate on which they are being built. Where we construct new homes on existing estates, the local lettings of these new homes will be in accordance with the lettings plan for the individual scheme for up to 100% of the allocations.

Where lettings plans are drawn up the following will apply to the local lettings allocations:

- Applicants must be secure council tenants living on the estate who meet the bidding threshold
- Applicants must fulfil the size and property requirements for the new homes, but under-occupiers will be able to bid for a property with an extra bedroom
- Applicants with the same number of points will be prioritised based on the length of time on the housing register
- Wheelchair adapted properties will be restricted to applicants who require such properties.
- Ground floor properties will be restricted to applicants with an assessed need for ground floor accommodation.
- Properties built to 'lifetime homes' standard which is a property that can be easily adapted for wheelchair use will be allocated to applicants assessed as needing this type of accommodation

Remaining properties subject to local lettings will be allocated to assured/secure social housing tenants with an assessed housing need living in the local ward. After local lettings on the estate and ward, remaining properties will be let according to the council's general Housing Allocation Scheme.

The Service Director of Housing Needs and Strategy can exercise discretion to include more than one estate and ward in the local lettings allocation.

#### Other new social housing

Islington Council also wants to make sure local people benefit from other, new social housing. Where new homes are built for social rent the local lettings of these new homes will be in accordance with the Lettings Plan for the individual scheme for up to 100% of the allocations.

Where lettings plans are drawn up the following will apply to the local lettings allocations:

- Applicants must be assured/secure council tenants living in the ward who meet the bidding threshold
- Applicants must fulfil the size and property requirements for the new homes
- Applicants with the same number of points will be prioritised based on the length of time on the housing register
- Wheelchair adapted properties will be restricted to applicants who require such properties.
- Ground floor properties will be restricted to applicants with an assessed need for ground floor accommodation.

- Properties built to 'lifetime homes' standard which is a property that can be easily adapted for wheelchair use will be allocated to applicants assessed as needing this type of accommodation

After local lettings in the ward, remaining properties will be let according to the council's general Housing Allocation Scheme.

The Service Director of Housing Needs and Strategy can exercise discretion to include more than one ward in the local lettings allocation.

### **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.

## **Succession**

### **Succession rights before and after 1 April 2012.**

In relation to tenancies that started before 1 April 2012, a person can succeed to a council tenancy on the death of a tenant if they are the tenant's spouse, civil partner or other close family member.

From 1 April 2012 new tenancies can only be succeeded to by a spouse or partner. Where other family members [as defined by Section 113 of the Housing Act 1985], have been resident in the property with the late successor tenant for the previous 5 years or the life of the tenancy (whichever is shorter) and the property is suitable according to their housing needs, we will permit a succession to the tenancy.

Where there is under-occupation or the property is unsuitable due to an occupancy criteria e.g. an over 55 block, we will enable the family member to be offered the tenancy of an alternative, suitably sized property.

Family members applying for a succession where the tenancy started after 1 April 2012 will be barred from succeeding a tenancy if they own a residential property anywhere within the United Kingdom or internationally.

### **Discretionary tenancy**

In certain circumstances the council or Partners for Improvement in Islington may grant the tenancy of a property to people resident in the property who were members of the tenant's family if there had already been a succession. This is known as a discretionary tenancy.

Where a discretionary tenancy 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 applicant's account. Right size means the household will not under occupy the property according to the council's rehousing standards.

Applicants agreed for discretionary tenancy that are under-occupying or occupying an adapted property may be offered rehousing in another suitable property. These applicants will be given 150 discretionary tenancy points.

Discretionary tenancy may be approved in cases where the applicant has resided with the late successor tenant for the previous 5 years or the life of the tenancy (whichever is shorter) and if the council may owe a housing duty as defined within the section 189 of the Housing Act (1996).

Anyone applying for a discretionary tenancy will be barred if they own a residential property anywhere within the United Kingdom or internationally.

A large, stylized outline of a house in a lighter shade of purple, centered on the page. The house has a gabled roof, a central door with a small circular handle, and a chimney on the right side.

