

Proposed Amendments to the Draft Housing Allocations Policy

Proposed Amendment	Reason Amendment Sought
<p>Section 7.2</p> <p>Amend the local connection test as follows “. . . they have a parent or sibling or adult child who has lived in West Berkshire for five consecutive years . . . “</p>	<p>Test was intended to reflect the local connection criteria applicable to homelessness. Unfortunately an error was made in the original draft.</p>
<p>Section 7.2</p> <p>Amend the financial test to read “. . . an income of £60,000 or less and/or capital of £16,000 or less”.</p>	<p>To clarify that the financial test and ensure it is properly understood.</p>
<p>Section 7.5.1.</p> <p>Include the following wording “The Council may seek a Police Disclosure Request as part of the assessment to determine whether an applicant or a member of their household is unsuitable to be a tenant, or as part of the assessment to determine whether the deferment should be lifted”.</p>	<p>To ensure that applicants understand that the Housing Service may seek Police Disclosure Requests when considering behaviour serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant.</p>
<p>Section 7.5.6</p> <p>Amend the wording as follows: “Violence and abuse towards staff (including staff of a partner RP) is not acceptable . . . abuses or harasses a member of staff (including staff of a partner RP). . . . RPs will be expected to provide evidence to the Housing Service of the violence, abuse or harassment to support any request to apply this sanction”.</p>	<p>To ensure that the sanction for violence and abuse extends to partner RPs who are involved in the Allocations Process.</p>
<p>Section 7.6</p> <p>Insert a section headed “<i>Looked after children</i>: for the purposes of local</p>	<p>To ensure that looked after children who are placed outside of the district are not disadvantaged by the local connection criteria.</p>

<p>connection, a looked after child for whom West Berkshire Council has responsibility and who has resided in a placement outside of West Berkshire, will be deemed to have lived within West Berkshire for the length of the placement”</p>	
<p>Insert Section 13.9</p> <p><u>“Preference to Over/Under-occupying Social Tenants</u></p> <p>In order to make best use of stock and to ensure that the housing needs of applicants are met appropriately, a property that becomes available for let may be advertised as giving preference to social tenants in West Berkshire who are either over- or under-occupying their accommodation. It is expected that the home they would free up should they move would be released back into CBL.”</p>	<p>To assist the Housing Service in meeting the impacts of welfare reform. To enable the Housing Service to create chains of lettings and to ensure that best use is made of existing stock.</p>
<p>Section 14.15</p> <p>Include the discretion for a Housing Manager, on a case-by-case basis dependent upon relevant evidence, to award 5 points for a child who is over the age of 10 and who is disabled and who has no access to a garden.</p>	<p>To reflect the fact that some disabled children will require an enclosed safe play area, for example, if they are at risk of running away, have a lack of stranger danger awareness or a lack of road safety awareness.</p>
<p>Section 14.15</p> <p>Include the discretion for a Housing Manager, on a case-by-case basis dependent upon relevant evidence, to award 5 points for a child who is over the age of 5 and who is disabled and who lives in accommodation above or below ground floor.</p>	<p>To reflect the fact that non-ambulant (wheelchair users) or mobility impaired children cannot manage steps or stairs. This is only applicable where the main entrance to the accommodation is above or below ground floor.</p>
<p>Section 16.</p> <p>Insert Section 16.4 as follows:</p>	<p>To address changes in Housing Benefit assessments relating to disabled children.</p>

<p>“Managers within the Housing Service have discretion to award an additional bedroom in exceptional circumstances where there is a severely disabled child who cannot share with siblings, subject to consideration of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical evidence • Whether the child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (or in future Personal Independence Payment) • The nature and severity of the disability • The nature and frequency of care required during the night • The extent and regularity of the disturbance to the sleep of the child who would normally be expected to share the bedroom. <p>A decision to award an additional bedroom for the purposes of the CHR is not an indication that Housing Benefit will be paid. Applicants will therefore need to ensure that they are able to meet any potential rental shortfall arising through Social Sector Size Criteria before accepting an offer of accommodation. .”</p>	
<p>Section 29.1</p> <p>Amend as follows “The relevant RP will contact up to three of the top applicants .”</p>	<p>Some RPs do group viewings whilst others only contact the top applicant, This amendment allows flexibility dependent upon the RPs processes.</p>
<p>Section 24.3</p> <p>Add the following as bullet points explaining reasons why an application can be suspended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information has been requested from the applicant 	<p>For completeness</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information has been requested from a third party • Pending a request for a review decision • Pending CHR Team assessment for deferral 	
<p>Housing Need Assessment</p> <p>Remove the housing need points for “Time in Housing Need” from the matrix</p>	<p>The points assessment should be undertaken purely on housing need. Whilst time is a factor, it is accommodated through the application of ‘registration dates’ which are used to prioritise between applications with the same number of housing need points.</p>
<p>Section 7.5.7</p> <p>Insert the word “knowingly” to read “If an applicant knowingly provides false or misleading information . . . “</p>	<p>To clarify the sanction so it is properly understood.</p>