London Borough of Havering Council

Housing Allocations Scheme Summary

July 2016
Introduction to the housing allocations scheme and how to apply

This document summarises the current housing allocations scheme that came into effect in July 2016. The scheme sets out who qualifies for inclusion on the housing register having applied and then it prioritises amongst those who do qualify.

The scheme was reviewed, which included a major public consultation, to make sure that we allocate housing to residents in Havering who are in the greatest housing need. The scheme also aims

- Provide a fair and transparent system by which people are prioritised for social housing.
- Help those most in housing need.
- Recognise residents who make a contribution to a local community.
- Make the best use of Havering’s social housing including those of our partner Registered Social Landlords

For easy reference a table summarising how priority is awarded in the scheme can be found at the back of this document. A copy of Havering’s full housing allocations scheme can be found at www.havering.gov.uk

How to apply

Residents can apply for housing online by filling in a housing application form on our website: https://ha.havering.gov.uk/housingform/

Our website has lots of useful information about our housing allocations scheme and advice on how to apply.

Before you start the full application, you will be asked a few questions to make sure that completing it is worthwhile. The full application should take about 30 minutes.

To apply, you will need to have all the addresses you have lived at with the dates you moved in and out over the last 6 years and full name and dates of birth of everyone you’re including in your application.

Once you have completed the application form, you will be asked to provide supporting information to help determine whether you are eligible and qualify to join the housing register. Once the information is received and on completion of the assessment, you will be advised of the outcome within 28 days. If you are not eligible or do not qualify, you can request a review of that decision.
Who can’t join the housing register

You will not qualify to join the housing register if you fall into one or more of the groups below:

- you are not entitled to access to assistance from public funds due to your immigration status
- you have not lived in the London Borough of Havering for six continuous years.
- you have a high level of household savings or assets of £36,000 and over or you own your own home
- you or a member of your household has been involved in unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to make you an unsuitable tenant of the Council or other housing provider
- you have not demonstrated that you have a housing need

In some limited circumstances, you will be able to join the housing register even if you fall into one of the groups above. Details of these exceptions can be found in the full housing allocation scheme.

How the housing band (priority) system works

The housing band (priority) system is used to determine who will be prioritised for housing in the Borough and is summarised below:

a) Emergency Rehousing Band (ER)
   People with an urgent need to move, this can include applicants with life threatening health or medical needs, fleeing domestic abuse, with critical safeguarding issues and housing in serious disrepair.

b) Community Contribution Reward 1 Band (CCR1)
   People with an identified housing need plus Community Contribution. This includes an applicant who is in employment, ex-service personnel, or a council tenant wishing to downsize due to welfare reform impact.

c) Community Contribution Reward 2 Band (CCR2)
   People with an identified housing need plus Community Contribution as a result of fostering or adopting, volunteering, council tenants wishing to downsize, those caring for a Havering resident and disabled applicants who are unable to participate in work related activities.

d) Home-seeker Band (H)
   People with an identified housing need but do not qualify for Community Contribution Reward.
e) **Reduced Priority Band (RP)**
- Accepted homeless households who do not meet the Havering 6 continuous year residency criteria
- Other confirmed homeless households with no priority need or those who have made themselves intentionally homeless.

### Determining Priority ‘effective dates’

Initially, an applicant’s priority date will correspond to the date they registered to join the housing register. Priority dates may change when the Council is notified of a change in circumstances, or when an applicant moves up and down bands.

The principle applied is that when applicants fall within the same band, priority is determined through their ‘priority effective date’ and an applicant should not be affected by both the priority band and the effective date at the same time.

**Moving up a ‘Band’**
Your priority date is the date the new higher priority is awarded.

**Moving Down a ‘Band’**
Your priority date reverts to the date you were awarded the previous priority band OR any earlier date when you were in a higher band.

If you have been suitably housed for any of the time, the new priority effective date will correspond with the date you re-register to join the housing register.

