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## **AGENDA FOR THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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Members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee are summoned to Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on, **2 February 2023 at 7.30 pm.**

Enquiries to : Ola Adeoye  
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Despatched : 25 January 2023

### Membership

Councillor Jason Jackson (Chair)  
Councillor Marian Spall (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Valerie Bossman-Quarshie  
Councillor Ilkay Cinko-Oner  
Councillor Mick Gilgunn  
Councillor Benali Hamdache  
Councillor Michael O'Sullivan  
Councillor Rosaline Ogunro  
Dean Donaghey (Resident Observer) (Co-Optee)  
Rose Marie McDonald (Resident Observer) (Co-Optee)

### Substitute Members

Councillor Jilani Chowdhury  
Councillor Phil Graham  
Councillor Ernestas Jegorovas-Armstrong  
Councillor Ben Mackmurdie

**Quorum is 4 Councillors**



**A. Formal Matters** **Page**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declaration of Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interests

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest\*** in an item of business:

- if it is not yet on the council's register, you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent;
- you may **choose** to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is already in the register in the interests of openness and transparency.

In both the above cases, you **must** leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If you have a **personal** interest in an item of business **and** you intend to speak or vote on the item you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent but you **may** participate in the discussion and vote on the item.

**\*(a) Employment, etc** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

**(b) Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of your expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of your election; including from a trade union.

**(c) Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between you or your partner (or a body in which one of you has a beneficial interest) and the council.

**(d) Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.

**(e) Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.

**(f) Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which you or your partner have a beneficial interest.

**(g) Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

This applies to **all** members present at the meeting.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting 1 - 12
5. Chair's Report
6. External Attendees (if any)

7. Order of Business

8. Public Questions

For members of the public to ask questions relating to any subject on the meeting agenda under Procedure Rule 70.5. Alternatively, the Chair may opt to accept questions from the public during the discussion on each agenda item.

9. External Attendees (if any)

<b>B. Items for Decision/Discussion</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Damp and Mould - Presentation to follow	
2. Voids and Performance - Presentation to follow	
3. Quarterly Housing Performance ( Q2 2022/23)	13 - 18
4. Housing Allocations scheme consultation discussion	19 - 132
5. Tenant Satisfaction Measures	133 - 138
6. Islington Broadband	139 - 144
7. Work Programme 2022/23	145 - 146

**C. Urgent non-exempt items (if any)**

Any non- exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgent by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

**D. Exclusion of press and public**

To consider whether, in view of the nature of the remaining items on the agenda, any of them are likely to involve the disclosure of exempt or confidential information within the terms of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Constitution and, if so, whether to exclude the press and public during discussion thereof.

**E. Confidential/exempt items** **Page**

**F. Urgent exempt items (if any)**

Any exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

The next meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee will be on 16 March 2023

### **WEBCASTING NOTICE**

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London Borough of Islington

## **Housing Scrutiny Committee - 1 December 2022**

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 1 December 2022 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**      **Councillors:**      Jackson (Chair), Bossman-Quarshie, Cinko-Oner, Gilgunn, Hamdache, O'Sullivan and Ogunro

### **Councillor Jason Jackson in the Chair**

**13**      **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Apologies were received from Councillor Spall.

**14**      **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

There were no declarations of substitute members.

**15**      **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**16**      **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**

Meeting was advised that the Housing Allocation Scheme will now be scheduled for the Committee meeting in February 2023 following its consideration at the Executive meeting in January 2023.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them subject to the amended date when the allocation scheme report is to be considered by the committee.

**17**      **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)**

The Chair informed the meeting that Cllr O'Halloran Executive Member for Housing and Communities will be providing an update to Committee on the Council's response to Damp and Mould concerns within its Council's housing stock.

Meeting was advised that although item is not scheduled for consideration at this meeting, it has been accepted as an urgent item

**18**      **EXTERNAL ATTENDEES (IF ANY) (Item 6)**

None

**19**      **ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 7)**

The Chair agreed to alter the order of business, that the urgent item from the Executive Member will be taken after item B1.

Members were informed that some of the items is to be deferred to the next meeting.

**20 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 8)**

None

**21 EXTERNAL ATTENDEES (IF ANY) (Item 9)**

None

**22 MAIN SCRUTINY REVIEW: STRATEGIC REVIEW OF OVERCROWDING IN ISLINGTON - PEABODY HOUSING ASSOCIATION AND ISLINGTON NEW BUILD TEAM (Item B1)**

Committee received a presentation from Tracy Packer, Managing Director for North East London, Peabody Housing Association on its management of overcrowding issues. The following points were highlighted:

- Peabody has 5500 homes across the borough with the majority being let at social rent, that currently 382 Peabody households in Islington have applied to move because of overcrowding and this would include households who have a need to move for other reasons such as medical/health needs, welfare and those fleeing domestic violence.
- Peabody provides support to residents throughout the move process however, the number of empty homes available is limited and the wait can be lengthy.
- In the year 2021/22 only 14 x larger homes became available in the borough (3/4 bed)
- Meeting was advised that the number of lettings completed is driven by the availability of homes, that Peabody completed 115 lettings in 2021/22, however majority of these lettings were for 1 and 2 bed homes and that empty homes are let through working in partnership with LBI via nomination's agreement.
- LBI receive 100% nomination rights of all 1st lets (new homes), 50% of studio/1bedroom relets and 75% of 2 bedroom or larger relets and that Peabody residents who have requested a move are considered when a relet becomes available and a priority move list for those in most need.
- Move applicants are assessed based on need and are prioritised, that those overcrowded by 2 or more bedrooms are in the B4 priority band, those in an under-occupying household who wish to move are given a C1 priority band enabling Peabody's larger homes to be allocated to more suitably sized households.
- Presently of the current households requesting to move because of overcrowding, 32% are in the B4 priority band needing 2 or more further bedrooms with 68% in need of 1 further bedroom.

## Housing Scrutiny Committee - 1 December 2022

- Peabody offers a number of solutions and mitigations to address overcrowding for households requesting a move, whether in a priority band or not, and are supported through the bidding process however where there is long waiting times further support is provided.
- Peabody promotes mutual exchange for its tenants, provide advice and guidance on the opportunities that a mutual exchange can bring and make it easier to engage with the process. This includes providing information in multiple languages.
- 1-2-1 advice sessions is also available where in-house experts in rehousing offer support in finding alternative accommodation through other tenures such as shared ownership, market rent and potential moves to areas with lower housing demand. Members were reminded that this option is customer led and possible options will depend on customer requirements.
- Home visits to residents is undertaken and provides support such as offering possible space saving furniture to alleviate some shared sleeping arrangements. Also in light of the ongoing living costs concerns Peabody officers offer advice to help manage energy costs and other costs of living.
- Peabody takes a broad view on other actions to help alleviate overcrowding, by offering incentives such as financial incentives in the form of providing decoration allowance for residents who want to move and assist with moving for those willing or wanting to downsize. Peabody is interested in the support and promotions for downsizers being led by LBI.
- Peabody also takes a flexible approach, for example in a case of 2 residents, mother and daughter both living in different 3-bed homes on the same street and elderly mother requiring care, a request received from her adult daughter for them to move in together as joint tenants, clearly created a vacancy of a 3 bed home.
- Also customers in need of a home with 3+ bedrooms are able to bid for a home with one fewer bedroom even if this results in a low level of overcrowding.
- Meeting was informed of the 'Next Steps' scheme, which offers households overcrowded by 2 or more bedrooms with household members who are 21+ having grown up there as their principal home, will be considered for moving to a 1 bed accommodation.
- In summary Peabody aims to use its housing stock in the most effective way to meet housing need, actively support tenants requesting a move to assist in finding the option that will work best for them. The lack of larger homes means waiting times for a move can be lengthy.
- With regards to nomination rights for the Holloway Prison site which recently was granted planning permission for social housing, meeting was advised that Islington Council has 50% for 1 bedroom and 75% for 2 bed while the rest is for Peabody residents.
- Meeting was advised that any decision to sell or dispose of any property within Peabody's portfolio is not taken lightly and each case is assessed in terms of its cost in restoring the property to a decent standard, cost of maintenance over a long period and the condition of the property. The Managing Director assured the meeting that selling of properties only occurs

in very small instances, noting that over the next few years Peabody will be building new social housing on the Holloway site

- On the fire safety concerns which resulted in residents of Merry Mews being moved into temporary accommodation while being resolved, the Managing Director acknowledged that lessons had been taken on board going forward by both Peabody and the builders/developers.
- There is a recognition that the offer of shared ownership to social housing tenants and its affordability as a means of addressing overcrowding was not ideal but was an option for those interested.
- On the question of whether Peabody had a list of those residents who had to take time off work so that the rectification process could be carried out, the Managing Director advised that the information can be provided for committee and that most works were carried out after consulting with affected residents to minimise disruption to their daily lives.
- In response to a question on whether Peabody's Holloway site had future proofed some of its properties for disabled tenants, the Managing Director acknowledged that a number of homes will be specifically adapted to such residents.
- In response to concerns raised by Jermyn Corbyn MP for Islington North about Pitt House , leased by Peabody from a Freeholder property managed by an agent, a 2yrs old new build affected by 3 issues relating to pumps and drainage causing sewage leaks which had not been resolved, the Managing Director acknowledged that residents welfare is the sole responsibility of Peabody and it is working hard to resolve the issues with both the builder and are in discussion with Thames Water to resolve the issue.
- Jeremy Corbyn MP was also concerned with Peabody's response to complaints raised by Landsdowne court residents of being subjected to racist behaviour to which Peabody was describing it as anti-social behaviour and requesting that this issue needs to be revisited and resolved by Peabody quickly.
- On the financial incentives for those willing to downsize, the meeting was advised that besides the decoration allowance and assistance with moving, Peabody are having ongoing conversation on what more can be done on this issue.
- In response to the precise siting of Peabody properties in the borough, the managing director indicated that detailed information can be provided.
- On the question of compensation for affected tenants being moved into temporary accommodation, meeting was advised that tenants receive subsistence allowance which is paid in advance and also cover taxi fares, noting that this figures can be provided. Peabody engages in individual arrangements with tenants and not necessarily offer a standard amount.
- The Chair thanked the Managing Director for her attendance and the presentation noting that Peabody has agreed to attend a future meeting possibly in February when the performances of housing associations will be considered.

**RESOLVED:**

## Housing Scrutiny Committee - 1 December 2022

- That the presentation be noted
- That information details of Peabody's compensation scheme, a more detailed map about location of Peabody properties and its housing mix on the Holloway scheme be provided

Also Committee received a presentation from Alistair Gale, Islington's Assistant Director of Housing, Programming, Design and Customer Care on how its programme of building new homes help alleviate the shortage of housing especially in the context of overcrowding concerns. The following points were highlighted:

- It is a well known that the present housing crisis exists not only locally but nationally, that there is a desperate shortage of genuinely affordable homes, to which the Council has embarked on its biggest council-house building programme in the borough for a generation, which aims to meet the needs of residents.
- Local council tenants have priority for new council homes through the Council's Local Lettings Policy and that New council homes are under construction at 12 different locations across the borough, that presently 750 new council homes have either been completed or under construction for the period 2023-27.
- The new homes could be used to move a growing family into a larger home or downsizing an older person into ground floor, accessible housing.
- Meeting was advised that there are currently 371 council tenants registered for a housing transfer who are under-occupying their current home and it is estimated that there could be 3000 tenants who under-occupy their current home who are not registered for a housing transfer.
- In terms of New build delivery, meeting was advised that of the New council homes completed, 77% are 2+ bedrooms, 27% 3+ bedrooms and the rest one bedrooms
- Meeting was informed that presently 257 new council homes are under construction.
- In tracking housing needs trends, it was acknowledged that these change over time e.g. wheelchair accessible housing need is now for 3 and 4 bed properties, which the Council tries to accommodate in its pipeline programme.
- Residents feedback is important and taken on board. Meeting was advised that although residents may not be on the transfer list waiting to downsize, they might be encouraged if there is an opportunity to move into a smaller, attractive, energy efficient and high quality new build home
- As Islington is a dense urban borough, any infill housing on existing estates requires carefully considered design to optimise the available land without over-densification and some sites are not suitable/appropriate for houses such as undercroft garages/roof top developments
- Dover Court was highlighted as an example of a typical large infill project which delivered 57 new council homes for 197 local people, 16 of which were 3 bedroom houses, 2 x 5 bedroom houses and 1 ground floor wheelchair accessible 5 bedroom home. The scheme has been built across under-used

parts of the estate, including replacing derelict garages and a block of old bedsits.

- Members were advised that 8 new homes were allocated to local residents downsizing, 18 new homes were allocated to families from overcrowded accommodation, an example of replacing low quality existing accommodation and optimising the available land for family-sized homes and that occupants from the bedsit block were rehoused into a new over-55s block, which also encouraged others to downsize.
- Households who meet the bidding threshold will be able to bid for the new homes before anyone else in the borough.
- The applicant bidding with the highest number of points, subject to matching the size and any other characteristics of the property in question, will be offered the property first.
- 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.
- The meeting was advised of the difficulty of finding brownfields to build social housing, as land in the borough is rare, that the latest acquisition was the Holloway prison site. In the case of Parkhurst Road site, meeting was advised that freehold is not owned by council, has been recently challenged in the courts, noting that the council has been able to ensure that going forward if developers were to build homes on the site they would have to meet the councils criteria on provision of social housing.
- Although the Council is considering at other options beyond building new homes on garages however due to affordability of land, the council is only able to build social housing on its own land.
- With regards to downsizing, meeting was advised that the process is customer led, that the council does not force any of its residents to move into smaller homes.
- On whether council was actually building the right type of properties and in the right location and if data used to ascertain housing needs was up to date, the manager advised that at the early stage of feasibility, the new build team considers existing data from colleagues in the housing needs team who have information on live transfer request, the ages of children across the estate etc, essential information which helps to determine what type of housing is needed , it's mix and in what location. Also council's regular engagement with resident is valuable in assessing housing requirements.
- The Director acknowledged the difficulty of building social homes in the borough, that it is difficult to get a perfect fit in terms of housing mix, which is not the case with outer London boroughs where land is not an issue, as Islington is constrained and is a dense urban environment, factors which determines the type of mix of housing being built on individual schemes.
- On the question of the 188 void properties in the borough and why it has not brought back to use, meeting was advised that officers will provide and circulate reasons to committee on why it has not put back onto the housing

stock, noting that some of the properties are likely to be properties that were brought back in house following the end of PFI 2.

- On a suggestion that cases such as Poplar estate which received planning permission for 2 x 2 bedrooms and 38 x 1 bedroom, and then subsequently received funds from GLA should have been revisited by the Planning Committee, the officer advised that S73 is not applicable to minor amendments as this would be a change in the description of the scheme, that it could not be used to change the number of dwellings of the scheme.
- Cllr Ward acknowledged that going forward the council would look to revisit schemes like the poplar estate in terms of housing mix however in this instance there was a deadline that required planning permission.

**RESOLVED:**

That the presentation be noted and officers to provide information as noted above.

23

**PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR - 12 MONTH REPORT BACK (Item B2)**

Islington Director Housing Needs and Strategy informed the meeting that the report before the committee is an appraisal of the state of play in the private rented sector, that report has been produced in conjunction with other colleagues in other departments of the council

- On the question of the role of register of private landlords, meeting was advised that committee will receive an update in February 2023 on what has been done.
- With regards to concerns raised by Shelter that only 1 out of 12 young people in private sector who get evicted receive detailed information on their rights and what to do, meeting was advised that council will be doing some work on the website regarding private renters after the public consultation exercise has been completed as it is important for young people and other stakeholders to know their rights.
- On the issue of HMO licensing and whether Islington Council charges less than neighbouring councils Hackney and Camden and if Council has any plans to review the charges, meeting was advised that comparison data of neighbouring boroughs will be made available to members.

24

**PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR HOUSING CHARTER (Item B3)**

The Director Housing Needs and Strategy informed the meeting that draft document has been discussed across the council and it goes out for public consultation for a period of 8 weeks from January 2023, to be adopted by Council after taking on board comments from all the different stakeholders.

- Meeting was advised that there is significant time and opportunities for any amendments to the draft charter and that it has been published on the council website.
- A representative of the Islington London Rental Union (LRU) informed the meeting that having spoken to council officers about the draft charter, the

LRU noted that most of their views had been taken on board in the draft document, however noting some distinctions.

