

Blaenau Gwent Homes Allocation Policy

Summary of Changes

| Theme | Current Policy | Proposed Policy | Reasons for Change |
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| <p>Armed Forces</p> | <p>Armed forces applicants leaving or bereaved spouses or partners Applicants who require accommodation as a result of leaving the Armed Forces and the loss of military accommodation and Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces.</p> | <p>To redress the disadvantage people who have served in the British Armed Forces often face when accessing social housing, the effective date of registration may be reset set to the date they joined the British Armed Forces in the following instances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where an existing member of the British Armed Forces is likely to be homeless upon discharge; Applicants who require accommodation as a result of leaving the Armed Forces and the loss of military accommodation and Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces | <p>Request from Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer who is funded by Welsh Government to amend the housing policy to ensure that the armed forces community are treated fairly and equally throughout Gwent. Torfaen and Caerphilly have recently adapted this approach.</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where a British Armed Forces veteran applies for rehousing within 3 months of discharge and may be homeless or threatened with homeless within 56 days of submitting their application; or • in extenuating circumstances, and at the discretion of the Council, where a British Armed Forces veteran applies for rehousing beyond 3 months and up to 2 years from their date of discharge and are able to demonstrate that during this time they have been unable to establish stable accommodation. | |
| Short-listing | When an adapted property becomes available for allocation the relevant housing officer from the Housing Association will identify applicants requiring an adapted property, which are at the top of the relevant band. The housing officer will follow the process used for selecting an applicant for a general needs property i.e. identifying | The OTT will also recommend the type of housing that the homeseeker needs to resolve the urgent circumstances. All disabled applicants and adapted properties are assessed via a criteria which allows applicant(s) to be matched to the most suitable type of property | To make the best use of the adapted housing stock and adaptations that have already been installed in properties. |

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| | an applicant from Emergency Band first and if there is no suitable applicant in this band, moving to Gold Band and so on (dependant on the current quota system in place). | (A,B,C,D,E,F,U). When an adapted property becomes available to let, it is allocated to the person who needs that Level of property and who is in the highest band. | |
| Bungalows | Current Scheme states that bungalows will be offered to people requiring adapted housing in the first instance | Bungalows will be allocated according to the Level they have been assessed as (A,B,C,D,E,F) and will be allocated based on this and as per either adapted or general needs short-listing. | To make the best use of the adapted housing stock and adaptations that have already been installed in properties. |
| Extra Care | Not currently in Allocations Policy | To be eligible for Extra Care applicants must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aged 55 or over with any partner aged 50 or over, depending on the accommodation and Housing Association. Age is the initial qualifying criteria, however, in exceptional circumstances flexibility will be considered | The allocations were previously undertaken by the Extra Care allocations panel. However, to ensure that allocations are made in line with housing need/priority it has been decided that to ensure transparency these lettings will be undertaken in line with the Policy and processes of the Common Housing Register. |

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| | | <p>for designated units subject to the Registered Social Landlords individual policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eligible for housing as detailed in the Scheme and appear in an appropriate band as set out in the Scheme. • Complete a self-assessment application form which will enable a Community Care Assessment to be undertaken (which will identify both support and care needs). <p>A list of these schemes can be seen in Appendix 9.</p> <p>Extra Care Refusals</p> <p>If an offer of accommodation is refused the vacancy will be offered to the next eligible Homeseeker(s) on the reserve list agreed by the Extra Care Allocations Panel.</p> | |
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| | | <p>The Allocations Panel will undertake the following tasks</p> <p>New and existing cases will be updated and brought to the Extra Care Panel meetings. The Homeseekers information will be assessed and updated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Extra Care Panel will then consider the applications and identify individuals and their appropriateness for Extra Care.</p> <p>When the Homeseeker's housing and care needs cannot be met in an Extra Care environment, the Homeseeker will normally receive written notification from the Extra Care Panel outlining the reasons for the decision with suggestions for alternative options. Advice in the letter will be given on how to re-apply if circumstances alter.</p> <p>The Extra Care Panel can then discuss the application from all</p> | |
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| | | <p>information that is available (for example, care needs assessment, application form, Occupational Therapists Reports, etc.) from this information the Extra Care Panel should be in a position to make an offer to the Homeseeker if a vacant flat is available.</p> <p>If a Homeseeker requires High level support in order to maintain a tenancy then an allocation of a place in Extra Care can only be offered if there is a vacancy with a support provider. If support is not available and the Homeseeker would be unable to maintain their tenancy without support then the Homeseeker will not be offered a tenancy however they will remain on an additional preference band on the Housing list.</p> | |
| <p>Direct Matching</p> | <p>In addition there may be other circumstances where there are urgent operational or financial</p> | <p>Direct Match / Sensitive Lettings</p> | <p>Allows Housing Associations some flexibility in exceptional</p> |