### The bedroom standard

We will assess the number of bedrooms your household needs using the bedroom standard below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>1 bedroom property or studio</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single person or couple with no children</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>2 bedroom property</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single person / couple with any of the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• one child of any age</td>
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<tr>
<td>• two children of different sexes where both are under 10 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>• two children of same sex where both are under 16 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>• one other person (not the lead tenant’s partner or child) or couple</td>
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</table>
### 3 bedroom property

- Single person / couple with any of the following:
  - two children of different sexes, at least one of which is 10 years or over
  - two children of the same sex where one is 16 years old or over
  - three children of any sex or age
  - four children of the same sex
  - four children with 2 girls of any age and 2 boys of any age
  - four children with 3 of the same sex and one of the opposite sex, where one girl and one boy are both under 10 years
  - one person (not the lead tenant’s partner or child), with or without a partner plus one child, or two children of different sexes who are both under ten, or two children of the same sex regardless of age

### 4 bedroom property

- Single / couple with any of the following:
  - four children where the need for a 3 bedroom property does not apply
  - five children of any sex or age
  - six children of the same sex regardless of their age
  - six children with five of the same sex and one of the opposite sex where there is one girl and one boy both aged under 10 years
  - six children with four of the same sex, two of the opposite sex regardless of the age of the children
  - six children with three girls and three boys where all the bedrooms available to the children can be shared by either a girl and boy under 10 years or the same sex children of any age can share
  - one of the reasons for being eligible for a three bedroom property plus one person (not the lead tenant’s partner or child), with or without a partner

### 5 bedroom property

Single / couple with any of the following:

- six children where the rules for a 4 bedroom home do not apply
- seven children of any sex or age
- eight children all of the same sex
- seven of the same sex an one of the opposite sex where one girl and one boy are both under 10 years
- eight children with five of the same sex and three of the opposite sex, where all four bedrooms available for the children can be shared by either a girl and boy who are both under 10 years or two children of the same sex regardless of age
- eight children with four girls and four boys
- one of the reasons for being eligible for a four bedroom property plus one person (not the lead tenant’s partner or child), with or without a partner.
Statement on choice

The majority of council and housing association rented homes to which the Council has nomination rights will be advertised on the internet at www.ellcchoicehomes.org.uk. To be considered for an available home, applicants must bid for the home by the publicised deadline and meet the labelling criteria.

However in certain limited circumstances, the Council may allocate a property directly to an applicant (also known as an assisted bid),

The length of time you can wait before getting an offer is affected by the choices you make and the number of properties that become available, your housing band (priority) and how many other people bid for the properties that you are interested in.

Some properties are in higher demand than others. This means that more people are likely to bid for them. Whether you chose to wait longer for a high demand property, or you are willing to bid for a property that comes up more quickly in an area that is in lower demand is your decision. As with any decision about moving home, sometimes a compromise needs to be reached.

Number of offers of accommodation

All applicants except those entitled to supported sheltered accommodation will receive one suitable offer of housing under this scheme.

The consequences of refusing an offer of accommodation depend on the circumstances in which your application was accepted. Therefore, the Council’s rehousing duty may end or your application will be cancelled and you will be disqualified from reapplying for housing for 12 months.

Bidding activity monitoring

The Council will undertake monitoring of bidding activity. If an applicant fails to bid for suitable properties that have been advertised for six months from the date they are accepted on the housing register, we will contact the applicant to find out the reasons for not bidding and ensure that they understand their application can be suspended on the housing register for a period of six months. The applicant will be notified when this decision is made.

In making the decision whether to suspend an application we will take into account whether there have been no suitable properties advertised, or there are special circumstances for the applicant not bidding. In such cases, the application will not be affected.
Annual review of applications

It is important that we have an accurate picture of the overall housing need in Havering and we use this to inform our housing strategy and in particular the need for new social housing.

Therefore, we have to keep the housing register up to date. We will review your case following a change of circumstances or write to you on the anniversary of your application to ask you to complete a form to confirm whether your housing circumstances have changed or not.

Right to request information or a review

We want you to know how we assess your housing application and how your priority is awarded. We can provide you with information on whether you are likely to be housed and how long this might take.

You have the right to information on how we have assessed your case. If we decide that you are ineligible or do not qualify for housing, we will let you know in writing.

You have a right to request a review of any decision on your case.