# Chapter 2

# **Mutual Exchange**

# Mutual Exchange

## Mutual exchanges

### What is it?

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](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)) or House Exchange ([www.houseexchange.org.uk](http://www.houseexchange.org.uk)). Once 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](http://www.islington.co.uk/housing)

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## Homeswapper and House Exchange

### What are they?

Both schemes are national mutual exchange schemes. 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 do they work?

Both are web-based schemes and tenants can register on the web-sites at either [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk) or [www.houseexchange.org.uk](http://www.houseexchange.org.uk)

Tenants can carry out searches for possible swaps on a daily basis. When you have found the tenant you want to exchange with, both tenants must complete the mutual exchange form and return it to their landlord. You must contact the person who is living in the property you want to move into to make viewing arrangements.

## Smart Move

### What is it?

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

### Who can apply?

This scheme is available to **Islington Council tenants only**.

### 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](http://www.islington.gov.uk/homeconnections)**

If tenants express their interest in a property which matches their requirements, the council will put all the parties in contact with each other.

### Further information

For more information on any of the schemes above please contact:

#### Housing Options Team

E [rehousing@islington.gov.uk](mailto:rehousing@islington.gov.uk)

T 020 7527 4140

W [www.islington.gov.uk/housing](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing)



# Chapter 3

# **Shared Ownership**

# Shared Ownership

## 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 starting at 25% in a flat from the council or 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?

You can apply if you have a gross household income of up to £90,000 per annum.

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 operates its own scheme directly, and 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.

Information about all shared ownership properties available in London are advertised on the Share to Buy website which is in partnership with First Steps. The Share to Buy website also includes information about obtaining mortgages and contact details of solicitors who have experience in assisting clients with shared ownership purchases.

Registering your contact details with Share to Buy enables you to keep up to date when new properties become available. If you find a property you are interested in the share to buy portal will direct you to the housing associations website that owns the property and their sales team will be able to answer any questions you have, go through your application form and assess your eligibility.

### Further information

For more information please visit:

**W** [www.sharetobuy.com/london](http://www.sharetobuy.com/london)

A large, light blue outline of a house with a gabled roof, a central door, and a chimney on the right side, set against a darker blue background. The text is centered within the house's outline.

# Chapter 4 **Sheltered 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 Clarion. Other sheltered housing providers include Peabody Housing Trust, Barnsbury Housing Association, Mercers, Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association (ISHA), ASRA and Anchor Housing Trust.

Applicants interested in sheltered housing must apply to the housing register and an assessment will take place to decide if sheltered housing is suitable for their housing needs (see chapter 1).

If suitable the applicant will be placed on the priority list and a sheltered housing category of A, B or C will be awarded. Sheltered categories won't have an effect on rehousing bidding points.

Examples of the award categories are:

### A – High priority

- Overcrowded
- Housebound
- In hospital and cannot return home
- Threat of violence or abuse
- Under occupying

### B – Medium priority

- Inappropriately housed based on assessed medical need
- Imminent threat of homelessness
- In Temporary Accommodation

### C – Low priority

- No threat of homelessness
- Appropriately housed

## Offers of Sheltered Accommodation

All offers of sheltered accommodation will be made by direct offer. Direct offers will be made collaboratively in accordance with the Housing Allocations Scheme (see page 30 Direct Offers). The relevant housing association will make the final decision on any sheltered housing offers. Applicants will therefore be subject to the housing associations policies and criteria's regarding the suitability of any offers made.

### Further information

Please contact:

**Housing Options Team**

E [rehousing@islington.gov.uk](mailto:rehousing@islington.gov.uk)

T 020 7527 4140

W [www.islington.gov.uk/housing](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing)

A large, light teal outline of a house with a gabled roof, a central door, and a chimney on the right side. The house is centered on the page.

