

London Borough of Bromley
Housing Allocation Scheme 2012

Summary



THE LONDON BOROUGH
www.bromley.gov.uk

This leaflet is a summary of Bromley Council's Housing Allocation Scheme. If you want further information or wish to see the Scheme in full you can visit the Council's website www.bromley.gov.uk or contact the Housing Solutions Team by email at bromleyhomeseekers@bromley.gov.uk or by telephone on 0208 313 4098.

Introduction

We use the Housing Allocation Scheme to ensure homes are offered fairly to those we and the law have assessed as being in the greatest need. Anyone who is not eligible or does not meet the criteria set out in this Scheme will not be included on the Housing Register but will still receive advice and/or assistance to resolve their housing need.

Social Housing is in incredibly short supply. Our housing service is paid for by public funds and we work hard to protect these funds from fraud and corruption. In accordance with S.171 of the Housing Act 1996 anyone found guilty of attempting to obtain accommodation by deliberately giving false information or withholding information pertinent to their application is liable to be prosecuted and fined up to £5000. The Council will use all available means to prosecute anyone suspected of such an offence.

Who can be included on the Housing Register?

To be included on the Housing Register you:

- **Should** be aged 18 or over.
- **Should** currently live in the borough **and** have done so for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years.
- **Should** have a priority in accordance with the Local and Reasonable Preference Categories.
- **Should not** own a property.
- **Should not** have an annual income of £60,000 or more before tax (for the whole household).
- **Should not** have savings or capital of £30,000 or more (for the whole household).

Who is not eligible to be included on the Housing Register?

- Anyone guilty of behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be the tenants of a Council or Housing Association at the time of their application.
- Anyone who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 (unless the Secretary of State has stated that they should be eligible for housing).

What are the different levels of priority?

If you are included on the housing register you will be placed in one of four Bands. Your position within a Band is based on waiting time. This begins from the date that you were awarded that Band.

We believe that a banding system is the simplest and most transparent way of managing the Housing Register. You will be placed in one of the following Bands.

Band 1 = Those with a high housing need

Band 2 = Those with a medium housing need

Band 3 = Those with a low housing need

Band 4 = Those with a reduced priority e.g. those with rent arrears

Emergency Band = This is a restricted Band for those with a critical/immediate need to move.

Who is priority awarded to?

As the availability of social housing is incredibly limited, only those assessed as having a priority in accordance with the Local and Reasonable Preference categories will be included on the Housing Register.

This is so we only include people on the Housing Register who we believe stand a reasonable chance of securing a move into social housing. We have done this to let people know what re-housing options are available and to manage the expectations of those seeking accommodation.

Each Local and Reasonable Preference Category is outlined in the full Allocation Scheme, but a summary of the identified needs and the priority they attract is listed in the table below:

Housing Need	Band Awarded	Additional Information
Management Priority Cases	Emergency	These are agreed at the discretion of the Housing Needs Team and include, for example, public protection cases or instances where there is an immediate risk to the life or safety of an applicant or a member of their household.
People occupying extreme insanitary or unsatisfactory housing conditions.	Emergency	This assessment will be carried out by the Council's Residential Services Team who will work with landlords and tenants to resolve the problems identified. Only in exceptional cases, where a prohibition notice is required, will an applicant be placed in the Emergency Band.

<p>Under Occupiers who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving up 2 or more bedrooms • Moving from general needs into sheltered accommodation • Freeing up 4 bedroom accommodation or larger • Moving from fully adapted housing into general needs or sheltered accommodation. 	Emergency	Only applies to Housing Association tenants where a reciprocal agreement has been entered into.
Under Occupiers who are in 2 or 3 bedroom accommodation and wish to downsize by 1 bedroom.	1	Only applies to Housing Association tenants where a reciprocal agreement has been entered into.
People occupying accommodation that is overcrowded by two or more bedrooms	1	Overcrowding is assessed in accordance with the bedroom standard.
People with a severe medical need including those who require adapted accommodation.	1	Medical priority is not awarded solely on the existence of a health problem. It is only awarded where the health of an applicant or a member of their household is made significantly worse or prevented from improving by their accommodation to such a degree that the circumstances have, or are likely to become, life threatening and would be demonstrably improved by a move to alternative accommodation.
London Borough of Bromley Care Leavers	1	Notification for this priority will be provided by the Council's Leaving Care Team.
Move on from Supported Housing	1	Notification for this priority will be provided by the Council's Support and Resettlement Team.
Those with a learning disability who are ready for independent living	1	Notification for this priority will be provided by the Council's Commissioning and Partnerships service.
Prevention of homelessness where the household would be considered unintentionally homeless and in priority need	1	This assessment will be conducted by the Council's Housing Options and Assessments Team.