We have a two stage review procedure.

**Stage 1** If you disagree with an officer’s decision, you can ask them in the first instance to reconsider it up to 21 days of receiving the decision letter. You should let them know your reasons for disagreement in writing or by telephone. Within 48 hours of receiving your reasons and any further information you provide, the officer will advise you of any change to their decision.

**Stage 2** If you are still unhappy with the decision, you can request a formal review of the stage 1 decision. You must do so within 21 days of receiving the decision letter and should provide your reasons for disagreement in writing and send us any other information that you would like us to consider as part of the review. A reviewing officer, who was not involved in the original decision, will review the decision within 56 days of your request and let you know the outcome in writing.

All requests for a formal review should be made in writing. Emails can be sent to: housingapplicationappeal@havering.gov.uk.

Alternatively, a letter of appeal can be sent to:
- Appeals Officer, Housing Register Team
- Housing Demand Service
- Mercury House, Mercury Gardens
- Romford, RM1 3DT
### Housing Needs Priority Criteria at a glance

#### 1. Emergency Rehousing Band (ER): People who have an urgent need to move

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency medical or disability (Reasonable preference category S.166A(3)(d))</th>
<th>Summary Guide of Criteria</th>
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<td></td>
<td>• An applicant in hospital or residential care who cannot return home due to unsuitability of the property</td>
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<td>• An applicant or someone in their household’s condition is expected to be terminal within a period of twelve months and rehousing is required to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care.</td>
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<td>• An applicant or someone in their household’s condition is life threatening and their existing accommodation is a major contributory factor.</td>
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<td>• An applicant or someone in their household's health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it is likely to become life threatening (Domestic abuse, management transfer).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The applicant or someone in their household has severe mobility issues, is housebound and is unable to leave their accommodation save with assistance that will result in high risk to the applicant or their carer. They will have an assessed need to move to accommodation that meets their needs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The applicant needs to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which they, or a member of their household, has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The applicant or someone in their household is a wheelchair user and unable to use the wheelchair within their current accommodation and they have an assessed need to move to wheelchair suitable accommodation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The applicant’s accommodation is directly contributing to the deterioration of their health such as severe chest condition requiring intermittent hospitalisation as a result of chronic dampness in the accommodation and the condition of the property cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time – usually 6 months.</td>
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<td>• Where overcrowding in the property leaves the applicant or someone in their household at risk of life threatening infection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardship and Welfare Criteria</td>
<td>• There are circumstances or a combination of circumstances considered exceptional and the applicant’s need to move is supported by health professionals, the Council’s Housing and Social Services and/or a senior Police Officer or MARAC.</td>
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| **(a) Leaving care**  (Reasonable Preference category s166A(3)(c)) | • The applicant has been accommodated by Havering Council’s Children and Young Adults Services and it has been confirmed by the service that they are now ready to move into independent or supported accommodation.  
• The applicant has been assessed as having the life skills to manage a tenancy including managing a rent account and the necessary support package is in place. |
| **(b) Move on from specialist accommodation**  (Reasonable Preference category s166A(3)(c)) | • The applicant is moving on from specialist accommodation provided by Havering Council’s Social Services Team, North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) or another registered supported housing provider in line with an agreement with Havering Council’s Housing Service.  
• The applicant has been nominated as part of an agreement with a single homeless accommodation provider in Havering where they are in need of settled accommodation and unable to secure it yourself.  
• The applicant has been assessed as having the life skills to manage a tenancy including managing a rent account and the necessary support package is in place. |
| **(c) Management transfer** | • The applicant is an existing social tenant with a need to move because there is demonstrable evidence to support imminent personal risk to the applicant or their family as a result of violence or harassment if they remain in the property OR  
• The applicant has had to leave their current home to move to a place of safety in temporary accommodation allocated by the Council and supported by a senior Police Officer. |
| **(e) Reciprocal arrangement** | • The Council will only agree to reciprocal requests from other authorities and Registered Providers where they can demonstrate that there is imminent personal risk to the tenant or their family and accommodation is required in Havering, and that the reciprocal property being offered will be beneficial to Havering residents with high priority to move. |
| Homeless households owed a full homeless duty under section 193(2) or 195(2). (Reasonable Preference categories s166A(3) (a) | • The applicant is accepted as homeless and in severe need.  
• Where it is in the overriding interest of the Council to prioritise an allocation in order to make best use of Havering’s resources as approved by Head of Housing (Move on).  
• Where the landlord wants the temporary accommodation property back AND you have been in temporary accommodation for 3 years AND the council cannot find alternative suitable temporary accommodation (End of lease). |
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<tr>
<td>Statutory Overcrowded (Reasonable preference category S.166A(3)(c))</td>
<td>• The applicant is considered to be statutorily overcrowded according to the relevant legislation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Unsanitary conditions where the conditions pose an ongoing and serious threat to health (Reasonable preference category S.166A(3)(c)) | • The applicant is an owner occupier or private tenant and the Council’s Environmental Health Team has determined that the property poses a category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (e.g. crowding and space, excessive cold or risk of falls) and the Council are satisfied that the problem cannot be resolved by the landlord within 6 months, and as a result continuing to occupy the accommodation will pose a considerable risk to their health. This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of roof, or have living conditions which are a statutory nuisance, and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a 6 month time period.  
• The applicant is an owner occupier or private tenant where a statutory notice has been issued by the Environmental Health Team that an unfit property is to be demolished under the Housing Act 2004. |
| Release of adapted property (Reasonable preference category S.166A(3)(e)) | • The applicant is a Havering Council tenant who is willing to transfer to a suitable non-adapted property and is releasing an adapted house or designated older persons property. |
| Decants - Major works or demolition | • The applicant is a Havering Council tenant required to move because their current home is due to be (a) sold, and/or (b) demolished or (c) have extensive works |
(Reasonable preference category S.166A(3)(c ) completed or (d) refurbishment or conversion work which means that they you need to move out either permanently or temporarily whilst the works are completed. NOTE: This does not apply to PSL properties.