- LRU's view is that the tone of the draft charter was a bit pessimistic, for example where LRU request the need to ensure the provision of social housing in new developments, the charter talks about promoting social housing.
- Also LRU's request to publish targets on how council deal with landlords was not evident, the charter only mentions data when it should be about enforcement of existing housing standards. There is also concern that charter makes reference to providing safer and decent accommodation, which is a minimum requirement, when more could be done.
- LRU are of the view that the charter needs to be bolder, disappointing that there is no reference to retro fitting, increasing the standard management of energy efficiency and concerns about the removal of the wording in relation to landlord illegal eviction.
- The charter should be an opportunity to shape landlord behaviour through council action, to ensure that Islington is a borough which welcomes renters and not one that preserves landlord behaviour.
- It was also stated that the Charter should provide more clarity on working with tenant resident organisation and disappointing not to see this forum acknowledged in the draft charter, that this omission in the draft charter is not sufficient in response to the crisis that private renters face.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Draft Charter be noted and welcome suggestions during its public consultation.

**25 TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION (Item B4)**

The Director Housing Needs and Strategy advised the meeting that a further update will be provided at a future meeting as recent information from the Housing Regulator regarding damp and mould is not reflected in the report before committee.

In addition to the above, Officer advised that the report will be recommending that this measure be included as part of the quarterly performance report.

**RESOLVED:**

Item was deferred to the next meeting.

**26 ISLINGTON BROADBAND (Item B5)**

**RESOLVED:**

Item was deferred to the next meeting

**27 URGENT ITEM - DAMP AND MOULD IN ISLINGTON COUNCIL HOUSING (Item )**

Councillor Una O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities highlighted the following actions which Council proposes to carry out in addressing the issues of Damp and Mould within its housing stock.

- Council will recontact all tenants who had previously requested a damp and mould survey in the last two years, and works will be prioritised based on number of the reports, vulnerabilities and complaints. Additional resources will be brought in to carry out home visit where this has been an issue.
- All reported complaints over the last 2 years, including members enquiries and resident reported cases of condensation, damp and mould will be reviewed, identifying what additional interventions could be made to address and resolve the issue and this may include additional works such as new ventilation or insulation.
- Members were advised that presently the council has already conducted work to reduce the likelihood of damp and on the most effected estates and further investment is ongoing, that the Council will continue to use repairs data to source estates that need investment to reduce the chance of damp and mould.
- Council is working with health partners to overlay information about families with health conditions that may require repairs to go even further in those houses to prevent damp and condensation
- In addition to the above, the repair service is investigating the greater use of remote loggers to help diagnose the cause of damp in properties.
- The Council will be setting up a dedicated phone line and email contact for residents concerned about damp and mould which will offer advice, the ability to report concerns and book a surveyors visit.
- Meeting was advised that a weekly panel will be set up to review cases of repeat reports of damp and mould with a view to sending senior surveyors and or increasing the levels of work or moving the family into temporary accommodation while work is being carried out.
- Council is working with local housing associations, encouraging them to take a similar proactive approach.
- The Council is working with University College London and Building Expert Mike Parrett to ensure that the best investigative techniques are employed and also in designing an affordable retrofit package for the worst cases.
- In terms of investment, the Executive Member noted that given the councils varied stock, some properties have a higher chance of getting damp and mould than others however the Council will continue to invest capital funding to improve all of its housing stock.
- On the issue of window and boiler replacements, the Council will ensure that capital works consider water supply pipes and wastes that may be past their serviceable life so as to prevent leaks.
- Members were advised of dedicated programme to reduce damp and leaks at Girdlestone which has been completed and the pilot at the Andover Estate have been completed.
- The Council is seeking grant funding to improve insulation and heating across its housing stock.

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- It was noted that repairs call waiting times have been too long for the last few months, due to increase in emergency orders and partly due to staff retention issues, however staff numbers have improved.
- A significant number of people have experienced frustrating situations, so the Council has commissioned HQN to undertake a systems thinking style customer care review to look at each stage of the experience and recommend improvements.
- Meeting was advised that supervisors and the dedicated leak team are presently reviewing all outstanding leak actions before actions are finally closed.
- Also how Council manages its housing complaints is being reviewed with a view to providing a holistic service.
- The Council aims to launch an improved information systems during large events (power outages, heating failures etc) and improve online offer.
- On the proposed timeline for the proposed changes and actions, meeting was advised that the Council is working on it and details will be brought back to committee in the near future.
- On the processes involved resolving mould and damp, the meeting was advised that anyone experiencing these issues would report it via the Council's general repair process, after which it would be allocated for an inspection and advice is provided and information following a visit and then repairs undertaken, however more needs to be done.
- In response to a question on how many cases and details on leaks, condensation etc, meeting was advised that a report would be brought to committee in the future, that there are presently about 150 cases which have been identified.
- On whether council had any details of ongoing legal proceedings against the Council regarding damp and mould, meeting was advised that officers are sifting through a lot of repair cases and presently exact numbers regarding damp and mould are not available.
- Meeting was advised that surveys of the housing stock will be carried out by in house surveyors and additional resources is being embarked for the programme.
- On the role of the environmental health team in addressing damp and mould, meeting was advised that housing officers work closely with their counterparts and regularly refer cases to them.
- In response to Housing Ombudsman claims that housing officers first response is to blame resident's lifestyle for incidents of damp and mould in their properties, the meeting was advised that things have changed following the Andover Estate experience, that officers now recognise the causes of damp and mould are complex and the council should ensure it offers suitable responses for every case
- Council should be more proactive, carrying out individual visits to properties especially where cases had already been reported, similar to how Council undertakes its annual gas safety checks of properties , the Director advised that all options were being considered and a report detailing the cost of such exercise would be reported back to committee in due course.

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- Officer also acknowledged that the quality of materials used for repairs are being reviewed to ensure that it meets high standards.
- A suggestion about using forums like the Tenant and Resident Panel to hold councillors and council accountable was noted. Meeting was advised that officers will be updating ward councillors of instances of mould and damp within their wards going forward.
- The Chair stated that in light of the serious nature of damp and mould within the council's housing stock and its potential impact on residents wellbeing and welfare, this issue should be included as a standard item on the committee agenda for the next few meetings.
- With regards to how much it will cost the council to resolve this issue, officer advised that information is unavailable, although presently the council has committed a level of expenditure in its overall repair budget to address this issue.
- The Chair acknowledged the enormity of the task ahead, however Committee would welcome the cost the council as it is important that Council is not only viewed as open and transparent by its residents, it would also assist the council identify and plan its priorities. The Chair requested that information on cost should be presented to the committee.
- On the issue of procurement, meeting was advised that 80% of the works is carried out by the Council's in house repairs team and 20% by external contractors, that the latter is generally used for large and complex cases.
- Meeting was advised that the Council is in discussions with other housing providers to carry out similar works and getting them to review works already carried out.
- A suggestion that the key to resolving ongoing issues raised by residents is for all repairs to be followed up after some agreed time period after the initial repairs were originally carried out to establish if it has been fully resolved before it is signed off.
- With regards to access to central government grant to support council in resolving this issue, meeting was advised of an ongoing campaign and lobbying on this issue for over a decade.
- A suggestion for officers to revisit both the findings and recommendations of the housing ombudsman's findings was noted.
- The Chair thanked both the Executive Member and officers, noting the importance of this issue and requesting that officers schedule this item on the agenda for future meetings.

### **RESOLVED:**

Item to be scheduled on the agenda of the committee for future meetings

## 28 **WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23 (Item B6)**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.15 pm

**CHAIR**

Homes & Neighbourhood Directorate

Town Hall, N1 2UD

Report of: Acting Corporate Director - Homes & Neighbourhoods

Meeting of: Housing Scrutiny Committee

Date: 2 February 2023

Wards: All

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## Subject: Quarter 2 Performance Report: Housing

### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The council has in place a suite of corporate performance indicators to help monitor progress in delivering the outcomes set out in the council's Corporate Plan. Progress on key performance measures is reported through the Council's Scrutiny Committees on a quarterly basis to ensure accountability to residents and to enable challenge where necessary.
- 1.2 This report sets out Quarter 2 progress against targets for those performance indicators that fall within the Housing outcome area, for which the Housing Scrutiny Committee has responsibility.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note performance against targets in Quarter 2, 2022/23 for measures relating to Housing.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 A suite of corporate performance indicators has been agreed, which help track progress in delivering the seven priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan - *Building a Fairer Islington*. Targets are set on an annual basis and performance is monitored internally, through Departmental Management Teams, Corporate Management Board and Joint Board, and externally through the Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.2 The Housing Scrutiny Committee is responsible for monitoring and challenging performance for the following key outcome area: Housing: Delivering decent and genuinely affordable homes for all.

## 4. Quarter 2 performance update – Housing

### 4.1 Key performance indicators relating to Housing.

#	Indicator	2019/ 20 Actual	2020/ 21 Actual	2021/ 22 Actual	2022/ 23 Q2	Targets	On target ?	Q2 last year	Better than Q2 last year?
H1	Number of planning permissions agreed for new council housing	0	43	30	0	36 (Q2)	NO	30	N/A
H2	Number of new council homes started on site	New	New	47	0	25 (Q2)	NO	0	N/A
H3	Number of affordable new homes (social rented or shared ownership) completed by the council	63	53	10	77	102 (Q2 cumulative)	NO	2	N/A
H4	Number of affordable new homes (social rented or shared ownership) completed by Developers	89	118	40	0	0 (Q2)	YES	15	N/A
H5	Percentage of homeless decisions made in the target timeframe	New	40%	68%	70%	90% (annual)	NO	59%	BETTER
H6	Number of households in nightly booked temporary accommodation	316	468	403	482	365 (annual)	NO	492	BETTER
H7	Number of homeless preventions	717	947	701	449	850 (annual)	YES	417	BETTER
H8	Number of people sleeping rough	New	11	6	9	0 (annual)	NO	7	WORSE
H9	Percentage of all lettings provided to council tenants securing a transfer	38%	35%	29%	34%	35% (annual)	NO	33%	BETTER
H10	Percentage of LBI repairs fixed first time	87.7%	92.9%	88.5%	89.4%	85% (annual)	YES	89.4%	SAME
H11	Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll - LBI (%)	3.9%	4.7%	4.50%	4.9%	Target TBC	N/A	4.66%	N/A*
H12	Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll - partner properties	3.7%	4.9%	5.38%	4.9%	Target TBC	N/A	5.11%	N/A*
H13	% of residents who are very satisfied or satisfied with whole experience of having works carried out	N/A	N/A	N/A	96% **	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW

\*NB Q2 figures for this year are not directly comparable to Q2 of last year as the Council took back management of the PF12 housing stock, approximately 3,000 properties from the first quarter of this year.

\*\*Q2 results reflect Q1 of 2022/23

- 4.2 *H1: Number of planning permissions agreed for new council housing*  
For 2022/23 there is a target of 82 planning permissions to be granted for new council housing. 36 new council homes expected to get planning permission in Q2 are now expected in Q3 with a further 78 expected in Q4.
- 4.3 *H2: Number of new council homes started on site*  
25 new council homes planned to start on site in Q2. No new affordable homes started in Q2, 3 are due to start in Q3, with a further 3 expected to start in Q4. A further 22 homes (Hathersage & Besant Courts) should have started during Q2, but commercial conditions have meant the contractor were unable to stand by their original tender price. The returned retender is currently being evaluated, and if viability issues are resolved could add another 22 new council homes starting in Q4
- 4.4 *H3: Number of affordable new homes (social rented or shared ownership) completed by the council*  
102 council homes to be completed by the council were expected by Q1. Up until Q2 77 council homes have been completed. A further 70 new council homes expected to complete in Q3 with a further 33 in Q4.
- 4.5 *H4: Number of affordable new homes (social rented or shared ownership) completed by Developers*  
No new affordable homes completed by Developers are planned for Q2. There is a target of 171 new homes to be completed during Q3 and Q4.
- 4.6 *H5: Percentage of homeless decisions made in the target timeframe*  
70% of homeless decisions were made in the target framework. Though this is 20% below the annual target of 90%, it is a significant improvement compared to Q2 of last year. Performance has been affected by a combination of the increased demand for the service which has increased significantly over the quarter and the complexity of the homeless cases presenting that require more detailed inquiries and lengthier enquiries. The increased demand has been reflected nationally that has seen an increase of 5.4% in statutory homelessness presentations for the same quarter. The mitigating actions that are underway include continuing weekly focus on performance on this indicator, increasing the officer target for decision reached and provision of overtime for high performing officers to reach decision within the target time frame. The service has set an ambitious target and if achieved this will result in the council being placed in the top quartile of performance.
- 4.7 *H6: Number of households in nightly booked temporary accommodation*  
There were 482 households in nightly booked temporary accommodation in Q2 compared to 446 in Q1. The annual target is 365. There has been a significant increase in homeless approaches due to domestic abuse, including those fleeing threats of violence/gang violence [this represents a marked shift from what has been the most common reason for homeless to date- being asked to leave by friends/family]. Q1 2022/23- 79 approaches due to domestic abuse vs 61 approaches due to being asked to leave by friends and family. In contrast, Q4 2021/22- 53 approaches due to domestic abuse vs 60 approaches due to being asked to leave by friends and family.

The team are continuing to work to discharge ineligible households as quickly as possible, to bring the number down further.

In London, there are 15.7 households living in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households, compared with 1.9 households per 1,000 in the Rest of England. In Islington

there are 8.1 households per 1,000 living in temporary accommodation. Newham had the highest rate of TA in London with 48.3 households per 1,000 households and Luton had the highest rate of TA outside London with 13.7 households per 1,000 households. Therefore, Islington Council's overall performance in managing temporary accommodation is excellent. However, further reductions in the use of private sector properties are urgently needed going forward and we should not be complacent. The council has set a stretching target to eliminate the use of expensive nightly paid temporary accommodation to provide greater security for our homeless residents.

4.8 *H7: Number of homeless preventions*

In Q1 there were 449 households that were prevented from being homeless. This is on track to meet the end of year target, and better than the first 2 quarters of the previous year. The annual target is 850. Whilst on target for this year there are wider factors of concern that may impact on homelessness prevention success in future quarters. These include, increase in rents in London which will make securing private sector accommodation more challenging, corresponding decrease in affordability due to the cost of living crisis, energy costs, inflation etc which will impact more acutely on those on low and moderate incomes, concerns about the affordability of social housing properties owned by Housing Association and a further increase in homeless presentations from September 2022, as initial six-month placements through the Homes for Ukraine scheme end. Homelessness is expected to increase during the remaining part of 2022/2023 and throughout the 2023/2024 financial year as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and people in Islington being unable to afford the basics of heating their homes, food for the households, and stable/secure accommodation.

4.9 *H8: Number of people sleeping rough*

The number of people sleeping rough this quarter (9) is higher compared to Q2 last year (7), but lower than Q1 of this year (14). Rough sleeping is increasing across London. However, Islington Council continues to re-house people from the streets as no one should be sleeping on the streets of Islington. The increase in people sleeping on the streets is being driven by a number of councils closing covid accommodation in particular for people with no recourse to public funds and Councils going back to business as usual and assessing people under the Homeless Reduction Act for interim temporary accommodation. This has led to rough sleepers moving into Islington due to the lack of provision in the boroughs the rough sleepers were previously in.

4.10 *H9: Percentage of all lettings provided to council tenants securing a transfer*

This indicator shows how many of the council's existing tenants have been successful in moving to a more suitable social rented home, alleviating overcrowding for example and freeing up council homes for those in need. Lettings is below target by 1% due to no new build in Q2.

The service continues to focus on under occupiers to release larger properties for households that need them and encouraging social housing tenants to consider the mutual exchange scheme to increase the lettings to those seeking a transfer.

4.11 *H10: Percentage of LBI repairs fixed first time*

89.4% of repairs have been fixed first time by the end of Q2 of this year. This is the same as Q2 of the previous year, and it is above the annual target of 85% for 2022/23.

4.12 *H11: Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll – LBI*

As at Q2 rent arrears as a proportion of rent roll was 5%. In April 2022 the Council took back the management of PFI2 housing stock, approximately 3,000 properties which has resulted in the proportion of rent arrears of the rent roll for LBI increasing. 37% of the former PFI2 accounts are in arrears, which represents between 4% to 8% more arrears accounts than for LBI patches. Rent values for PFI properties are up to 25% higher than pre-existing LBI managed stock and the average arrears value of these accounts is also £417 higher compared to pre-existing LBI managed properties. A detailed review of PFI2 accounts has been undertaken since handover resulting in a significant number requiring enforcement action to bring them in line with the LBI arrears process.

Reducing rent arrears over the next year will be a significant challenge, due to the increase in the cost of living and fuel bills, which will adversely affect a majority of our residents and limit their ability to make rent payments.

4.13 *H12: Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll - Partner properties*

As at Q2 rent arrears as a proportion of rent roll was 5.20%. Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll for partner properties is down compared to Q2 of last year due to many properties being brought back in-house in April 2022.