Tenants of partner Housing Associations subject to decant proceedings within 12 months	1	This priority will be awarded at the request of the Housing Association.
Tenants of partner Housing Associations subject to decant proceedings within 24 months	2	This priority will be awarded at the request of the Housing Association.
People who are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	2	This assessment will be conducted by the Council's Housing Options and Assessments Team.
Those who need to move closer to a school that is named as essential in a statement of special educational needs	2	Consideration will be given to the needs of the child, their age and the current circumstances etc.
Those who require support from family or a specialist service in order to continue to live independently	2	Consideration will be given to the level of support currently provided and required in the future and the capacity to provide that support etc.
People who are intentionally homeless or homeless but not in priority need	3	This assessment will be conducted by the Council's Housing Options and Assessments Team.
People occupying accommodation that is overcrowded by one bedroom	3	Overcrowding is assessed in accordance with the bedroom standard.
Those who wish to move from general needs accommodation into sheltered / older person's accommodation.	3	All household members must be aged 55 or over.
Any of the above who are either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not ready for move on • In rent arrears • Have engaged in, or are engaging in, antisocial behaviour 	4	This is a reduced priority Band and applicants within this Band are unlikely to make a successful bid via Bromley Homeseekers.

What if you have more than one housing need?

If you have more than one priority in the Reasonable and Local Preference categories you will not be awarded a cumulative priority. Your application will be placed into the highest band as assessed in the Allocation Scheme, for example:

- Someone with a Band 2 and Band 3 priority would be placed into Band 2
- Someone with multiple Band 2 priorities would remain in Band 2

How do we assess the size of property you require?

We work out how many bedrooms your household needs in accordance with the Bedroom Standard assessment.

If you have more bedrooms available than your household needs, you are under-occupying the property.

If you have fewer bedrooms available than your household needs, you are overcrowded.

We allow one bedroom for each of the following:

- a person living together with another as husband and wife or partner (whether that other person is of the same or opposite gender)
- a person aged 21 years or more
- two persons of the same gender aged 10 years to 20 years
- two persons (whether of the same gender or not) aged less than 10 years
- two persons of the same gender, where one person is aged between 10 years and 20 years and the other is aged less than 10 years, except in instances where the relationship is that of parent and child
- any person aged under 21 years in any case where he or she cannot be paired with another

Each person is only counted once in the first group they would come into.

What happens once you are on the Housing Register?

Advertising Properties:

Properties are advertised weekly on the Bromley Homeseekers website www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk

Each bidding cycle begins at 6pm on a Wednesday and closes the following Monday at 4pm.

Only those who are included on the Housing Register will be able to express an interest by "bidding" on properties that are advertised.

You can place up to 2 bids each week on properties that you meet the criteria for.

During the bidding cycle you can withdraw or swap the bids you have made.

Once the bidding cycle closes you cannot withdraw, change or add to the bids you have made.

Properties may be advertised with “preference to” criteria specified. In these instances, bids from applicants who do not meet the preference criteria may be bypassed. For example, if an adapted property is advertised with preference to those who require that level of adaption, bids from able bodied applicants may be bypassed.

Bidding:

If you place a successful bid you will be contacted by either the Council or the Housing Association which manages the property. You will be required to provide information confirming your circumstances before you are formally offered a property. If you fail to provide the required information you will not be offered the property and your circumstances will be reviewed.

If your bid is not successful you will not be contacted.

If your bid is bypassed you will be able to view the reason for this by logging into your Homeseekers account.

Accepting a Property:

If you accept a property your details will be removed from the Housing Register and you will not be able to make any further bids.

Turning Down a Property:

You can turn down **up to 2 properties** but will then be expected to accept the third property that is offered to you.

If you turn down 3 properties you will have your application reviewed and the following may apply:

- Your priority on the Housing Register may be reduced or withdrawn.
- Your application on the Housing Register may be cancelled.
- You may be made a direct offer in discharge of our duty to you.

Publishing Results

Details regarding successful bidders will be advertised on the “**this week’s lettings and results**” section of the Bromley Homeseekers website. The published information will show the band, and the date that it was awarded, of the successful bidder.

What happens if your circumstances change?

It is your responsibility to advise us of any changes in your circumstances. This includes a change of address or if someone leaves or joins your family.

Failure to notify us of a change in your circumstances might mean that you miss out on an offer of accommodation or could result in the cancellation of your Housing Register application. If you intentionally withhold information in order to attempt to secure accommodation you may be liable to be prosecuted and fined up to £5000.

Once you notify us of a change in your circumstances you may be asked to complete a new application.

If the change in your circumstances means that you no longer have a priority in accordance with the Local or Reasonable Preference categories your application will be cancelled.

If the change in your circumstances causes either:

- A change in your Banding priority ; or
- A change in the number of bedrooms you require (even if your Band remains the same)

Your waiting time will begin again.

Reviewing your application

We review the details of households included on the Housing Register. We do this to ensure that you are bidding for properties and are not turning down accommodation as well as to ensure that the information that we hold is up to date and accurate.

From time to time we may contact you. For example we may:

- Request additional information.
- Enquire whether you want to remain on the Housing Register.
- Give you a deadline to place a successful bid and accept an offer of accommodation.

You must ensure that you respond to us within any deadlines that we give. If you do not respond to us your priority might be reduced or cancelled or we might make you a final offer of accommodation in discharge of our duty to you (where applicable).

What happens if you don't agree with a decision we have made?

You are able to request a review of the following:

- The assessment of your application.
- The priority you have been awarded.
- The cancellation of your application.
- The decision to reduce your priority.
- The suitability of any property offered to you.

Please ensure that you title your correspondence **Review Request**.

How to contact us:

By email: bromleyhomeseekers@bromley.gov.uk

Through the Bromley Homeseekers website www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk
by clicking the "Contact Us" button

By post to:
The Housing Solutions Team
Bromley Civic Centre
Stockwell Close
Bromley
BR1 3UH