# Chapter 5 **Supported Housing**

# Supported Housing

## What is it?

Supported Housing is accommodation that is provided to help develop and sustain a 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.
- single homeless people with a range of support needs
- women escaping violence
- 16-25 year olds in care or in need of housing

## How does it work?

Applicants are supported by staff who may be based on site or provide visiting support to the residents. Applicants can live 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. They may then get support to move on to independent accommodation in the private rented or social housing sector.

### Further information

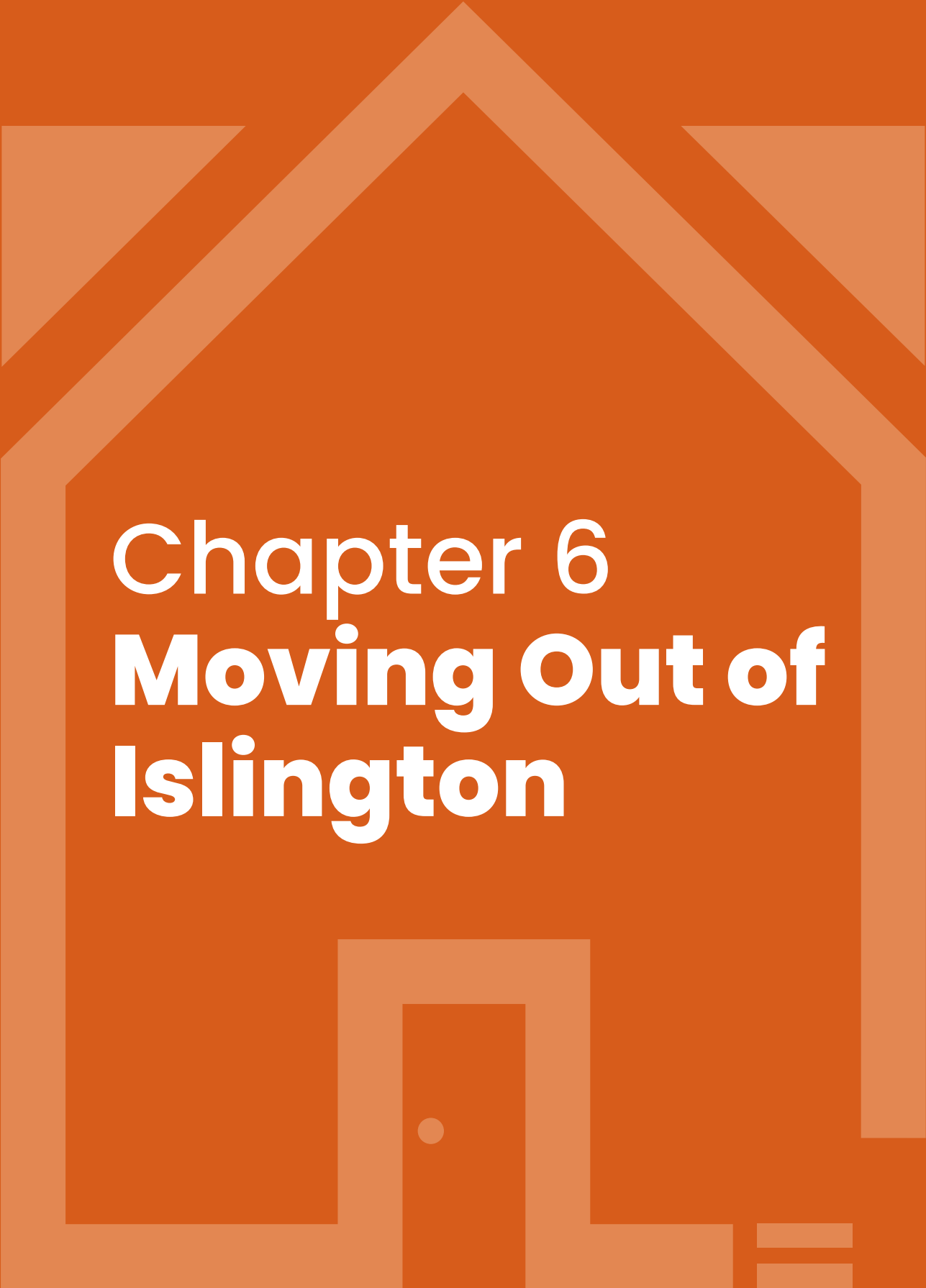
Please contact:

**Referrals Co-ordinator Team**

**E** [housing.advice@islington.gov.uk](mailto:housing.advice@islington.gov.uk)

**T** 020 7527 4140

**W** [www.islington.gov.uk/housing](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing)



# Chapter 6

# **Moving Out of Islington**

# Moving Out of Islington

## 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

Please contact:

**Housing Options Team**

**E** [rehousing@islington.gov.uk](mailto:rehousing@islington.gov.uk)

**T** 020 7527 4140

**W** [www.islington.gov.uk/housing](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing)

**W** [www.housingmoves.org](http://www.housingmoves.org)



# Chapter 7

## Home shelter

**Sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic violence**

# Home shelter

## 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 with legal advice.

### Further information

Islington Council tenants should contact their area housing office. Housing association tenants should contact their landlord.

Contact **Islington Women's Aid** to talk to someone about domestic violence.

T 020 8269 2121

W [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

**In an emergency always dial 999.**

A large, light blue outline of a house with a gabled roof, a central door, and a chimney on the right side. The house is centered on the page.

# Chapter 8

# **The Private Sector**

# The Private Sector

## Renting in the private sector

### What is it?

Renting in the private sector means that 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 they are 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

Please contact:

**Housing Solutions Team**

E [housingsolutions@islington.gov.uk](mailto:housingsolutions@islington.gov.uk)

T 020 7527 6371

W [www.islington.gov.uk/housing](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing)

## Private sector opportunities for homeless people

### What is it?

The Private Sector Opportunities Scheme (PRSO) 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. Applicants subsequently housed through the PRSO scheme in discharge of the full housing duty will then receive **70 points**. Applicants who are housed into the Private Rented Sector to end the prevention or relief duty contained within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will receive **30 points**.