4.14 *H13: % of residents who are very satisfied or satisfied with whole experience of having works carried out.*

Satisfaction for capital works is collected quarterly by an independent satisfaction monitoring company. Due to the long-term nature of capital programmes Q2s results will relate to schemes ending in Q1 of 22-23. We are hoping to increase the number of surveys working with residents and the sampling company as sample rates are low. The Satisfaction measure is new, so we have not set targets this year.

## **5. Implications**

### **5.1 Financial implications**

5.1.1 The cost of providing resources to monitor performance is met within each service's core budget.

### **5.2 Legal Implications**

5.2.1 There are no legal duties upon local authorities to set targets or monitor performance. However, these enable us to strive for continuous improvement.

### **5.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030**

5.3.1 There are no environmental impact arising from monitoring performance.

### **5.4 Resident Impact Assessment**

5.4.1 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010).

- 5.4.2 The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out a clear set of priorities, underpinned by a set of firm commitments and actions that we will take over the next four years to work towards our vision of a Fairer Islington. The corporate performance indicators are one of a number of tools that enable us to ensure that we are making progress in delivering key priorities whilst maintaining good quality services.

**Signed by:**



Acting Corporate Director - Homes and Neighbourhoods

Date: 2/1/23

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Homes and Neighbourhoods  
Islington Council  
222 Upper Street N1 1XR

**Report of: Executive Member for Homes and Communities**

**Meeting of: Executive/Housing Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

## **DRAFT NEW HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME - CONSULTATION**

### **1. FOREWORD**

Councillor O'Halloran Executive Member for Homes and Communities

At the time of writing over 15,500 households are waiting for a secure and affordable home on Islington Council's Housing Register, following a sharp rise in applications during the Covid-19 pandemic and now the Cost of Living crisis. Behind these figures are stories of individuals and families living in overcrowded homes, delaying key life decisions due to extortionate housing costs, health and wellbeing problems linked to housing, children's educational attainment and younger people's ability to invest in themselves and their futures thwarted.

With growing rent arrears, mortgage interest payments increasing from below 2% to above 6%, inflation now above 11% for the first time in over 40 years, and continuing uncertainty around the Government's post-Pandemic, Brexit and Cost of Living Crisis, the rising pressure on our council housing register makes the need to refine the criteria around how we prioritise access as immediate as it has ever been.

This report commits the council to consult all residents and partners on our proposed new allocations rules towards building strong, sustainable communities formed around our council homes, while providing a fair, transparent, consistently applied and easily understood set of criteria for

residents bidding for homes and for housing association partners. We have aimed to balance the need to support residents with most acute medical and welfare needs and those who overcrowded or without a home, while guarding against the residualisation of council housing and maintaining its status as providing for all stages of life.

Among the changes in this consultation, we are proposing to increase the priority given to victims of domestic violence, as well as making proposals to help homeless households find new ways of settling down.

We are also introducing a greater degree of flexibility to reflect local circumstances on our local letting's schemes on new build council homes to strengthen the local community benefit as well as to maximize the wider chain of benefit from new homes.

Alongside this new scheme, we are also jumpstarting several initiatives to help enable more lettings through the system, as well as promote awareness of the widest range of housing options and to make the system more user-friendly.

The stark situation we find ourselves in with the growing housing need in Islington only underscores the critical importance of the council and other builders to bring forward new, high quality, secure, social rent homes, and wherever possible to convert other tenures towards affordability, all while the Government chronically underfunds the most fundamental thing our residents need – a safe and secure home. The entire Islington community – landlords, developers, community groups, housing associations and residents in all tenures – all need to work together to tackle the housing crisis that keeps too many of our residents from living the fullest lives they can.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To note the contents of the proposed draft new housing allocations scheme attached.
2. To agree the proposed consultation arrangements proposed in the report.
3. To report back to Executive following this consultation exercise on the outcomes of the consultation.

## **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

This most recent review of the Housing Allocations scheme has been prompted by several different factors including the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which gives local authorities the freedom to be innovative, dynamic, and transformational and the Domestic Abuse Act. Islington Council has an enormous housing register with over 15,500 applicants registered for housing, but it is anticipated there will be less than 1,000 lettings during 2023. For many of these applicants, being on the housing register will do nothing to alleviate their housing need. The new housing allocation scheme needs to be fair and transparent but recognising the council is required to ration a scarce and valuable resource to build the successful and stable communities of tomorrow.

The review has also been carried out against the background of central Government's package of welfare reforms, austerity, the remodelling of the provision of new affordable housing, Brexit, the COVID19 pandemic and through the current Cost of Living Crisis. The impact of welfare reform has had a large impact on people in Islington, and elsewhere, and has resulted in an increase in the number of residents presenting as homeless and seeking to join the housing register to access better and more affordable housing. The council has seen a 10% increase in homeless applications in the 2022/2023 financial year.

The housing allocations scheme is only part of the re-housing framework and households can achieve suitable alternative accommodation through the mutual exchanges, seaside and country homes, the Pan London and North London reciprocal arrangement and accessing private rented accommodation.

The production of the new Housing Allocations scheme and the recommendations contained above attempt to address the housing needs of residents who live in Islington, meet the legal requirements contained within the 1996 Housing Act, the Homelessness Reduction Act, and the Domestic Abuse Act. The Housing Allocations scheme also attempts to address the severe outcomes of the Welfare Reforms and the impacts of the Government's austerity measures. The new Housing Allocations scheme also follows national best practice examples and provides a sensible response to the continuing demand for housing in Islington today and in the future.

The council will introduce a localised 'right-sizing' initiative to better facilitate mutual exchange, rehousing opportunities between underoccupying and overcrowded households. This will be promoted on a regular basis through

information available through the Choice Based Lettings web site, through the production of leaflets, information displayed on Estate Notice Boards, through TRA meetings, organising specific estate based drop in sessions (19 drop in sessions have been conducted during November and December 2022) and through support from officers across the council.

The council will track the chain of benefit for all new council homes schemes (starting with recent completions to analyse the rehousing impact of new homes. This information will then be promoted on the council's Choice Based Lettings web site and through future consultation exercises.

The council will establish a target for 100% of lettable voids to be allocated within 21 days.

A fundamental review of the council's housing allocations scheme was conducted during, 2021 and 2022. The council's housing allocations scheme was last reviewed in 2017. The current review was to take into consideration the greater freedoms available to local authorities to determine their lettings policies as set out in the Localism Act 2011, the recent changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. These Acts of Parliament enable local authorities to allow flexibility for priority status (alongside the existing 'reasonable preference' categories of applicants to whom local authorities must give a degree of priority under their lettings schemes) to local circumstances, such as people with strong local or family connections.

The Localism Act also gives local authorities more freedom to determine who are eligible to join their housing registers. In addition to this the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, will also be of benefit to anyone fleeing Domestic Abuse.

Because of the strategic importance of council housing and housing association accommodation in Islington, and its links to other council priorities such as economic wellbeing, improved education attainment the Fairer Together principles and improving the health of the borough, it is of the greatest importance for the housing allocations scheme to be a cross cutting strategic policy document which promotes the best solutions for Islington's residents.

Officers have carried out a benchmarking and research exercise that has looked at what other authorities are planning and recent or forthcoming changes in government policy and legislation that impacted on lettings.

Officers have attempted to make the Housing Allocations scheme easy to understand and accord with council's CARE values.

Households will continue to receive a customised handholding approach to navigate through the Choice Based Lettings scheme and the completion of housing applications when this is required. In addition to this the new housing allocations scheme will design a framework which enables the council to look at the housing needs of households through the lens of treating every household as if they are an important member of our own families.

It is believed the new housing allocations scheme meets the principles of the CARE values and principles, provides a clear, honest, and fair process, which promotes the best use of all available council and housing association accommodation.

#### **4. Proposed changes and the reasons for these changes**

The proposal to award 100 points to everyone who has been resident in the borough continuously for the last five years at the date of application will allow local people to be prioritised for the limited availability of Islington Council and Housing Association accommodation. Exceptions to this will be available for those in the legislation classified as reasonable preference groups who are not resident of Islington Council.

The council proposes to ensure people who are the perpetrator of domestic abuse, violent, coercive, or controlling behaviour towards a resident of the borough will not be permitted to join the housing register. This confirms the council's commitment towards people fleeing Domestic Abuse and ensuring the council is on the side of victims of Domestic Abuse and our commitment to end all forms of Domestic Abuse in Islington.

The council proposes when applicants who have total savings, investments and/or assets of £16,000 or more, or whose household's total gross income from all sources exceeds an annual income of £90,000 will not be permitted to join the Housing Register. This will ensure the people in the greatest housing and medical need are offered accommodation first.

It is proposed to remove the waiting time points, to prevent applicants without significant housing need who have accrued a high level of waiting time points (over the years) leapfrogging applicants who are in severe housing need. The

length of time waiting will be reflected in date of registration. This will help the council to address the most severe forms of housing need in Islington

The council proposes to allow a council tenant to 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 are rehoused simultaneously

This will allow the council to reduce severe overcrowding for the households who may require larger accommodation to address the wider housing, educational attainment, and health needs of the household.

It is proposed to increase the medical points for category A medical needs from 150 priority points to 200 priority points to reflect the severe medical needs within households and to enable these households to be re-housed.

It is proposed to clarify why welfare points are awarded to make the housing allocations scheme more transparent for the benefit of our residents.

The council is proposing to increase the management transfer points to reflect the severe housing needs of our tenants and to also provide clarity on how these points are awarded. This proposed change will address the severe needs and ensure people in need of a management transfer are awarded sufficient priority points.

It proposed all applications will be re-assessed and therefore all applicants will be awarded the points that will be reflected within this new housing allocations scheme. This will help to ensure all applicants are treated fairly and equitably in line with the council's CARE values and the new housing allocations scheme.

It is proposed to remove the relationship breakdown points as there is a growing increase in high needs single vulnerable applicants who require housing for example leaving looked after care children, single homeless people which represents 70% of all homeless approaches etc. This amendment to the housing allocations scheme will help to address some of the severe shortage of social housing in Islington.

It is proposed to quality for the New Generation scheme applicants will have to live in Islington for five consecutive years and applicants must not have been previously housed by the council. This will allow the council to address local housing needs for the benefit of our community.

The proposal is to award additional priority housing needs points for people fleeing Domestic Abuse. Therefore, applicants fleeing domestic violence and abuse that have been assessed by MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference). These applicants will be awarded 30 additional priority points, in addition to the other priority points awarded. This will help the council to address the urgent housing needs of people fleeing Domestic Abuse and to provide service which reflects the council's CARE values through a trauma informed approach.

The council proposes to prevent homeless and to place the prevention of homelessness at the heart of our service. This approach reflects the council's CARE values, places residents at the heart of service design and offer and this approach will also protect the council's financial position. It is proposed 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 additional. In addition to these 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 additional points. These proposals will help the council to reduce the number of homeless households living in expensive and inappropriate Temporary Accommodation.

It is proposed 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 and provided with any support required. 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. This is to ensure the council provides accommodation to households in the greatest need.

It is proposed 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 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. This is to ensure the council provides accommodation to households in the greatest housing needs and the scheme is reviewed on a regular basis.

The proposal relating to the allocation of all new homes on the council estates is to enable the council to remain 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 letting's 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 Greater detail relating to the proposed changes are described in Appendix one of this report

It is proposed to remove the Intra Estate Transfer and the Key Worker scheme from the new housing allocations scheme due to the severe shortage of housing and the increased demand in high needs cases.

It is proposed to award 100 points for households moving on from supported housing schemes where it is in the council's wider strategic interest for these applicants to move on from supported housing. This proposal will enable the council to address some of the most urgent needs of households.

The Localism Act 2011 sections 148 and 149 allows councils to accommodate homeless people into the Private Rented Sector rather than a Social Housing tenancy to allow the council to discharge its homeless duty. The operation of this section of the Housing Allocations scheme will comply with the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) order 2012 SI No 2601. It is recommended at that this change is implemented.

The drivers for these changes are the Localism Act 2011, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the demand for social housing greatly outstripping supply. Regard has also been had to the statutory guidance, Allocation of Accommodation Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England.

In preparing the revisions to the Housing Allocations scheme regard has been had to the Housing Strategy, Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the London Housing Plan, and the council's Tenancy Strategy. In addition to this, equalities impacts have been borne in mind throughout the process. The equality impact analysis is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

The new approach will assist the council to adopt a managed approach to its Housing Register for the benefit of local communities. The Localism Act enables the council to better manage its housing register by giving it the power to determine which applicants qualify for an allocation of social housing. The council will be able to operate a more transparent system which better reflects local circumstances and can be understood more readily by local people.

We will monitor the number of lettings monthly and keep these new policy changes under review and if any further amendments are required to be made to the council's Housing Allocations scheme, we will report back following a twelve month review.

## **5. Consultation**

The key principle of the proposed consultation to progress the adoption of the Housing Allocations scheme will be inclusive of all the borough's communities,

using a range of methods to provide as many residents as possible with the opportunity to engage.

The consultation will use a mix of traditional methodologies and newer methods such as online consultations to allow a wider range of residents to participate. Consultation with external stakeholders a questionnaire outlining the council's recommended changes, as well as specific questions will be sent to external partners including registered social landlords and representatives from the voluntary and community sector.

Consultation with internal stakeholders – a similar questionnaire plus specific questions for consideration, will be circulated internally to all service areas with an interest in allocations, for example housing management, Children's services, Adult Social Care, Public Health etc. The council will also conduct internal focus group meetings with each department to ensure the new housing allocations scheme meets the corporate needs of the council's wide range of residents.

All Registered Social Landlords operating in the borough will receive a letter seeking views on the proposed changes to the Housing Allocations scheme, with these consultation comments considered as part of the design of the new Housing Allocations scheme.

**Financial Implications Author: [Tom Cooksey, Finance Manager]**

The package of measures proposed in this consultation are not currently quantifiable. The measures proposed in this package are designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Housing service's operations. The measures are not designed as part of any existing or proposed savings.

In evaluating the package of measures in the Housing Revenue Account and in the Housing General Fund it is possible that they will reduce spending and total costs. The financial upside from the measures may come from the likely reduction in numbers in TA, time spent in TA, and the level of HRA cases in TA.

Measures relating to prioritising Domestic violence cases could have financial upsides. They can be shown to realise significant savings in the HRA. Currently those living in social housing who are victims of domestic violence may be housed in TA pending them being offered alternative accommodation. This leads to often long periods where tenants occupy TA and retain residency rights on their existing vacant property, paid for by the HRA after the first 12

months of occupancy. The current proposal would reduce the time period of those cases in TA, thereby reducing the cost to the HRA. The HRA pays for a significant amount of TA, over the last 3 years the HRA has been charged:

Financial Year	HRA TA Cost (£)
2019-2020	650,645.00
2020-2021	652,555.00
2021-2022	878,767.00

Of the HRA cases in TA, based on FY2021/22 figures, 67.25% related to domestic violence. If 50% of these domestic violence cases can be reduced through the measures in the consultation it is possible to realise up to a £295,485 reduction in costs based on FY2021/22 figures.

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**Email: [Thomas.Cooksey@Islington.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.Cooksey@Islington.gov.uk)**

### **Legal Implications**

The proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme meet the statutory requirements of Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

In large part, the content of the Scheme is a matter for the council's discretion, in the exercise of which regard has been given to the statutory guidance, equalities impacts and justification for the proposed changes.

The proposed consultation meets the requirements of s166A of the Housing Act 1996 (consultation with social housing landlords the council has nomination arrangements with) and s105 of the Housing Act 1985 (consultation with the council's secure tenants). The council will need to consider any responses received to the consultation.

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**6. Appendices:**

Appendix one the proposed changes to the housing allocations scheme

Appendix two the equality impact assessment

Appendix three the new proposed housing allocations scheme

Appendix four the draft consultation questions.