| Service tenants where there is a contractual obligation | The applicant is a Havering Council employee who has been living in tied accommodation provided to them as part of their work but needs to move out due to (a) retirement or (b) redundancy or (c) the Council is changing the terms of your employment or (d) because the property is due to be (i) sold and/or (ii) demolished, or (iii) have extensive works completed or (iv) refurbishment or conversion work which means that they need to move out either permanently or temporarily while the works are completed. |
| Succession rights where property is not suitable | The applicant lives in Havering Council property and has the right of succession following the death of the tenant, but the property is too large, has adaptations that they do not require and/or there is an age restriction which renders them ineligible to hold the tenancy of the property. |
| Council tenants with a fixed term tenancy coming to an end | Where the Council intends to grant a new tenancy of their current property but has decided to grant a tenancy of an alternative property. | Refer to the tenancy policy |

2. Community Contribution Reward 1 Band (CCR1): People who have a need to move AND are given increased priority for their positive Community Contribution as a result of working, being an ex-service personnel or council tenant wishing to downsize due to welfare reform impact.

Summary Guide of Criteria

| Working | The applicant is a working household (*this will not disadvantage applicants who may be unable to work for example, due to disability as this is considered under other criteria stated in the policy*) The applicant needs to move to take up (or continue) with an employment opportunity that is not available elsewhere and they do not live within reasonable commuting distance (Right to Move applicants). |
### Ex-armed forces and reserve forces personnel
- The applicant is a member of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where they have made the application within five years of discharge.
- The applicant is a bereaved spouse and civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.
- The applicant is a serving or former member of the Regular or Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of service.

### Under-occupation (PSL excluded)
(Reasonable preference category S.166A(3)(e))
- The applicant is a Havering Council tenant who wishes to downsize because otherwise they would be liable for part of their rent under the size criteria for housing benefit/universal credit.