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| | reasons to make a direct offer of housing outside of the band and date order criteria. | <u>Direct Match Lettings</u> Whilst it is expected that the vast majority of general needs properties will be allocated based on the proposed Policy, there are times when the Housing Association would like to directly match a hard to let property to an applicant (e.g. Low demand area and short list has been exhausted). This will be done in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with the Council. | circumstances to make the best use of their housing stock. |
| MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) | Currently all applicants are assessed via banding for their needs. Applicant(s) are matched to the most suitable type of property subject to coming top of the band to which the property has been allocated and Probation checks have been carried out. | A high risk applicant assessment form will need to be completed and attached to the housing application by the Registered Social Landlords on all match/offer rejections for bypass reasons. | To implement reasons for any exclusion and give advice on all housing options. |
| Domestic Abuse | <i>1) Need to move on welfare grounds - Domestic abuse, extreme violence or extreme harassment.</i> | | This wording is clearer for applicants to understand and more appropriately reflects reduced preference. |

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| | <p>Applicants who need to move immediately due to domestic abuse, extreme violence or extreme harassment will be awarded additional preference. This includes hate crime, disability, racial, homophobic or transgender harassment and will be awarded for exceptional circumstances where there is a high risk to the tenant or their family's safety if they remain in the property/area and they therefore require an immediate move.</p> <p>The assessment will be made by a senior officer within the Council and will be based on evidence provided by the customer and other appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies. This would include, the Police, Social Services, referrals by MARAC, Domestic Violence organisations and Lesbian and Gay support groups.</p> | <p>1) Need to move on welfare grounds - Domestic abuse, extreme violence or extreme harassment.</p> <p>Applicants who need to move immediately due to domestic abuse, extreme violence or extreme harassment will be awarded additional preference. This includes hate crime, disability, racial, homophobic or transgender harassment and will be awarded for exceptional circumstances where there is a high risk to the tenant or their family's safety if they remain in the property/area and they therefore require an immediate move.</p> <p>The assessment will be made by a senior officer within the Council and will be based on evidence provided by the customer and other appropriate statutory and</p> | |
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| | <p>For tenants of a Council or another Registered Social Housing Provider in another local authority area that apply to join the Blaenau Gwent Register the imminent risk of harm will be assessed taking into account the responsibility on that landlord to resolve the problem or transfer the tenant immediately. Therefore only in an absolutely exceptional case will reasonable preference be awarded.</p> <p>Where the Homeseeker's social circumstances affect their housing conditions (examples being serious neighbour nuisance, threat of violence from inside or outside of the home) the case will be passed to the Local Housing Panel. The Panel consists of a nominated representative from all partners with the delegated power to make a decision</p> <p>The Local Housing Panel will consider each case with any supporting information provided by the relevant</p> | <p>voluntary agencies. This would include, the Police, Social Services, referrals by MARAC, Domestic Violence organisations and Lesbian and Gay support groups.</p> <p>For tenants of a Council or another Registered Social Housing Provider in another local authority area that apply to join the Blaenau Gwent Register the imminent risk of harm will be assessed taking into account the responsibility on that landlord to resolve the problem or transfer the tenant immediately. Therefore only in an absolutely exceptional case will reasonable preference be awarded.</p> <p>Where the Homeseeker's social circumstances affect their housing conditions (examples being serious neighbour nuisance, threat of violence from inside or</p> | |
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| | <p>agencies to ensure that the threat of domestic abuse, violence or harassment would be significantly reduced via rehousing. The Panel will decide whether priority should be awarded based upon the severity of the case and the urgency of the need for rehousing.</p> <p>The Panel will also recommend where the Homeseeker should be rehoused in order to resolve the urgent circumstances.</p> | <p>outside of the home) the case will be passed to the Local Housing Panel. The Panel consists of a nominated representative from all partners with the delegated power to make a decision</p> <p>The Local Housing Panel will consider each case with any supporting information provided by the relevant agencies to ensure that the threat of domestic abuse, violence or harassment would be significantly reduced via rehousing. The Panel will decide whether priority should be awarded based upon the severity of the case and the urgency of the need for rehousing.</p> <p>The Panel will also recommend where the Homeseeker should be rehoused in order to resolve the urgent circumstances.</p> | |
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| | | <p>The Registered Social Landlords reserve the right to refuse to make an offer of accommodation. Such cases are expected to be rare, and as such senior officers from the relevant partners are likely to be involved in such decisions. Such cases will be referred to the Local Housing Panel for in-depth discussion with the aim of reaching a consensus view.</p> | |
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