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**Final report clearance:**

*Una Mallon*

**Signed by Executive Member for Homes  
and Communities**

**Date: 6 December 2022**

# Allocation Scheme 2022

## Changes and additions to the scheme

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register – Non-Residence</b></p> <p>People who are not resident in the borough on the date of application, and people who have lived in Islington for less than three out of the previous five years from the date they apply for housing, cannot join the housing register</p>	<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register-Non-Residence</b></p> <p>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</p>
<p><b>No previous wording</b></p>	<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register- non residence exception (p17)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving due to domestic abuse</li> </ul>
<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register - Unacceptable behaviour</b> Being the perpetrator of violent, coercive, or controlling behaviour towards a resident of the borough</p>	<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register - Unacceptable behaviour (page 17)</b> wording changed to expand scope Being the perpetrator of domestic abuse, violent, coercive, or controlling behaviour towards a resident of the borough.</p>
<p><b>Non- residence exception</b></p>	<p><b>Non- residence exception (page 18) -item7 wording changed regarding income.</b></p>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
Households who have sufficient financial resources to own or rent accommodation.	<p>a) Applicants who have total savings, investments and/or assets of £16,000 or more</p> <p>b) Applicants whose household's total gross income from all sources exceeds an annual income of £90,000</p>
<p><b>Residence Points</b></p> <p>Applicants must be resident in the borough for at least three out of the last five years from the date of application</p>	<p><b>Residence Points</b></p> <p>100 points are awarded to everyone who has been resident in the borough continuously for the last five years at the date of application</p>
<p><b>Waiting time points</b></p> <p>Points are calculated at 5% per year of housing needs points (except residence points)</p>	<p><b>Waiting time points</b></p> <p><b>This points allocation has been removed:</b></p> <p><b>Reason:</b></p> <p>To prevent applicants without significant housing need who have accrued a high level of waiting time points (over the years) leapfrogging applicants who are in severe housing need. The length of time waiting will be reflected in date of registration.</p>
<p><b>Splitting households</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Splitting households (Page 21)</b></p> <p>Dividing Households</p> <p>A council tenant may request one or more separate properties for their authorised household members. The council will only agree to this request where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the tenant and the authorised household members move to one- bedroom properties;</li> <li>• the number of one-bedroom properties required does not exceed the number of bedrooms in the original larger home;</li> <li>• the tenant and household member are rehoused simultaneously</li> </ul> <p>Shared residency of children</p> <p>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</p>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
	<p>assessed as having overnight access only and no additional bedrooms will be agreed for the children.</p> <p>Households occupying more than one tenancy</p> <p>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</p>
<p><b>Medical points</b></p> <p>Previous medical points</p> <p><b>Cat A 150</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• life limiting or progressive condition</li> <li>• serving members of the regular forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability</li> <li>• where two household members have Cat B</li> </ul> <p><b>Cat B 80</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the applicants current housing conditions is having a major effect on their health condition</li> <li>• Cat C 40</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medical points- (page 22)</b></p> <p><b>Medical points</b></p> <p><b>Cat A 200 (change to points award)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• life-limiting, life threatening or progressive condition</li> <li>• serving members of the armed force with a disability</li> <li>• Hospital discharge</li> </ul> <p><b>Cat B 80</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant at risk and housebound</li> <li>• Applicant health is severely affected by their current accommodation</li> </ul> <p><b>Cat C 40</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No change</li> </ul>
<p><b>Welfare points</b></p> <p><b>Welfare A</b></p>	<p><b>Welfare Points (page 25)</b></p>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
<p>Where the accommodation is required to meet the assessed needs of relevant children and other care leavers under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.</p> <p><b>Welfare B</b></p> <p>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</p>	<p><b>No change to point's award. Some clarification on examples</b></p> <p><b>Welfare A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Where the accommodation is required to meet the needs of a child who has been assessed as in severe harm or fatality due to their accommodation as assessed by Children's Services.</li> <li>• Where there is a risk of a child within the applicant's household coming into Local Authority care or residential care due to their housing situation</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p><b>Welfare B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the accommodation is required to meet the needs of a child who has been assessed as in urgent risk of harm due to their accommodation as assessed by Children's Services.</li> <li>• Where an applicant is experiencing a threat of violence, abuse or harassment that is impacting their living conditions</li> <li>• Where accommodation is required to meet the needs of a child as assessed in a Child in Need (CIN) plan</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p><b>Welfare C</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
<p><b>Management transfers</b></p> <p>Points may be agreed by the council and Partners for Improvement in Islington where it is necessary to move a tenant on management grounds. In most cases, 60 management points will be awarded.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, 120 points may be awarded. These points will be reviewed every six months.</p>	<p><b>Management Transfers (page 27)</b></p> <p>These points are only awarded to council tenants where a move is necessary on management grounds. Points may be awarded as follows:</p> <p><b>150 points</b> may be awarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• where it can be evidenced that the risks can only be managed effectively by moving the tenant elsewhere</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p>These points will be reviewed every six months.</p> <p><b>120 points</b> may be awarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
	<p>being taken <b>and</b> where officers can evidence that a move will resolve the issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> </ul> <p><b>60 points</b> may be awarded for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Points awarded from previous Allocation Scheme (Retention Points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicants retain these points under previous Allocation schemes (2010 and 2013)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Points awarded from previous Allocation Scheme (Retention Points)</b></p> <p><b>This section has been removed:</b></p> <p><b>Reason:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All applications to be re-assessed and therefore these points will no longer be applicable</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relationship breakdown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where a relationship has occurred between couples and one or both partners are an Islington council tenant.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Relationship breakdown</b></p> <p><b>This section has been removed:</b></p> <p><b>Reason:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a growing increase in high needs single vulnerable applicants who require housing. This should be removed due to the severe shortage of social housing</li> </ul>
<p><b>New generation scheme:</b></p> <p>Applicants must be living continuously as an agreed member of the household of an Islington resident for at least three out of the last five years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>applicants must be living as an agreed member of the</li> </ul>	<p><b>New generation scheme (page 28)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>applicants must not have been previously housed by the council</li> <li>proof of residence will be required</li> </ul>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
<p>household of an Islington resident</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applicants must have lived continuously as an agreed member of the household of an Islington resident for the three years prior to the date of application</li> <li>• proof of residence will be required</li> </ul>	
<p><b>No previous wording</b></p>	<p><b>Domestic Abuse (page 28)</b></p> <p><b>New points allocation</b></p> <p>Applicants fleeing domestic violence and abuse that have been assessed by MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference). These applicants will be awarded <b>30 additional priority points</b></p>
<p><b>No previous wording</b></p>	<p><b>Prevention of homelessness (page 30)</b></p> <p><b>New points allocation</b></p> <p>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 <b>30 points</b>.</p> <p>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 <b>70 points</b>.</p>
<p><b>Applicants not bidding</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Applicants not bidding (page 36)</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Applicants who:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• persistently bid and do not attend viewings</li> </ul>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
<p>Applicants who persistently bid and do not attend viewings and applicants who consistently accept and later refuse properties may be suspended from the list for 6 months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>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</p>
<p><b>Supported choice</b></p> <p>Applicants agreed two offers of housing</p>	<p><b>Supported Choice (page 36)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>No previous wording</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Lettings Plan (page 39)</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
<p><b>New homes Local Lettings</b></p> <p><b>Council Estate:</b></p> <p><b>Priority is given to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure council tenants</li> <li>• Household members of a secure council tenants</li> <li>• Secure council tenants requesting a like for like transfer</li> <li>• Remaining properties will be let to residents of the borough</li> </ul> <p><b>Ward Priority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure social housing tenants</li> <li>• Household members of secure social housing tenants</li> <li>• Remaining properties will be let to residents of the borough</li> </ul>	<p><b>New homes Local Lettings (page 40)</b></p> <p><b>New homes on council estates</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Where lettings plans are drawn up the following will apply to the local lettings allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants must be secure council tenants living on the estate who meet the bidding threshold</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Applicants with the same number of points will be prioritised based on the length of time on the housing register</li> <li>• Wheelchair adapted properties will be restricted to applicants who require such properties.</li> <li>• Ground floor properties will be restricted to applicants with an assessed need for ground floor accommodation.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p>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.</p> <p>The Service Director of Housing Needs and Strategy can exercise discretion to include more than one estate and ward in the local lettings allocation.</p>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
	<p><b>Other new social housing</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Where lettings plans are drawn up the following will apply to the local lettings allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants must be assured/secure council tenants living in the ward who meet the bidding threshold</li> <li>• Applicants must fulfil the size and property requirements for the new homes</li> <li>• Applicants with the same number of points will be prioritised based on the length of time on the housing register</li> <li>• Wheelchair adapted properties will be restricted to applicants who require such properties.</li> <li>• Ground floor properties will be restricted to applicants with an assessed need for ground floor accommodation.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p>After local lettings in the ward, remaining properties will be let according to the council's general Housing Allocation Scheme.</p> <p>The Service Director of Housing Needs and Strategy can exercise discretion to include more than one ward in the local lettings allocation.</p>
<p><b>Intra Estate Transfer</b></p> <p>20% of available voids on estates are prioritise to tenants who live on the estate</p>	<p><b>Intra Estate Transfer</b></p> <p><b>This section has been removed:</b></p> <p><b>Reason:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the severe shortage of housing and the increased demand in high needs cases.</li> </ul>

Current wording	Proposed new wording/changes/additions
<p><b>Keyworker housing</b></p> <p>Islington keyworkers (Social Workers, Teachers, Metropolitan police nurses working in Islington are awarded housing points to bid for a bedsitter or 1 bedroom accommodation on a non secure let</p>	<p><b>Keyworker housing</b></p> <p><b>This section has been removed:</b></p> <p><b>Reason:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a growing increase in high-needs, single, vulnerable applicants who require housing. This should be removed due to the severe shortage of social housing accommodation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>No previous wording</b></p>	<p><b>Supported housing move on new points allocation (page 29)</b></p> <p><b>Supported Housing Move On</b></p> <p>100 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</p> <p>Examples where this may occur include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant is in supported accommodation that they no longer need and that the council urgently requires that accommodation for other applicants</li> <li>• The supported accommodation scheme is closing down or changing use</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
<p><b>Armed forces personnel</b></p> <p>To serving members of the regular forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service</p>	<p><b>Armed forces personnel (page 22)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To serving members <b>or former members or reserve members</b> of the regular forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service</li> </ul>

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**Equality Impact Assessment**

**The Housing Allocation Scheme 2022**

**Service Area: Homes and Neighbourhoods**

**1. What are the intended outcomes of this policy, function etc?**

The overall aim of the Scheme is to ensure that social housing is allocated fairly and objectively to those in the greatest housing need.

**2. Resident Profile**

Who is going to be impacted by this change i.e. residents/service users/tenants?

		<b>Borough profile</b>	<b>Housing Register</b>
		<b>Total: 206,285</b>	<b>Total: 14,003</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>58%</b>
	<b>Male</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>42%</b>
	<b>Other</b>		<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Under 16</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>0%</b>
	<b>16-24</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>13%</b>
	<b>25-44</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>52%</b>
	<b>45-64</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>26%</b>
	<b>65+</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Disability</b>	<b>Disabled</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>24%</b>
	<b>Non-disabled</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Sexual orientatio</b>	<b>LGBT</b>	<b>No data</b>	<b>6%</b>
	<b>Heterosexual/straight</b>	<b>No data</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>Race</b>	<b>BME</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>52%</b>
	<b>White</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>48%</b>

<b>Religion or belief</b>	<b>Christian</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>46%</b>
	<b>Muslim</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>25%</b>
	<b>Other</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
	<b>No religion</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>24%</b>
	<b>Religion not stated</b>	<b>17%</b>	

### 3. Equality impacts

Many people are unable to secure appropriate accommodation without support. This is a major issue in Central London, where property prices and poverty levels are high. Ensuring people can access decent, suitable housing is a key priority for Islington Council. The Council also has a legal obligation to ensure certain groups are housed.

Social housing is a primary tool for tackling these issues. It provides accommodation to roughly 44% of Islington residents at below market rates. Demand for social housing in Islington far exceeds supply with more than 14,000 households on the Housing Register and approximately only 1,000 properties to let each year equating to about 7% of households on the Housing Register.

In cases where the Council has a legal obligation to house someone but is unable to do so immediately, it will use temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation is costly for the council, and represents greater instability for the housed family or individual.

The Council allocates social housing in accordance with its Housing Allocation Scheme. The scheme is developed in accordance with legislation and Government guidance.

**The Council's Housing Allocation Scheme lists the following guiding principles:**

- 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;
- 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) A Scheme 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.

Islington Council has a legal obligation to pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the manner in which it carries out its functions. The three elements of the PSED are:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The protected characteristics which need to be considered are age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is carried out annually to ensure the Allocation Scheme is not inadvertently discriminating against any of the protected characteristics when compared to the profile of the Housing Register and the profile of the borough's population. The findings of the EQIA carried out at the end of 2020/21 found:

- In general, the profile of Islington's housing applicants and those allocated a new property is slightly younger, comprises more females, and includes more people of colour than the borough's population.
- While these groups are over-represented, relative to the borough's population, they are likely to be a consequence of dependent children contributing to a priority need decision, ethnic inequalities in the labour market and other factors that contribute to homelessness.
- Overall, there is no obvious indication of inequitable processing in the Housing allocations process.

The full report is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

The table below lists the proposed changes to the current Allocation Scheme and the anticipated equalities impact if any.

### **Proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme**

<b>Current wording</b>	<b>New wording</b>	<b>Expected equalities impact</b>
<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register – Non-Residence</b></p> <p>People who are not resident in the borough on the date of application, and people who have lived in Islington for less than three out of the previous five years from the date they apply for housing, cannot join the housing register</p>	<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register-Non-Residence</b></p> <p>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</p>	<p><b>Neutral:</b></p> <p>This change could adversely impact on people who are more mobile. The disqualification is however mitigated by a considerable number of exceptions. Applications are considered on their individual circumstances and an applicant can request a review on disqualification from the housing register. We will carefully</p>

		monitor the effect of this change.
	<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register- non residence exception (p17)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving due to domestic abuse</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>Women and single female parents are over-represented in this group.</p>
<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register - Unacceptable behaviour</b> Being the perpetrator of violent, coercive, or controlling behaviour towards a resident of the borough</p>	<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register - Unacceptable behaviour</b> (page 17) wording changed to expand scope Being the perpetrator of domestic abuse, violent, coercive, or controlling behaviour towards a resident of the borough.</p>	<p><b>Positive</b></p>
<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register – Households with sufficient income or capital to meet their own housing need</b></p>	<p><b>Applicants who cannot join the housing register – Households who have sufficient financial resources to own or rent accommodation (page 18) - item7 wording changed regarding income.</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Neutral</b></p> <p>This proposed change of wording seeks to clarify and define what constitutes sufficient financial resources so that the scheme is more transparent for all housing applicants.</p>
<p><b>Residence Points</b> Applicants must be resident in the borough for at least three out of the last five years from the date of application</p>	<p><b>Residence Points</b> 100 points are awarded to everyone who has been resident in the borough continuously for the last five years at the date of application</p>	<p><b>Neutral</b></p> <p>Maintain points award for people who meet the residence criteria</p>
<p><b>Waiting time points</b> Points are calculated at 5% per year of housing needs</p>	<p><b>Waiting time points-</b> This section has been removed.</p>	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>The purpose of this proposed change to the existing Scheme</p>

<p>points (except residence points)</p>		<p>is to prevent applicants without a significant housing need who have accrued a high level of waiting time points from leapfrogging applicants who are in severe housing need. Therefore, applicants with the same number of points will be prioritised for a letting based on time spent on the housing register.</p>
	<p><b>Dividing households (Page 21) additional wording</b></p> <p>A council tenant may request one or more separate properties for their authorised household members. The council will only agree to this request where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the tenant and the authorised household members move to one bedroom properties;</li> <li>• the number of one bedroom properties required does not exceed the number of bedrooms in the original larger home;</li> <li>• the tenant and household member to be re-housed simultaneously</li> </ul> <p>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.</p> <p>Households occupying more than one tenancy Where a family unit is not currently residing together the assessment will be based on the</p>	<p><b>Neutral</b></p> <p>This proposed change is to clarify how this sort of request will be dealt with so is added to provide clarity and transparency.</p> <p>It is not expected that this change will have any negative impact to any protected group</p>

	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.	
<b>Medical points</b> Category A 150	<b>Medical points- (page 22)</b> Cat A 200 points (change to points award)	<b>Positive</b> Applicants who receive medical category A will have a disability or impairment that is severely impacted by their current housing and they would usually require a specific property type. It is expected that the additional points award will assist those with an acute and significant medical need to secure suitable housing more quickly.
<b>Welfare points</b> <b>Welfare A</b> Where the accommodation is required to meet the assessed needs of relevant children and other care leavers under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.  <b>Welfare B</b> 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	<b>Welfare points (page25-26)</b> <b>Welfare A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the accommodation is required to meet the needs of a child who has been assessed as in severe harm or fatality due to their accommodation as assessed by Children’s Services.</li> <li>• Where there is a risk of a child within the applicant’s household coming into Local Authority care or residential care due to their housing situation</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <b>Welfare B</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where an applicant or a member of their household has</li> </ul>	<b>Neutral:</b>  No change to points awarded. Clarification on wording of examples

	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the accommodation is required to meet the needs of a child who has been assessed as in urgent risk of harm due to their accommodation as assessed by Children's Services.</li> <li>• Where an applicant is experiencing a threat of violence, abuse or harassment that is impacting their living conditions</li> <li>• Where accommodation is required to meet the needs of a child as assessed in a Child in Need (CIN) plan</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p><b>Welfare C</b></p> <p>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.</p>	
	<p><b>Management Transfers (page 27)</b></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b></p> <p>These points were previous awarded under welfare grounds.</p>