### 3. Community Contribution Reward 2 Band (CCR2): People who have a need to move AND are given increased priority for their positive Community Contribution as a result of fostering and adopting, volunteering, a carer for a Havering resident or wishing to downsize.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Guide of Criteria</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster carers referred by the Council’s Children’s Service (Reasonable preference category S166A(3) (d) or (e))</td>
<td>The applicant is a foster carer approved by the Council and lack of housing prevents them from being able to start, or continue to provide foster care or adopt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer (Reasonable Preference category s166A(3) (c) and (d))</td>
<td>The applicant is a volunteer in Havering with an identified housing need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carer (Reasonable Preference category s166A(3) (c) and (d))</td>
<td>The applicant gives care to a Havering resident that is substantial and on-going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-occupation (PSL excluded) (Reasonable preference</td>
<td>The applicant is a Havering Council tenant who wishes to release a home with more bedrooms by moving to a property with fewer bedrooms than they currently have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category S.166A(3)(e)</td>
<td>- The applicant is a Housing Association tenant who wishes to release a home with more bedrooms and their landlord agrees that the vacated property can be used for a nomination by the Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disabled Households</td>
<td>- The applicant is a disabled applicant under retiring age who has been assessed as eligible for the support element of Employment and Support Allowance due to a permanent disability which prevents them from participating in work related activities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. Home seeker Band (H): People who have a need to move BUT do not qualify for Community Contribution Reward.

### Summary Guide of Criteria

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Homeless households owed a full homeless duty under section 193(2) or 195(2).</strong></th>
<th>- The applicant has been deemed homeless by Havering Council within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overcrowding</strong></td>
<td>- The applicant is living in a property with a bedroom or more short of the bedroom standard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (Reasonable Preference category s166A(3)(c))                                        | - The applicant is living in a property without access at all to any of the following facilities:-  
  - a bathroom or kitchen  
  - an inside WC  
  - hot or cold water supplies, electricity, gas or adequate heating  
- The applicant lives in private property which is in disrepair or is unfit for occupation and is subject to a Prohibition Order and recovery of the premises is required in order to comply with the Order as defined by Section 33 of the Housing Act 2004.  
- Applicants who only have access to shared facilities in shared accommodation will not qualify under these criteria. |
| **Moderate medical grounds**  
(Reasonable Preference category s166A(3)(d)) | • The applicant’s housing is unsuitable for severe medical reasons or due to their disability, but they are not housebound or their life is not at risk due to their current housing, but the housing conditions directly contribute to causing serious ill-health. |
|---|---|
| **Hardship and Welfare Criteria (Reasonable preference category S.166A(3)(e))** | **(a) Foster carers and adoptive parents**  
(Reasonable preference category S166A(3) (e)) | • The applicant is a foster carer or adoptive parent approved by the Council and lack of housing prevents them from being able to start, or continue to provide foster care or adopt. |
| | **(b) Need to move for care or support**  
(Reasonable Preference category s166A(3) (c) and (d)) | • The applicant needs to move to receive care that is substantial and ongoing.  
• The applicant needs to move in order to access social services facilities, and is unable to travel across the Borough.  
• The applicant wishes to move to a certain locality where not doing so would cause hardship (Includes those approved under Right to Move Scheme). |
| | **Under-occupation**  
(Reasonable preference category S.166A(3)(e)) | • The applicant is a Havering Council tenant who wishes to release a home with more bedrooms by moving to a property with fewer bedrooms than they currently have.  
• The applicant is a Housing association tenant who wishes to release a home with more bedrooms and their landlord agrees that the vacated property can be used for a nomination by the Council. |
| | **Housing for older people**  
(Reasonable Preference category s166A(3)(d)) | • Older or disabled residents seeking sheltered or extra care housing  
• Older owner occupiers who are not able to meet their housing need from their own resources (asset rich but cash poor) with agreement to lease their property to the Council to use as temporary accommodation. |
5. Reduced Priority Band (RP): People who have a need to move as a result of homelessness.

### Summary Guide of Criteria

Applicants in this band have reduced priority. *They are likely to wait longer for an offer and may be helped to find a home in the private rented sector.* Includes:

- Households who are accepted as homeless but do not meet the residency criteria (Reasonable Preference category s166A(3) (a))
- Households found intentionally homeless (Reasonable preference category S166A(3)(a))
- Households assessed as homeless but have no priority need (Reasonable preference category S166A(3)(a))