### Further information

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

## Private sector housing grants

### What is it?

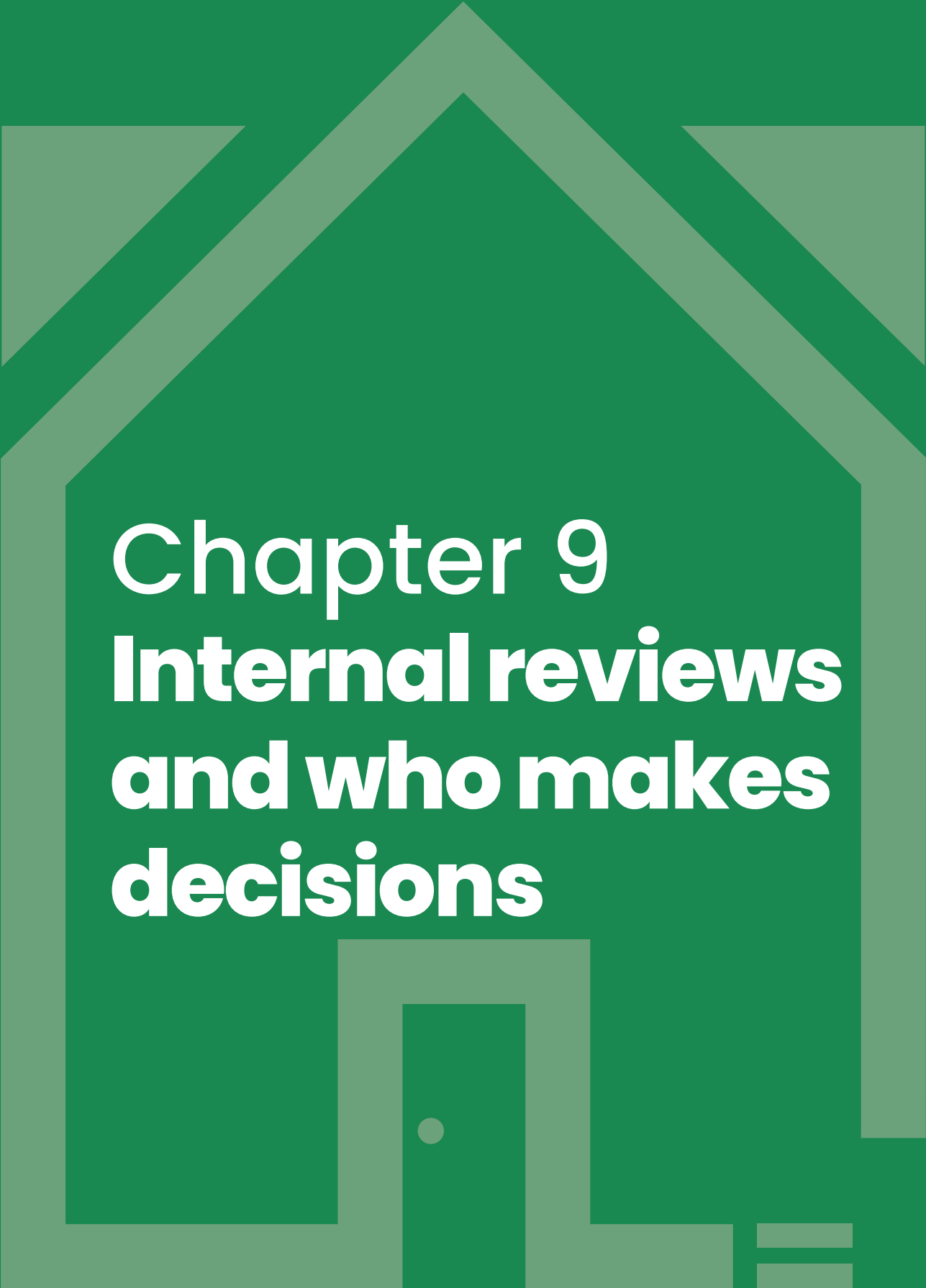
Grants are available from Islington Council to enable repairs, adaptation and grants for energy efficiency of owner occupied and private rented properties.

### 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

Please contact the **Housing Solutions Team**

A large, light green outline of a house with a gabled roof and a central door, serving as a background for the chapter title.

# Chapter 9

## **Internal reviews and who makes decisions**

# Internal reviews and who makes decisions

Applicants who wish to challenge a decision of the council under its allocation scheme should try to resolve the problem informally in the first instance.

If the applicant is still not satisfied they may request a formal internal review within 21 days from the date the applicant is notified of the decision. An applicant can request a review of any decision about the facts of their case which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing accommodation to them.

**All internal reviews will be processed within 56 days unless an extension has been agreed.**

## Reviews of decisions regarding eligibility or qualification

A review can be requested if one of the following is in dispute:

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

## Review of exclusion from the register

In exceptional circumstances the council will consider lifting the disqualification applied to an applicant i.e. the applicant may be able to join the list after 12 months.

## Review of points awards and decisions whether to allocate housing

If an applicant is unhappy about the points awarded, or a reduction in their points, they can ask for the relevant manager to review their assessment. They can request a formal internal review within 21 days from the date the applicant is notified of the points awarded

or decision whether to allocate housing accommodation to them.

## 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 within 21 days from the date the offer is made. The internal review is considered by a panel of officers from the Housing and Adult Social Services department of the council.

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.

## Update of applications

The council will contact applicants periodically to ensure the information held on applicants is up to date. If applicants do not respond to a review within 28 days of being requested to do so the council may remove their application from the register without further notice.

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 an applicant's circumstances change after they have applied the council may suspend or remove them from the Housing Register.

### The type of decisions and assessments are made by the following:

#### Officers within the Housing Options Service

- Determining eligibility and qualification to join the register.
- Deciding that a housing register application should be cancelled.
- Assessing and prioritising housing applications.
- Assessing size of home needed by an applicant.
- Assessing medical issues.
- Shortlisting applicants for council and housing association homes via the choice based lettings system.