	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• where it can be evidenced that the risks can only be managed effectively by moving the tenant elsewhere</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Points awarded from previous Allocation Scheme (Retention Points )</b></p> <p>Applicants retain these points under previous Allocation schemes (2010 and 2013)</p>	<p><b>Points awarded from previous Allocation Scheme (Retention Points) (page 28)</b></p> <p><b>This section has been removed:</b></p> <p><b>Reason:</b> All applications to be re-assess and therefore these points will be no longer applicable</p>	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>Our analysis has shown this will disproportionately affect older age groups aged over 45. However, those applicants have had time to use points secured under previous schemes in 2010 and 2013 to secure a move. Removing these points will make the Scheme clearer and more transparent for all applicants.</p>
<p><b>Relationship Breakdown</b></p> <p>Where a relationship has occurred between couples and one or both partners are an Islington council tenant.</p>	<p><b>Relationship Breakdown</b></p> <p><b>This section has been removed:</b></p> <p><b>Reason:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a growing increase in high needs single vulnerable applicants who require housing. This should be</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neutral</b></p> <p>Analysis shows as expected that males will be affected more than females by this change. Very few applicants were able to secure social housing through this points allocation. Applicants experiencing relationship breakdown will be able to seek advice and assistance to secure a settled</p>

	removed due to the severe shortage of social housing	home as a result of the Homelessness Prevention Act and have a much greater and realistic chance of actually securing an alternative settled home.
	<p><b>Domestic Abuse ( page 28)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicants fleeing domestic violence and abuse that have been assessed by MARAC These applicants will be awarded <b>30 additional priority points</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>Women and single female parents are over represented in this group.</p>
<p><b>New generation scheme:</b> Applicants must be living continuously as an agreed member of the household of an Islington resident for at least three out of the last five years</p>	<p><b>New generation scheme (page28)</b> 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</p>	<p><b>Neutral:</b> It is not expected that this change will have negative impact to any protected group</p>
	<p><b>Prevention of homelessness (page 30)</b></p> <p>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 <b>30 points.</b></p> <p>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 <b>70 points.</b></p>	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>Women, single parents, people with a disability or impairment, people from a BAME background and younger people are over represented among those who make homeless applications when compared to the rest of the housing register and the general population.</p> <p>This points allocation will encourage homeless applicants to take up a housing option suitable for their needs and also allow them to remain on Islington's housing register.</p>
<p><b>Applicants not bidding</b></p> <p>The council will review all applications where no bid has been placed on a regular basis. Applicants will be</p>	<p><b>Applicants not bidding (Page 36)</b></p> <p>The council will review all applications where no bid has been placed on a regular basis.</p>	<p><b>Neutral</b></p> <p>It is not expected that this proposed change will have a negative impact to any protected group.</p>

<p>contacted to make sure that they understand how to bid and to ensure that they will be able to make future bids.</p> <p>Applicants who persistently bid and do not attend viewings and applicants who consistently accept and later refuse properties may be suspended from the list for 6 months.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><b>Applicants who:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• persistently bid and do not attend viewings</li> <li>• applicants who consistently accept and later refuse properties</li> <li>• or applicants who fail to bid for more than twelve months may be removed from the Housing Register.</li> </ul> <p>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</p>	
<p><b>Supported choice</b></p> <p>Applicants agreed 2 offers of housing</p>	<p><b>Supported Choice (page 36)</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Neutral</b></p> <p>Applicants selected for supported choice because they are unable to use the bidding system effectively will undergo a thorough suitability assessment to ensure that any offer made will meet their requirements. All final offers are subject to the reviews process which will ensure any offers made are suitable.</p>
<p><b>New homes Local Lettings Council Estate:</b></p> <p><b>Priority is given to:</b></p> <p>Secure council tenants Household members of a secure council tenants Secure council tenants requesting a like for like transfer</p> <p><b>Ward Priority</b></p> <p>Secure social housing tenants</p>	<p><b>New Homes Local Lettings (page 40)</b></p> <p><b>Council Estate</b></p> <p><b>Priority is given to</b></p> <p>Current secure council tenants who meet the bidding threshold</p> <p><b>Ward priority</b></p> <p>Assured/secure social housing tenants living in the ward where the new homes for social rent are built will be given priority when the new homes are let.</p>	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>The introduction of Lettings Plans for individual schemes will mean that although the overwhelming majority of lettings on new build properties will continue to be let to residents on the estate (or ward), some properties will be available for applicants who need to move area for safety reasons. Women are over represented among this group.</p>

<p>Household members of secure social housing tenants</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>Other new social housing</b></p> <p>This will apply to either current social housing tenants or family members living with the tenants for the last 12 months</p>	<p><b>Other new social housing</b></p> <p>Applicants must be assured/secure council tenants living in the ward who meet the bidding threshold</p>	
<p><b>Intra Estate Transfer</b></p> <p>20% of available voids on estates are prioritise to tenants who live on the estate</p>	<p><b>Intra estate Transfer</b></p> <p><b>This section has been removed:</b></p> <p><b>Reason:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the severe shortage of housing and the increase demand in high needs cases.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neutral</b></p> <p>This scheme has been superseded by local lettings policy on new build property.</p>
<p><b>Keyworker housing</b></p> <p>Islington keyworkers (Social Workers, Teachers, Metropolitan police nurses working in Islington are awarded housing points to bid for a bedsitter or 1 bedroom accommodation on a non-secure let</p>	<p><b>Keyworker housing</b></p> <p><b>This section has been removed:</b></p> <p><b>Reason:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a growing increase in high needs single vulnerable applicants who require housing. This should be removed due to the severe shortage of social housing accommodation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neutral</b></p> <p>It is not expected that this proposed change will have a negative impact on any protected group.</p> <p>This was a scheme to encourage people to take up employment in the borough. There are low cost home ownership and intermediate rent opportunities available which are a more secure type of housing for these applicants.</p>
	<p><b>Supported housing move on new points allocation (page 20)</b></p> <p>100 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:</p>	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>This will enable the council to make best use of limited supported housing for those who require it</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant is in supported accommodation that they no longer need and that the council urgently requires that accommodation for other applicants</li> <li>• The supported accommodation scheme is closing down or changing use</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Armed forces personnel</b> To serving members of the regular forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service</p>	<p><b>Armed forces personnel (p17)</b> 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</p>	<b>Neutral</b>

#### 4. Safeguarding and Human Rights impacts

##### a) Safeguarding risks and Human Rights breaches

Please describe any safeguarding risks for children or vulnerable adults AND any potential human rights breaches that may occur as a result of the proposal? Please refer to **section 4.8** of the [guidance](#) for more information.

If potential safeguarding and human rights risks are identified then **please contact equalities@islington.gov.uk to discuss further:**

#### 5. Action

How will you respond to the impacts that you have identified in sections 3 and 4, or address any gaps in data or information?

For more information on identifying actions that will limit the negative impact of the policy for protected groups see the [guidance](#).

Action	Responsible person or team	Deadline
There is very little consistent recording of disability, and there is relatively little recording of religion, marital status and sexual orientation. There may be value in improving recording of these factors, to further inform future work in this area.	Housing Needs	
Do more work to develop positive and meaningful interaction between immigrant groups and local communities to reduce negative stereotypes	VCS team	

Please send the completed RIA to [equalites@islington.gov.uk](mailto:equalites@islington.gov.uk) and also make it publicly available online along with the relevant policy or service change.

**This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.**

**Staff member completing this form:**

**Head of Service or higher:**

Signed:



Signed: *Ramesh L*

Date: 10/10/2022

Date: 10/10/2022

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## Draft Housing Allocations in Islington consultation questions

There is a massive shortage of council and housing association housing in the UK; the problem is bigger in London than anywhere else. In Islington, we have just under 16,000 households on our housing register, yet we can only house approximately less than 6% of households every year, which has been declining in recent years. House prices and rents in the private sector have risen more than incomes, therefore placing even greater demand on scarce housing.

Therefore, with the demand for housing increasing and the supply of available council and housing association accommodation reducing Islington Council's residents are facing a housing crisis.

### Why do we need the allocations scheme?

The council is required by law to have a housing allocations scheme. The allocations scheme sets out the eligibility and qualification criteria for households to be placed on the council's housing register. The housing allocations scheme must set out the criteria for how households will receive different priority points from other households with different needs and provide priority to specific residents.

Therefore, we must decide who gets priority and the allocations scheme is how we do this. Longer term, we are using every tool at our disposal to increase the supply of all kinds of homes across the borough, including building 750 new council homes for social rent over the next 4 years. We are also aiming to ensure we can provide as much assistance to residents and provide access to alternative housing options and solutions.

### How does the allocations scheme work?

The council currently operates a choice-based lettings system that allows eligible residents to bid on available properties that become available each week.

When someone applies to join the housing register, we assess their application and award priority points. The higher number of priority points a household is awarded increases the prospects of being rehoused into council or housing association accommodation.

### Demand

The following table explains the demand and supply of council and housing association rented accommodation in Islington over the last 12 months:

Type of accommodation	Number of households on the register	Supply	% housed
Studio and 1 bedroom	6,370	486	8%
2 – bedroom	2,593	347	13%
3 – bedroom	1,479	124	8%
4 – bedroom	507	22	4%
5 – bedroom	181	7	4%
6 – bedroom or larger	79	1	1%

There has been a general increase in the demand for council and housing association rented accommodation over the last three years, due to COVID 19, the financial fallout of Brexit, the cost of living crisis, increased Domestic Abuse, and increased homelessness etc. but at the same time there has been a reduction in the supply of council and housing association rented accommodation. As of

the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022, there are 922 homeless households living in temporary accommodation (bed and breakfast accommodation, hostel's, private rented temporary accommodation mainly outside of Islington). This type of accommodation is not suitable or affordable for Islington's residents. Therefore, urgent action is required to address these trends.

The table below shows the total points currently required to secure council and housing association rented accommodation and the % of households on the housing register who have currently been awarded these points.

Type of accommodation	Points required	% of households on the register with these points
Studio/1 bedroom	200	9%
2 bedroom	238	15%
3 bedroom	277	8%
4 bedroom or larger	343	7%

### **Why do we need to change the scheme?**

We last changed the scheme in 2017. Then we had almost double the number of homes becoming available for rented accommodation than we do today. We want to create a simpler and more transparent housing register suitable for the situation in Islington today. There have also been some changes to the law that we need to consider.

### **Why are we consulting?**

We know that having a safe and secure home is one of the most important things in life. We also know that we make better decisions when we listen to residents, and customers, so we genuinely want to know what you think. We will publish the results of this consultation and explain how we plan to use your feedback by the end of January 2023.

### **How did we make these changes?**

There has never been more demand for rented accommodation in Islington. We're proposing the following key changes to make the housing allocations scheme clearer and fairer, but we want to know what you think of the changes.

Please place the proposed changes document here

### **What are we proposing to change?**

1. You will only have a connection if you have lived in Islington for the last five consecutive years.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

## 2. 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.

Do you agree we should not allow people who have been the perpetrator of domestic abuse, violent, coercive, or controlling behaviour towards a resident of the borough on to Housing Register?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

## 3. 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; and 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 household's total gross income from all sources exceeds an annual income of £90,000. '

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

## 4. Waiting time points

It is proposed to remove the waiting time points from all housing applications.

This is to prevent applicants without significant housing need who have accrued a high level of waiting time points (over the years) leapfrogging applicants who are in severe housing need. The length of time waiting will be reflected in date of registration.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

## 5. 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 are 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.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

### 6. Medical points

We propose to increase the priority points from 150 to 200 for category A medical priority points for life-limiting, life threatening or progressive condition, serving members of the armed force with a disability and Hospital discharge.

We are proposing that Category B medical priority points remain at 80 points for applicants at risk and housebound and applicants' health is severely affected by their current accommodation

There are no proposed changes to category C medical priority point totalling 40 points

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

### 7. 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

**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
- 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 are 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)

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

#### **8. Points awarded from previous Allocation Scheme (Retention Points)**

This section has been removed:

All applications to be re-assessed and therefore these points will no longer be applicable

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

#### **9. Relationship breakdown**

This section has been removed:

There is a growing increase in high needs single vulnerable applicants who require housing. This should be removed due to the severe shortage of social housing and the increased demand.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

#### **10. New generation scheme**

New generation points will only be awarded to households when an applicant has lived continuously as an agreed member of the household of an Islington resident for the five years prior to the date of application, the applicant must not have been previously housed by the council and proof of residence will be required.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

#### **11. Domestic Abuse**

We want to increase priority for Domestic Abuse households and therefore we are proposing to award 30 additional points for people fleeing domestic violence and abuse that have been assessed by MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference).

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

#### **12. Prevention of homelessness (page 30)**

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. Also, 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.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

#### **13. Supported Choice**

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 rather than two offers.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

#### **14. 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.

Therefore, 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

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

#### **15 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 local lettings plans are drawn up the following will apply to the local letting's 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 letting's allocation

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

## **16 All new social rented 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 Local Lettings Plan for the individual scheme for up to 100% of the allocations.

Where local lettings plans are drawn up the following will apply to the local letting's 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 letting's allocation.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

## **17 Intra Estate Transfer**

This section has been removed:

The reason for this proposed removal is due to the severe shortage of housing and the increased demand in high needs cases.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

## **18 Keyworker housing**

This section has been removed:

The reason for this proposed removal is due to the severe shortage of housing and the increased demand in high needs cases.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

## **19 Supported housing move on new points allocation**

100 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 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.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

## **20 Annual Lettings Plans**

We currently advertise properties through our Choice Based Lettings scheme in which residents can bid for properties that meet their needs i.e., bedroom entitlement, adaptations, and older persons dwellings.

What are we proposing to change?

We aim to produce an Annual Lettings Plan; this will set annual targets for property types across all priority needs points and ensure applicants in the highest priority are re-housed as soon as possible through active support from the council. This lettings plan will also highlight the reason for the households being accommodated, the percentage of lettings to each property type and the number of properties used as temporary accommodation.

Do you agree with the change?

Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have any comments on this?

# Housing allocation scheme 2022 **DRAFT**





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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 to be confirmed. 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 placed inside 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 below page 7)**
  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.

### 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 everyone 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

#### 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.

These points are awarded for six months only because we expect that applicants will have sufficient points to bid successfully for a suitable property within that 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 150 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.

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

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):
  - o 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
  - o 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.
  - o 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 every six months by the Social Welfare Panel 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.
- **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 succession 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	●	●	●	●
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	●	●	●	● *
Where there is more than one occurrence additional points will be given per occurrence	5	●	●	●	● *
For each additional bedroom required.	20	●	●	●	● *
Severely overcrowded points Additional points for households lacking 2 or more bedrooms.	30	●	●	●	● *
Sharing or lacking access to facilities i.e. cooking facilities, hot or cold water or toilet.	10	●	●	●	● *
Medical needs	40, 80, 200	●	●	●	●
Welfare needs	40, 80, 150	●	●	●	●
Islington care leavers	90			●	
Discretionary succession	150			●	
Children's Services	150 or 200	●	●	●	●
New Generation scheme: 1 Beds 2 Beds	20 90			● ●	
Statutory homeless	10,40 or 100				●
Prevention of homelessness	30 or 70			●	
Decants	100 or 200	●			
Major works	120	●			
Management transfers	60, 120 or 150	●			
Domestic abuse points	30	●	●	●	●
Supported Housing move on	100			●	
Under occupying social housing tenants – points per bedroom under occupying.	80	●	●		
Under occupying tenants in two bedroom properties.	150	●	●		
Under occupation dependents	100			●	

\* Except those in reception centres Page 100

## 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 2013.**

In relation to tenancies that started before 1 April 2013, 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.

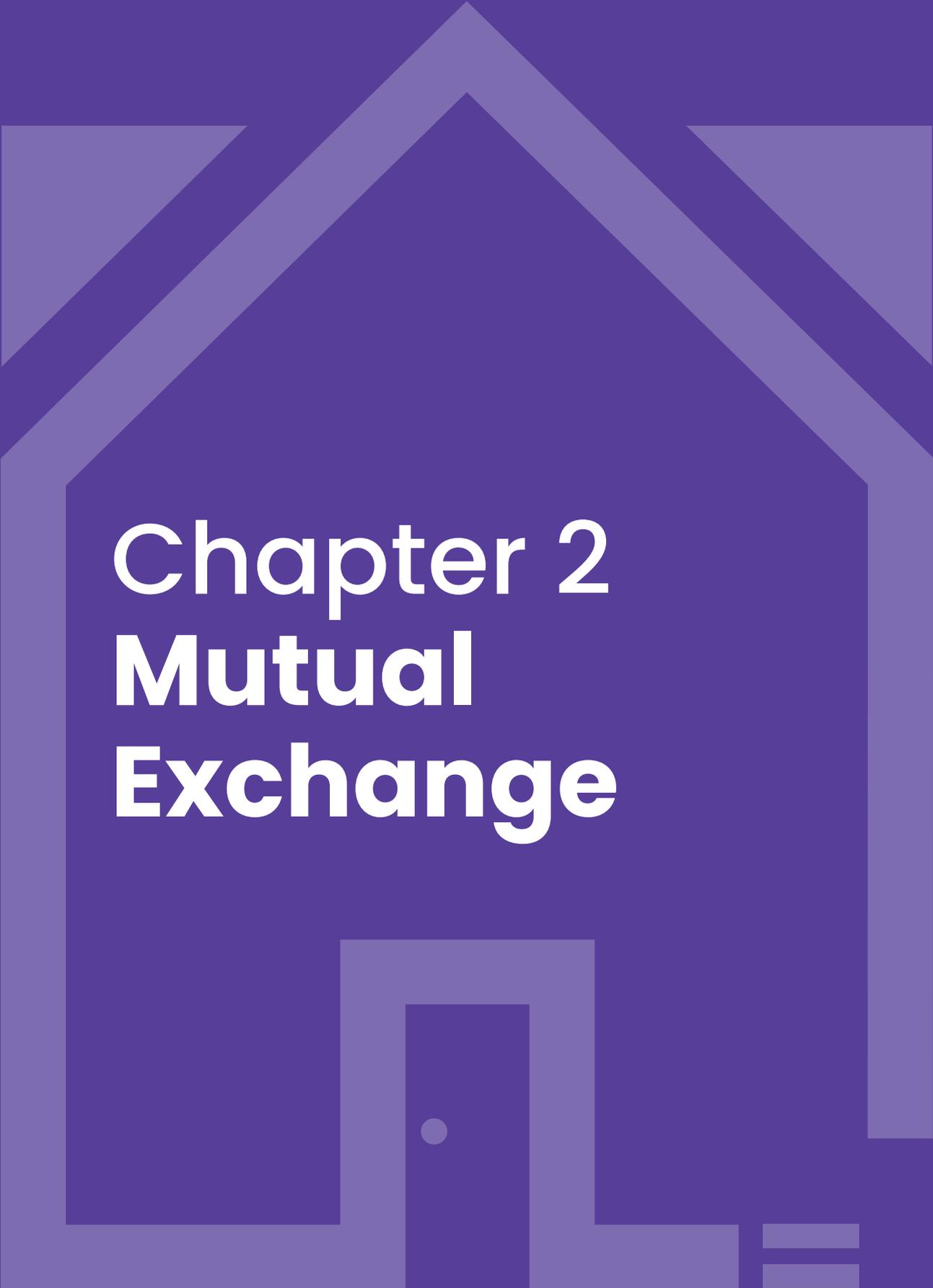
From 1 April 2013 new tenancies can only be succeeded to by a spouse or partner. Where other family members have been resident in the property for the previous 12 months and the property is suitable according to their housing needs we will permit a succession to the tenancy. Where there is under-occupation 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.

### **Discretionary succession**

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 succession.

Where a discretionary succession is agreed, consideration will be given to the suitability of the property being occupied. A tenancy will be granted for the occupied property if it is of the right size and does not have adaptations or features required by disabled people and there are no arrears on the 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 successions that are under-occupying or occupying an adapted property may be offered rehousing in another suitable property. These applicants will be given 150 points.



# 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)). 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

### What is it?

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

### Who can apply?

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

### How does it work?

This is a web-based scheme only and tenants can register on the web-site at [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)

Applicants can also view the Homeswapper site at their area housing offices.

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

### 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 and housing association tenants only. It is a free service.

#### How does it work?

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

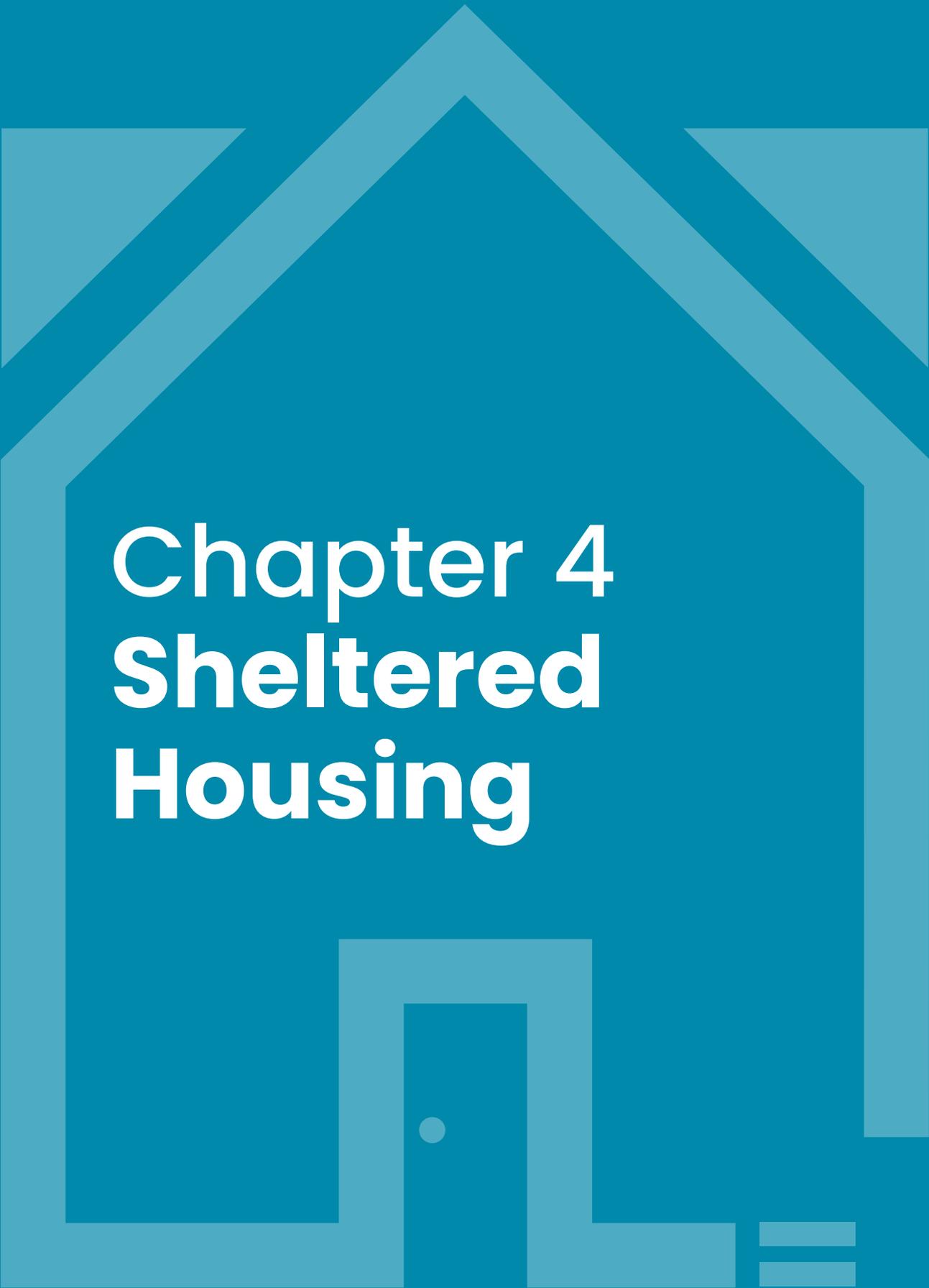
Information about all shared ownership properties available in London are advertised on the Share to Buy website which is in partnership with First Steps. The Share to Buy website also includes information about obtaining mortgages and contact details of solicitors who have experience in assisting clients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

# 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

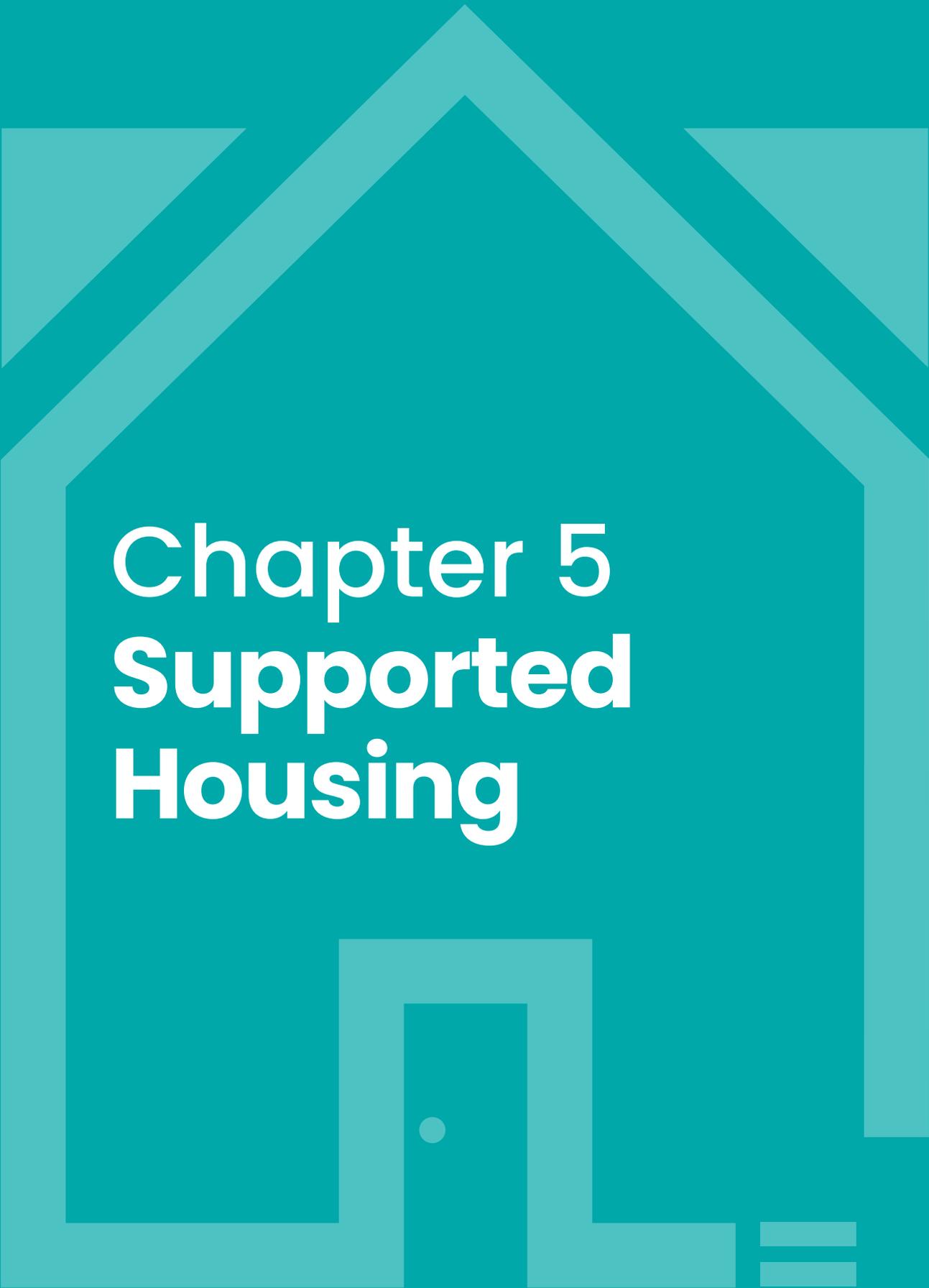
Please contact:

**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 and a central door, set against a darker teal background. The house outline is composed of several parallel lines, creating a sense of depth and shadow.

# 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

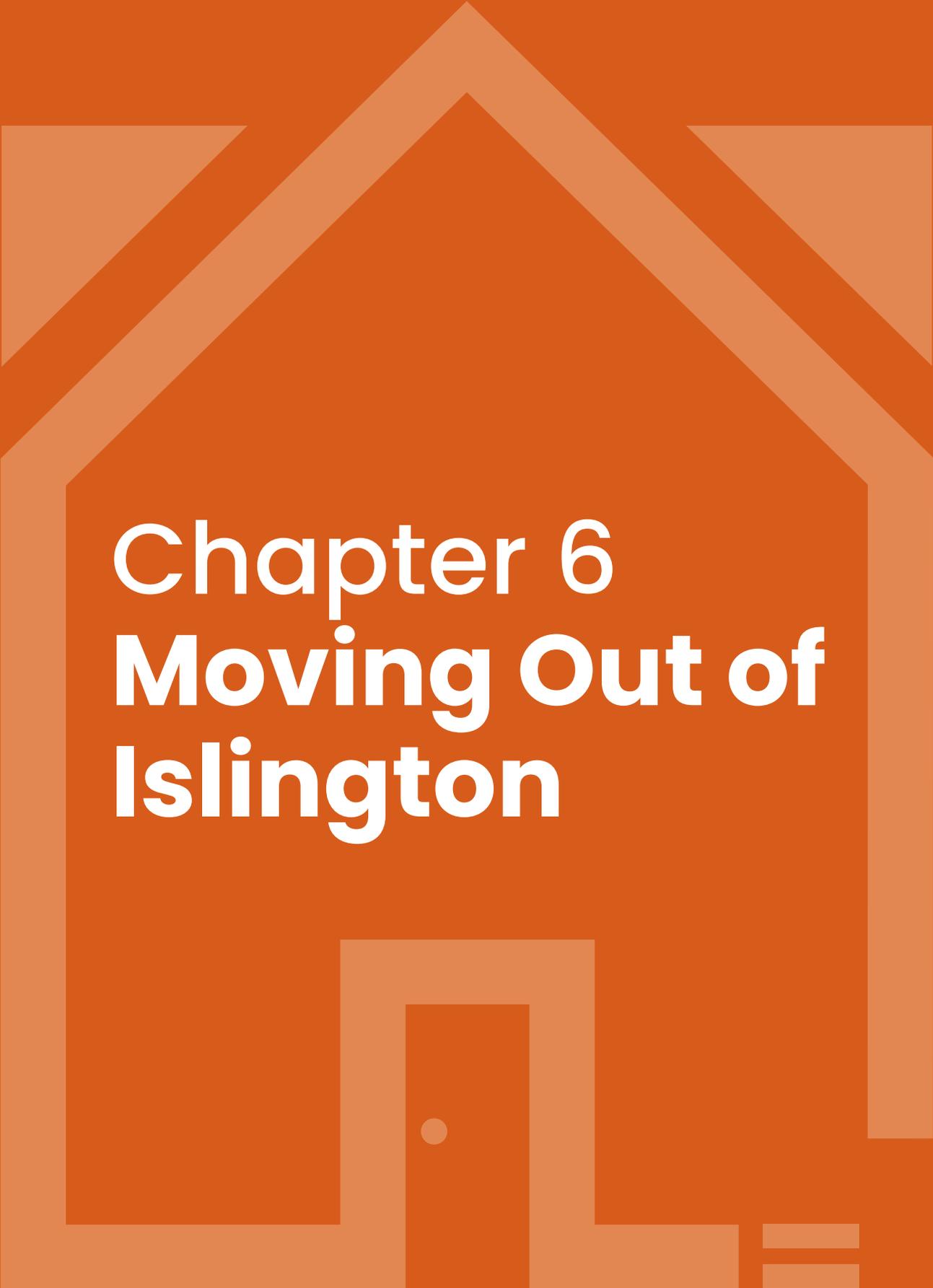
Please contact:

**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:

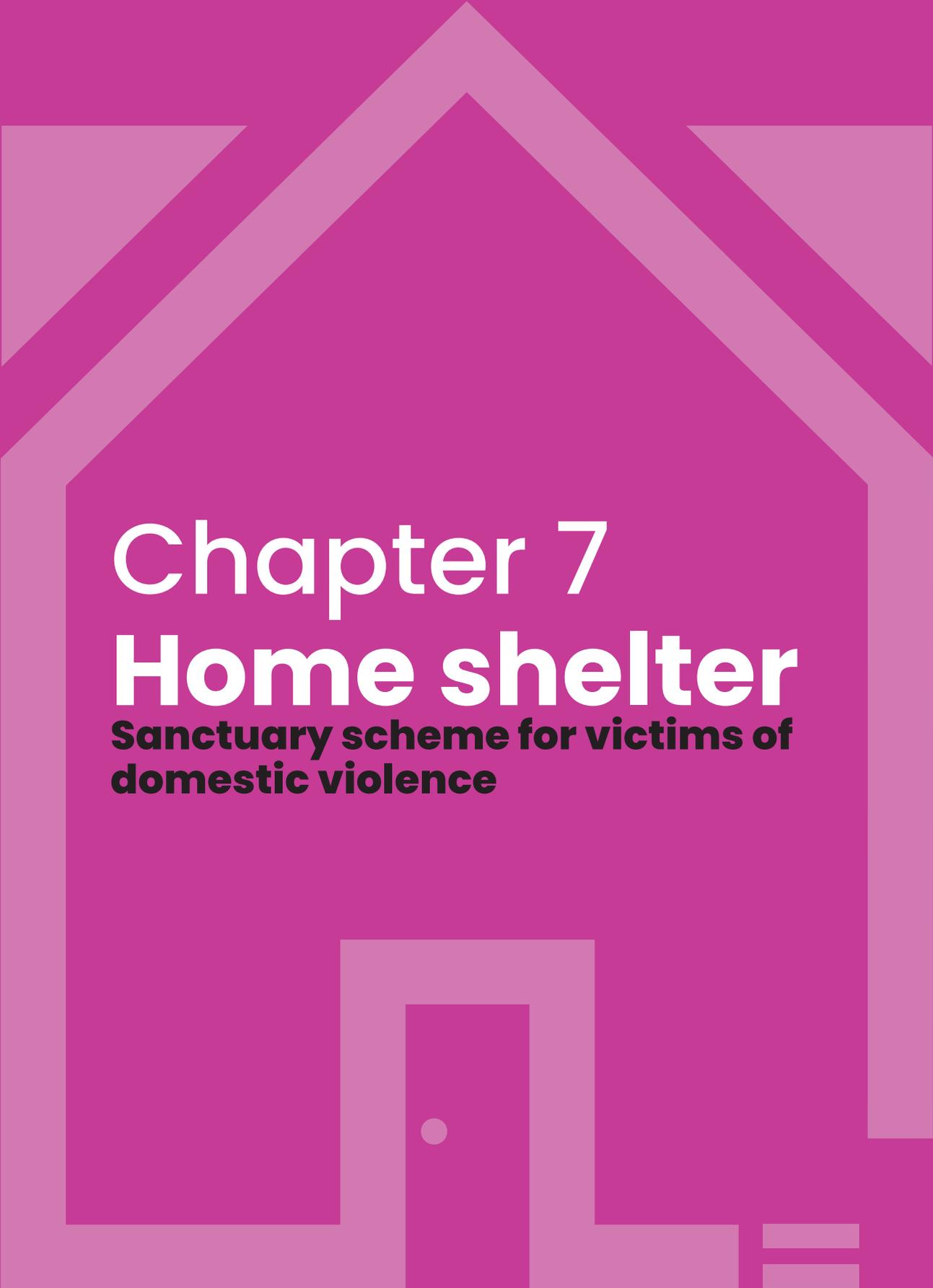
**Housing Options Team**

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

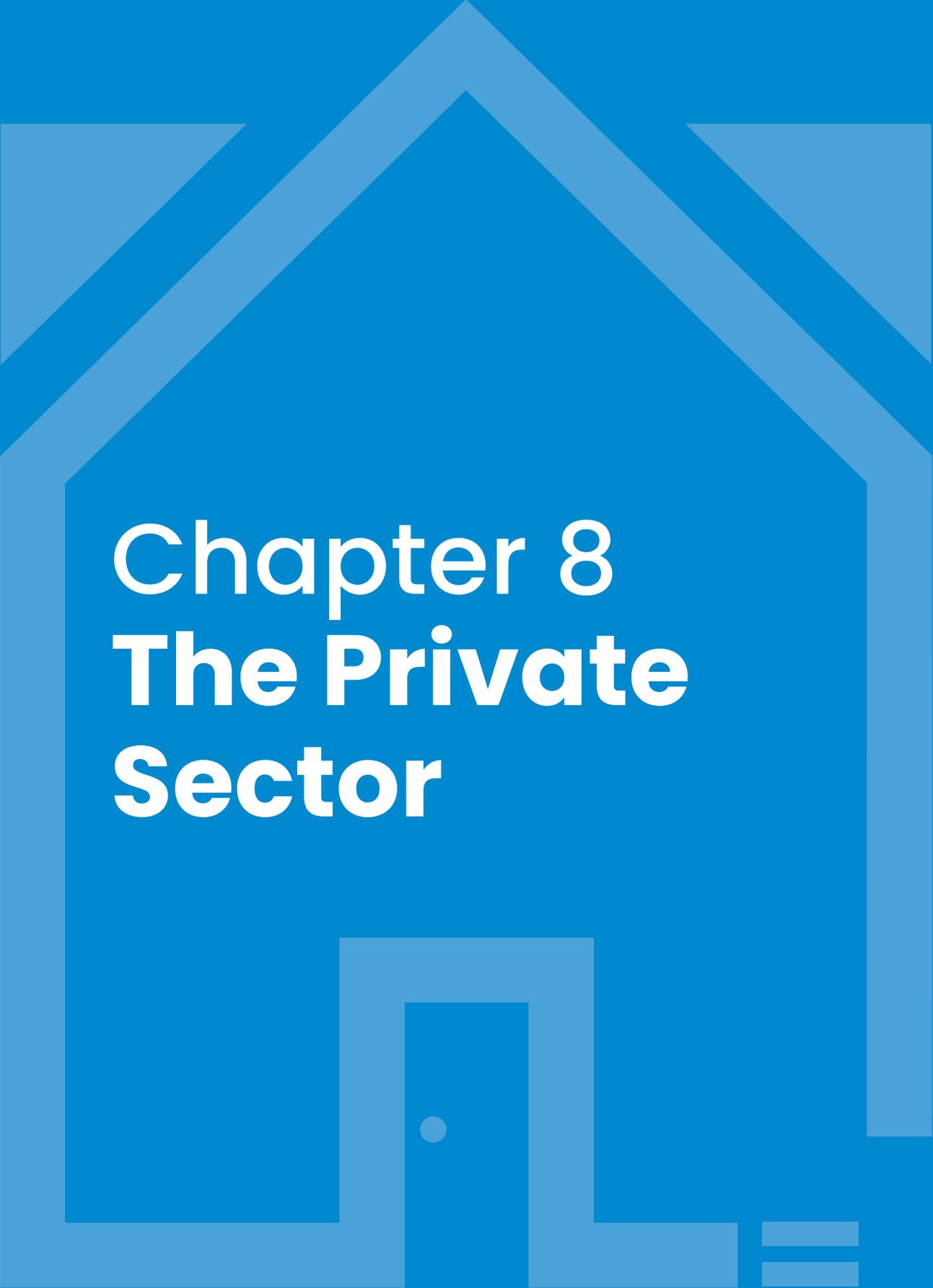
Islington Council tenants should contact their area housing office.  
Housing association tenants should contact their landlord.

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?

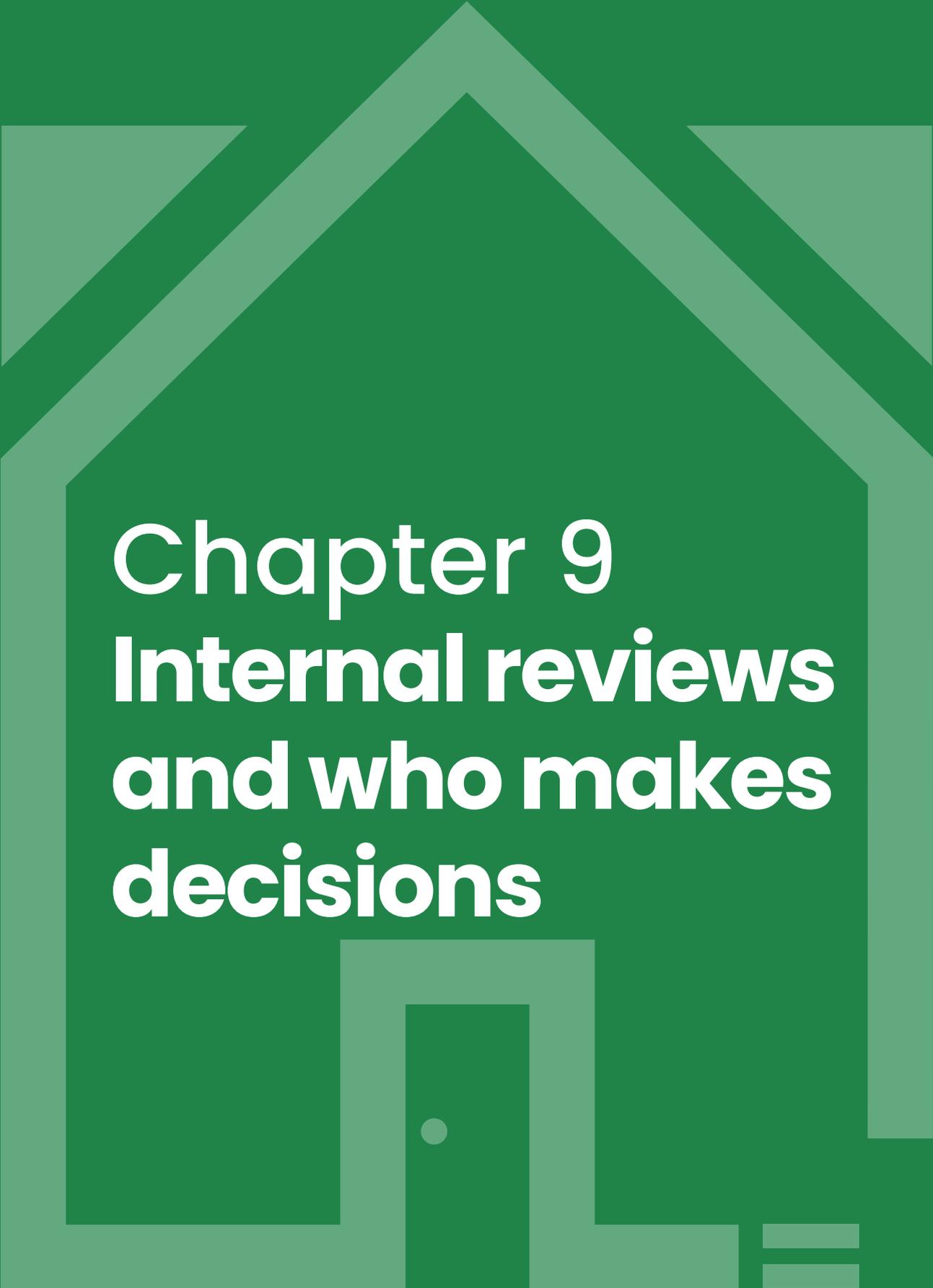
Grants are available from Islington Council to enable repairs, adaptation and grants for energy efficiency of owner occupied and private rented properties.

### 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, set against a dark green background. The house outline is composed of multiple parallel lines, creating a layered effect. The text is centered within the house's interior.

# 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:

#### A Housing Options Service Officer level

- 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

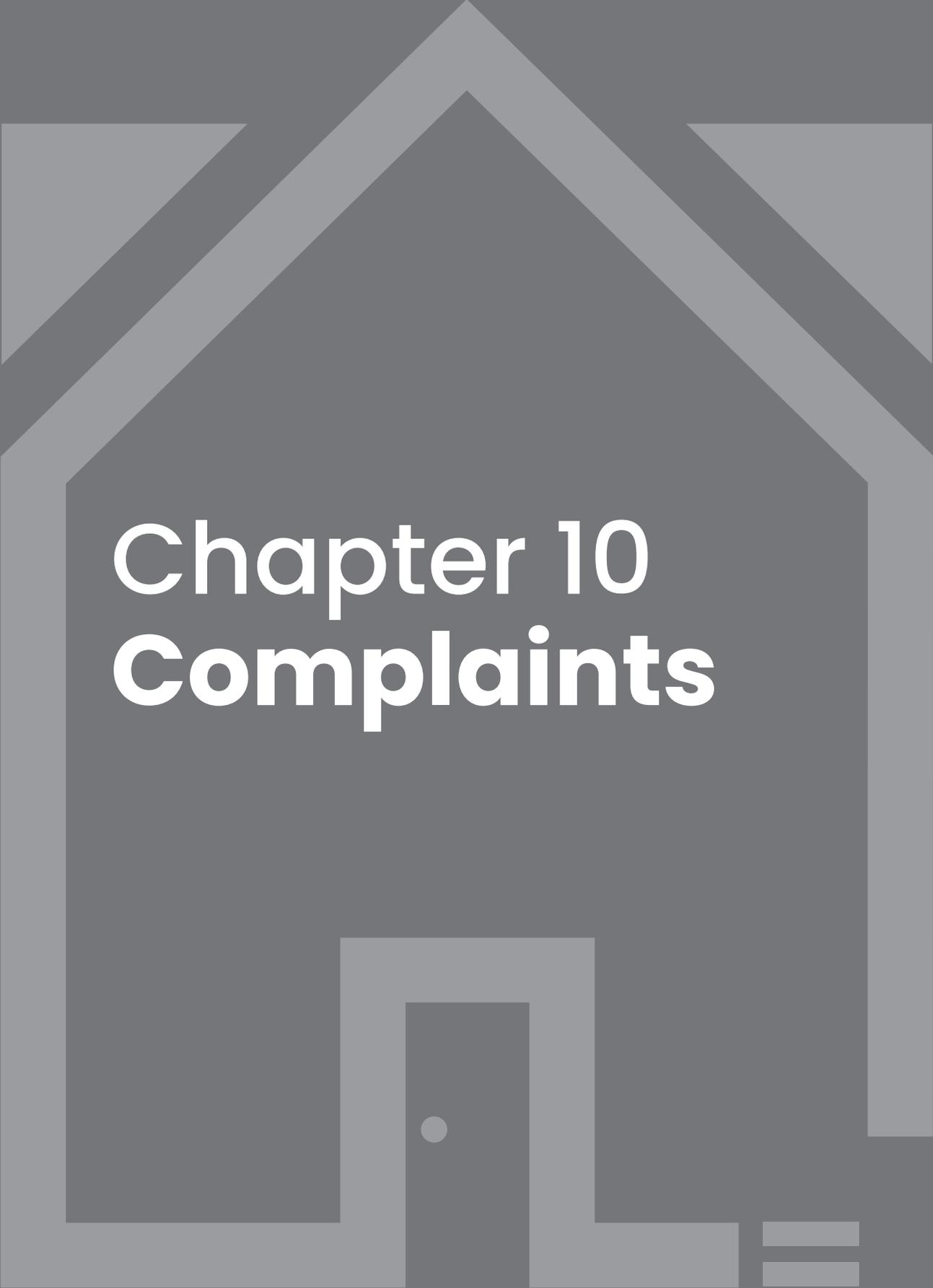
- Assessing welfare issues.
- Reviews regarding eligibility, qualification, exclusion, points award and decision on whether to allocate.

#### 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 and a central door, serving as a background for the chapter title.

# 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 Housing Ombudsman; the Housing Ombudsman considers housing matters such as rent, repairs and transfers.

You can complain to the Housing Ombudsman directly, eight weeks after you have received the final response from the Chief Executive and not before then.

If you do not want to wait that long you can ask a ‘designated person’ to refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman once the council’s complaint procedure has been fully completed. In Islington the designated person is the Lead Member for Housing. If you want the designated person to refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman you must write and give them your permission to refer your complaint. You will get more advice on how to do this when you receive the final response at the Chief Executive stage.

The designated person can try and resolve the complaint themselves or refer the complaint straight to the Ombudsman. If they refuse to do either a person may contact the Ombudsman directly.