#### A Housing Options Service Manager level

- Assessing welfare issues.
- Reviews regarding eligibility, qualification, exclusion, points award and decision on whether to allocate.

#### Housing options service/Homes and Communities service/Partners for Islington Manager level

- Assessing management transfer/decant/major works.
- Reviews regarding eligibility, qualification, exclusion, points award and decision on whether to allocate.

#### A panel of officers from the Housing Options service. Officers directly involved in the original decision will not take part in the panel decision

- Reviews on suitability of offers.

A large, light gray outline of a house with a gabled roof, a central door, and a chimney on the right side. The house is centered on the page.

# Chapter 10

# **Complaints**

# Complaints

## Complaints regarding the service

The council operates a two-stage procedure:

1. **Stage 1**

The first stage is investigated and responded to locally by the service area in which the complaint originated.

2. **Chief Executive’s stage**

The second stage of the complaints procedure gives the customer the right to request that an investigation of their complaint is undertaken by the Corporate Customer Service Team on behalf of the Chief Executive.

## Complaints to the Housing Ombudsman

If you feel your complaint has not been dealt with properly or fairly you can make a request for your complaint to be considered by the **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**. More information about how to complain can be found on their website:

**[www.lgo.org.uk/how-to-complain](http://www.lgo.org.uk/how-to-complain)**

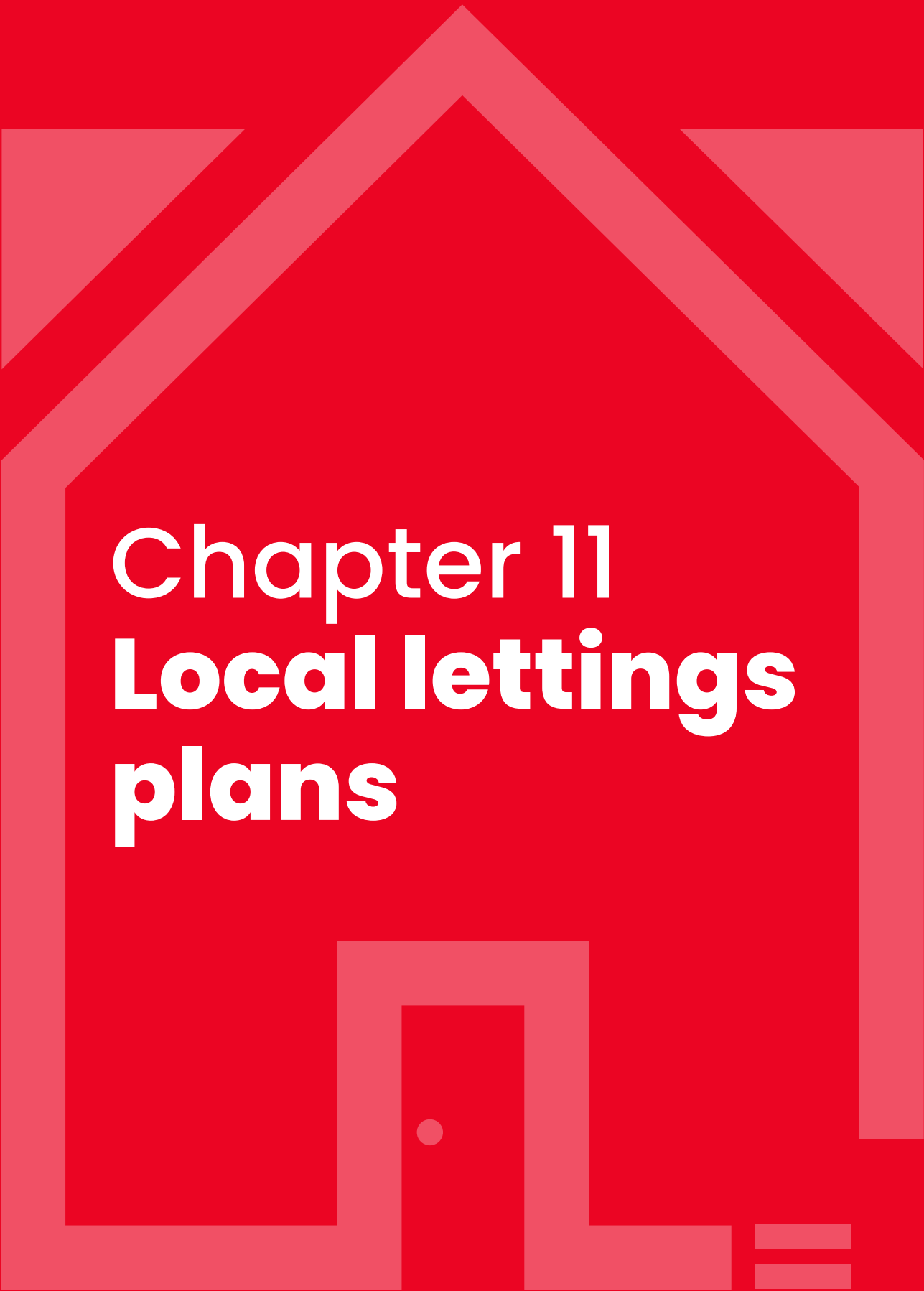
Alternative, you can call the **LGSCO** on **0300 061 0614** to talk to a complaints advisor about registering a new complaint or you can write to them at:

**Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH



# Chapter 11

# **Local lettings plans**

# Local lettings plans

Local Letting Initiatives may be applied to meet the needs of an estate or local ward or to address sustainability and community issues to ensure that the housing allocation scheme is able to contribute to building sustainable communities.

They will be tailored to fit local situations in well-defined communities (such as a particular block of flats, an individual street, or new housing development). Each local letting initiative will be based on a detailed analysis of relevant information gathered from a variety of sources and may include for example evidence from internal departments, partner Housing Associations, local Councillors, and the community itself. (Evidence may include information such as tenant profiling, the incidence of anti-social behaviour, and stock turnover in a particular block, street or area, or the need to provide housing for a specific group).

The following are examples of local letting policies that may be deployed under the Allocation Policy. The list is for illustrative purposes and is not exhaustive.

- Age restrictions.
- Policies that are geared towards encouraging applicants who work or volunteer to live in an area where for example there may be an area, or street with high numbers of working age households not in work.
- Restrictions on lettings to vulnerable households where there are already a concentration of supported tenants/ residents in a street or block.
- Lettings to childless households where there are high concentrations of children and young people living on a specific estate, street, or block.

- Disregarding household type or property matching rules to allow for example under-occupation to reduce child density or to account for future family growth
- Ensuring that there is a balance of working and non-working households allocated to a new build scheme.
- Up to 100% of all new build accommodation developed by Islington Council and partner Registered Social Landlords

Local Lettings Plans will always be applied to new developments (usually only applied to first lettings) regardless of whether the new development is subject to a section 106 agreement. Where a new development is subject to a section 106 Planning Agreement the criteria set will be followed.

## How will a local letting policy be assessed and agreed?

The Council and, if relevant, any Housing Association Partner will come to an agreement on the estates, blocks, or streets where a local letting policy may be appropriate and why.

There must be a clear evidence base for adopting a local letting policy. Agreement as to whether a local letting policy is appropriate will be based on the following test:

1. That there is a clear definition of the objective to be achieved by that local letting policy
2. That there is a clear evidence base to back up the need for a local letting policy.
3. That any potential equality impact has been considered.
4. How long the local lettings policy is intended to operate
5. When the policy should be reviewed

A written record of each policy adopted or rejected should be kept. It is the intention that local letting policies will be fluid with new policies being added as are required and existing policies being deleted once the objective for that policy has been met. All current local letting policies will be listed as a link to the online version of the Council's Allocation Policy so the public can see which policies are in operation at any point in time.

All Local Lettings Policies will be approved by the Executive Member for Homes and Communities as a recordable decision.

**If you would like this information in another language or reading format, such as Braille, large print, audio or Easy Read, please contact 020 7527 2000.**

For any enquiries/comments, please contact:



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