### Further information

Please visit:

**W** [www.islington.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-and-complaints-info](http://www.islington.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-and-complaints-info)

Contact details for the Housing Ombudsman:

#### **Housing Ombudsman**

Exchange Tower

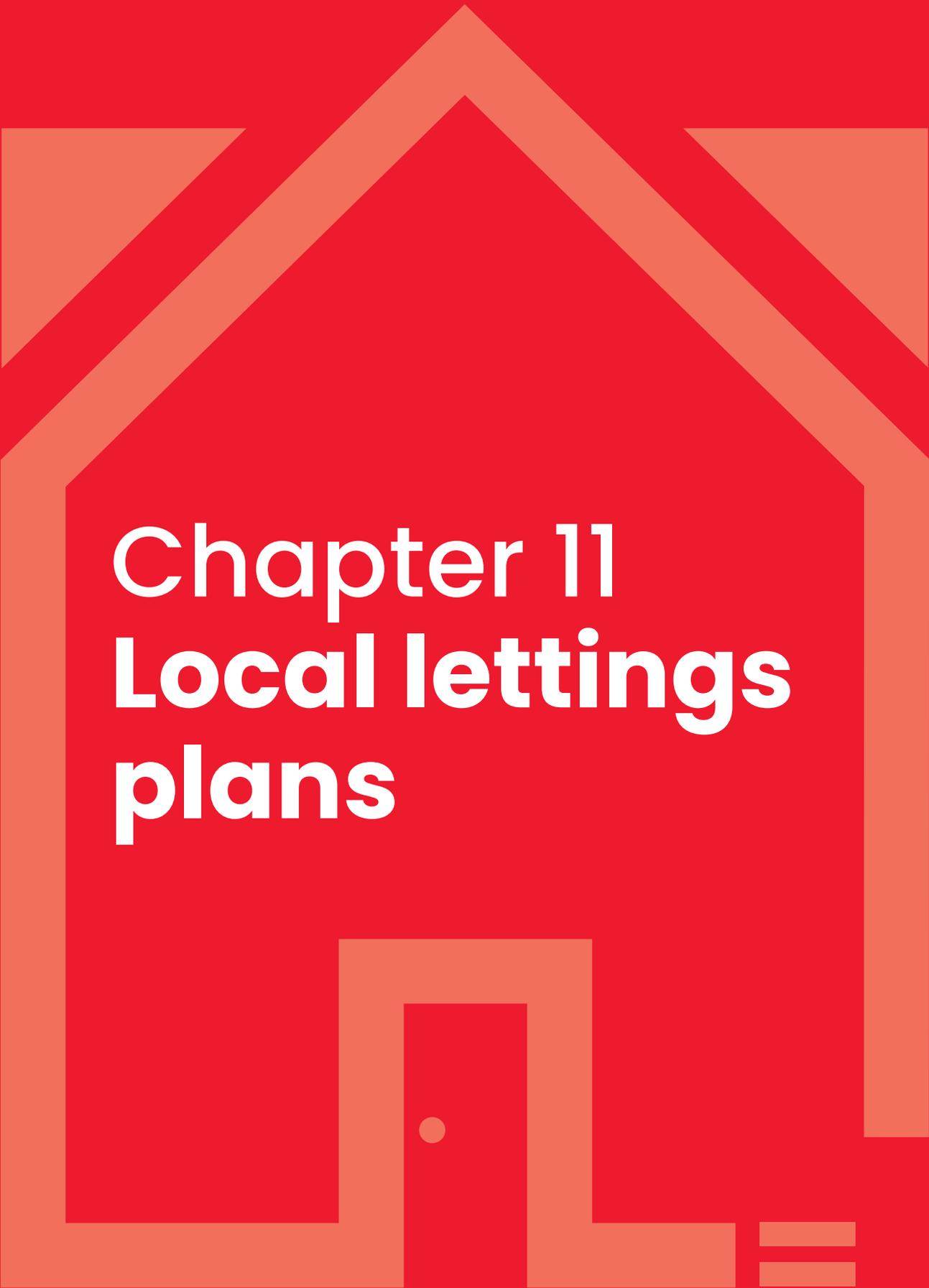
Harbour Exchange Square

London, E14 9GE

**E** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

**T** 0300 111 3000

**W** [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)



# 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 enquiries, please contact:



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Homes and Neighbourhoods  
Islington Council  
222 Upper Street N1 1XR

**Report of:** Ian Swift, Director of Housing Needs and Strategy

**Meeting of:** Housing Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

## Tenant Satisfaction Measures

### Introduction

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are metrics that all social landlords in England will have to collect and report on to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). They are based around a series of themes important to tenants and are being introduced to demonstrate the individual performance of landlords to their tenants and to the RSH and to allow the comparison of performance between landlords. They come into effect on 1 April 2023.

### Recommendation

This report is to provide the Housing Scrutiny Committee with information on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures which will be introduced and to ensure the council is publicly accountable, honest, and transparent when improving the quality of services to tenants across Islington.

### Background

#### Statutory framework

The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill<sup>1</sup> will enact a set of measures to improve standards for people living in social housing. It sets out a new regulatory framework for the consumer regulation of social housing to strengthen the accountability of landlords for providing safe homes, quality services and treating residents with respect. Many of the changes in the Bill are to be implemented by the RSH with TSMs forming part of this new framework.

In addition to the TSMs, the RSH will also carry out regular inspections and investigate organisational complaints to ensure compliance with the new standards. The Bill also gives new powers to the Housing Ombudsman which is responsible for investigating complaints from individuals.

### **Tenant Satisfaction Measure Standard<sup>2</sup>**

Further to consultation carried out in March 2022, the Tenant Satisfaction Measure Standard which sets out the reporting requirements for TSMs was published in September 2022.

Landlords will be required to collect and report on 22 metrics across 5 themes. Ten will be measured by landlords through their performance indicators and 12 will be measured by an annual tenant perception survey. The Standard sets out requirements (including mandatory questions and methodology) for data collection and reporting. The measures do not apply to leaseholders. Landlords will need to start data collection in April 2023, landlords with 1,000 or more homes will send first years' worth (2023/24) of tenant satisfaction measures results to the RSH in Summer 2024, and the first set of data will be published by RSH in Autumn 2024.

## The Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The TSMs are grouped into 5 themes: keeping properties in good repair; maintaining building safety; respectful and helpful engagement; complaints handling; responsible neighbourhood management.

Keeping properties in good repair	Maintaining building safety	Respectful and helpful engagement	Complaints handling	Responsible neighbourhood management
TP02: Satisfaction with repairs	TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe	TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them	TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints	TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained
TP03: Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	BS01: Gas safety checks	TP07: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	CH01: Complaints relative to the size of the landlord <sup>3</sup>	TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well-maintained	BS02: Fire safety checks	TP08: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour
RP01: Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	BS03: Asbestos safety checks			NM01: Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord <sup>4</sup>
RP02: Repairs <sup>5</sup> completed within target timescale	BS04: Water safety checks			
	BS05: Lift safety checks			

The measures are either a tenant perception measure (TP) or a landlord management information measure (RP, BS, CH, NM). Additionally, there is a single measure for Overall satisfaction (TP01) to be included in the tenant perception survey with the mandatory question “*Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by your landlord?*”

## Preparation for the introduction of TSMs across Homes and Neighbourhoods

Since the publication of the proposed TSMs in March 2022, Homes and Neighbourhoods have been auditing the current performance framework against the proposed Measures to ensure that the systems and processes are in place to start collecting data from April 2023. This work is overseen by the Service Improvement

Board (SIB) which is chaired by the Corporate Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods and is being delivered through a series of workstreams including:

- Service Access and Quality
- Tenancy Standard
- Quality of Homes & Communal Spaces
- Resident Engagement & Communications
- Governance, Infrastructure & Data
- Neighbourhoods and Communities
- and the Building & Fire Safety Board.

A critical friend partner is being procured to start working with the Improvement Team for inspection readiness and this will include several deep dives into housing data and performance, critical appraisal of our plans for the TSMs and a comprehensive review of policies and procedures and best practice.

The council has also commenced with the collection of tenant satisfaction surveys conducted independently to ensure a robust appraisal of the tenant's satisfaction is connected. These surveys are conducted monthly, and the tenant's satisfaction stands at 64% for each month during July, August, and September 2022, compared to 60% in October 2021.

### **Resourcing the delivery of TSMs**

Much of the information due for reporting is available to the service through our current KPIs. However, as a landlord to over 29,000 tenanted properties, Islington Council will be required to run a large-scale tenant perception survey every year. We will also need to ensure that our data reflects the mix of people living in our homes.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no known financial implications associated with the Tenancy Satisfaction Measures.

### **Legal Implications**

There are no known legal implications associated with the Tenancy Satisfaction Measures.

## **Glossary**

**The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill:** together with Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022, represents part of the government's response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy of June 2017. It follows a 2018 green paper on social housing and accompanying call for evidence on social housing regulation, and a 2020 social housing white paper. The Bill is currently at Report stage (18<sup>th</sup> October 2022) in the House of Lords. <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3177>

**The Regulator of Social Housing:** an independent body tasked to focus on regulating the social housing sector at an organisational level. It can receive referrals

from tenants, registered providers of social housing and other sources relating to its standards on homes, neighbourhood and community, tenancy or tenant empowerment and involvement. The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill includes new powers for the Regulator of Social Housing intended to bring more focus on how consumer issues are regulated in the sector.

**The Housing Ombudsman:** investigates and resolves individual complaints made by tenants, shared owners, and leaseholders about their landlords. The Ombudsman and Regulator are required to cooperate with each other.

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# Islington Broadband

## Introduction

To deliver Islington Labour's manifesto commitment to ensuring all estates in the borough have access to high speed, cheap broadband, Islington Broadband is a partnership between Homes and Neighbourhoods and full-fibre broadband providers to offer faster, more reliable internet services to our 36,000 council homes as well as non-residential housing assets such as community centres and concierge offices.

## Background

### Islington's approach

Understanding the priority for council residents to access faster, more reliable, and affordable internet connectivity in their homes, in July 2021 CMB agreed that Homes and Neighbourhoods should enable delivery of these services through a borough-wide master wayleave agreement with telecommunication providers. The agreement to be developed in a way that maximises the number of properties able to access high speed connections, not just those deemed most profitable by providers, protects council buildings and estates more widely from damage or disruption and realises the maximum social benefit and provides as much choice to our residents as possible.

Since CMB, the Islington Broadband project team has been working to mobilise the programme with oversight from a Steering Group chaired by Ian Swift, Director of Housing Needs and Strategy and comprising colleagues from across Homes and Neighbourhoods, Digital Services, Legal Services and Community Wealth Building.

Our approach is informed by building relationships with other London Boroughs who are at different stages in their rollout programmes as well as through the Central London Forward Digital Connectivity Group which shares intelligence with those teams tasked with improving digital connectivity in their boroughs as well as working with the market to address the shared challenges.

## Current status

Market engagement with the telecommunication providers was carried out in early 2022 by way of an Expression of Interest exercise. We set out the requirements for the council as a condition of working on our estates and installing equipment in our buildings:

- Robust technical, health and safety and design requirements
- connecting 90% of estate properties across the Borough
- delivery of community benefits.

Three companies came forward as a result of the EOI and, following negotiations, as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022, our master wayleave has been signed with two well-known and experienced companies – Community Fibre and Hyperoptic. Negotiations continue with G-Network whilst starting mobilisation plans and engagement with BT Openreach commenced in September. We also anticipate that further providers may come forward in the future.

Mobilisation meetings with three providers have been continuing throughout the summer months to gear up for works starting as soon as possible. Jointly led by the Broadband Delivery Manager from Property Services and the HRA Business Plan Manager, the meetings have included colleagues from Corporate Communications to align the resident communication processes and materials and from New Build for information and inclusion in the programme. As of October 2022, survey pilots have been completed and the first installations will be shortly commencing with live services available to residents by the end of the year on the pilot sites. The first phase of the main programme for two ISPs are due to commence surveying estates in Bunhill and Clerkenwell Wards in October for installation by February 2023 and second phase surveys commencing February 2023 onwards - see Appendix 1. This programme will be kept up to date as the programme progresses and published on the Islington Broadband webpage. The whole programme is likely to take 3 years to complete.

### **Programme delivery**

Although the council is not able to influence the rollout programme due to the constraints of the Electronic Communications Code, we have negotiated the terms of the agreement with the telecommunication providers to ensure that we got the best possible deal for our residents and that the rollout was carried out in a way that ensures the safety of our council homes and allows us to carry out repairs and maintenance to our stock in the future. This is the reason why we are not able to sign wayleaves for individual properties. Importantly, the programme is co-ordinated with technical teams in Property Services to ensure that our health and safety, including fire safety and asbestos management requirements are met.

It is clear how important the council's role to tightly project manage this programme to make sure that the installations meet our requirements in our wayleave agreement and technical schedules.

In addition to the residential portfolio, we have identified HRA commercial assets to be included in the programme. The wayleave agreement also covers all street properties. We will be providing details of the rollout programmes and publishing them on our webpage [www.islington.gov.uk/broadband](http://www.islington.gov.uk/broadband) once they have been received from the providers.

### **Community benefits**

Now that the mobilisation programmes are underway, working with housing, VCS and iWork colleagues, we are starting to develop and take forward the community value offers which include:

- Apprenticeships
- Supporting council's 100 Hours World of Work
- Work with Employment and Skills team to identify residents suitable for employment

- Free gigabit connections, some in perpetuity, for community centres and other housing assets such as temporary accommodation or as identified by the Steering Group
- £20K contribution to digital inclusion /skills training
- Discounted services for digitally excluded residents.

The Steering Group will monitor how these benefits are realised over the course of the programme with the expectation that the providers will report progress.

## Glossary

Electronic Communications Code - the framework that governs the nationwide rollout of broadband provision. The Code limits the influence that the council can exert over telecommunications providers as it specifically prevents any landowner from restricting access to land or property to install electronic communications equipment, where a Code registered provider can demonstrate that it is expanding choice or improving connectivity for residents or businesses.

Full-fibre broadband: the fastest and most reliable type of broadband. It uses fibre optic cables that run directly into homes or buildings, rather than the old-style copper wiring used in standard internet services. It allows households to use multiple internet services and different devices at the same time.

Wayleave: a contractual agreement between a landowner or landlord and a telecoms provider. In this instance, our wayleave agreement enables the provider to have access rights to land/and or property to install, maintain or repair telecoms apparatus.

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<b>Phase 1: October-February 2023</b>		<b>Phase 2: February 2023 onwards</b>	
KESTREL HOUSE	EC1V 8EL	HALTON MANSIONS ESTATE	N1 2AA
PEREGRINE HOUSE	EC1V 7PR	DEVONSHIRE HOUSE	N1 2BE
KINGS SQUARE	EC1V 8BA	CROSS STREET	N1 2BH
LAGONIER HOUSE	EC1V 3TJ	BAMPTON HOUSE	N1 2BP
PERCIVAL ST ESTATE	EC1V 0AG	CARLETON HOUSE	N1 2BQ
PLEYDELL ESTATE	EC1V 3SN	ASTEYS ROW	N1 2DA
THE TRIANGLE	EC1V 0AR	CATTON HOUSE	N1 2DJ
WENLAKE ESTATE	EC1V 3PX	RICHMOND GROVE	N1 2DL
CHADWORTH HOUSE	EC1V 3RQ	WAKELIN HOUSE ESTATE	N1 2EF
CLUSE COURT	EC1V 3RB	SEBBON STREET	N1 2EH
GAMBIER ESTATE	EC1V 8EH	HALTON ROAD	N1 2EN
JESSOP COURT	N1 8LG	HUME COURT	N1 2EQ
ST LUKES ESTATE	EC1V 3SR	273 UPPER STREET	N1 2UA
STAFFORD CRIPPS	EC1V 9ES	HAWES STREET	N1 2UU
SHEPPERTON ROAD	N1 3DH	HIGHBURY MANSIONS ESTATE	N1 2XF
BARING COURT	N1 3DR	TYNDALE MANSIONS ESTATE	N1 2XG
ARBON COURT	N1 7AP	BARRATT HOUSE ESTATE	N1 2AH
FARRIERS HOUSE	EC1Y 8TD	SPRIGGS HOUSE ESTATE	N1 2AJ
COLTASH COURT	EC1V 8TD	PLEASANT PLACE ESTATE	
REDBRICK ESTATE	EC1V 3QL		
BOREAS WALK	N1 8DS		
FALCON COURT	N1 8EY		
BANNER ESTATE	EC1Y 8NQ		
LANGDON COURT	EC1V 1LH		
COLINSDALE	N1 8DZ		
CUMMING ESTATE	N1 8QA		



## **HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

### **2 FEBRUARY 2023**

1. Damp and Mould – an update
2. Voids and Performance
3. Quarterly Review of Housing Performance (Q2 2022/23)
4. Housing Allocations scheme consultation discussion
5. Tenant Satisfaction Measures
6. Islington Broadband
7. Work Programme 2022/23

### **16 MARCH 2023**

- 1) Major Scrutiny Review: Strategic Review of Overcrowding in Islington- Planning department
- 2) Overcrowding Strategic Review to review the consultation questionnaire/document
- 3) Quarterly Review of Housing Performance (Q2 2022/23)
- 4) Work Programme 2022/23

### **8 MAY 2023**

- 1) Major Scrutiny Review: Strategic Review of Overcrowding in Islington -Draft Recommendations and Report
- 2) Preparing for the end of PF12 – 12 month report back
- 3) Communal Heating Mini-Review – 12 month report back
- 4) Quarterly Review of Housing Performance (Q3 2022/23)
- 5) Work Programme 2022/23

### **6 JUNE 2023**

- 1) Major Scrutiny Review: Strategic Review of Overcrowding in Islington - Final Report
- 2) Membership, Terms of Reference and Dates of Meetings
- 3) Draft Work Programme 2023/24 and Potential Scrutiny Topics
- 4) Work Programme 2023/24

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