

Draft Housing Allocations Policy: verbatim responses to consultation

ELIGIBILITY TO JOIN THE HOUSING REGISTER

We are proposing to maintain an open housing register but to have a 'qualifying' and 'non-qualifying' list. This means those who 'qualify' will be considered for an allocation of housing before those who are classed as 'non-qualifying'.

Qualifying households will:

- have been resident in West Berkshire for 6 months out of the last 12 months OR they have been resident in West Berkshire for 3 years out of the last five OR they have a parent or sibling who has lived in West Berkshire for 6 months out of the last 12 months OR they have a parent or sibling who has lived in West Berkshire for 3 years out of the last 5 year OR they have been employed in meaningful paid employment within the district, for 16 hours or more a week, for at least the last 6 months

AND

- have insufficient resources to secure accommodation, whether rented, part-owned or owned in the private sector. This will normally mean that the household has an income of £60,000 or less and capital of £16,000 or less. Owner-occupiers will be considered to have sufficient resources to secure accommodation unless they are able to provide appropriate evidence that this is not the case

AND

- are assessed as having a housing need that places them within one of the reasonable preference categories

We are therefore proposing to give priority for social housing to households who have a local connection to West Berkshire, who do not have the financial capability to secure their own housing and who are in the greatest housing need.

Do you agree with this proposal?

- Won't make any difference to those who work and can pay for it, but a nice thought
- There does not appear to be anything in your proposed policy to consider those persons who have developed support

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needs and may need to move to be nearer an adult child for example, who could help care for them.

- That's help poor people
- I was born in Reading in 1973, I went to ***** Primary , and ***** Comprehensive, I moved to ***** in Sept 2001. I was on the committee of Kennet Valley ***** twice, I represented Reading Athletic Club from **** to ****, I worked in Reading at various shops and also Reading Sporting Club , I feel I am being ignored and insulted by this so called local thing .
- Doesn't take into account parents of children living in West Berks who need through age or ill health need to be closer to their family
- We are privately renting at the moment, unable to afford our own house but the rent is getting higher and we do not know if we can afford it long term.
- This is certainly the correct approach
- I believe that single people from afar,who have brothers or sisters long term resident in West Berkshire, who need their family support for health or peace of mind should be considered equally to having a parent resident in the area.
- As i have been on the housing list for about 9 yrs and i live in private rented accomadation (of which we really cannot afford) i completley agree
- they want to work in London.they can bloody live there too
- I agree with the proposal,as I have lived in West Berkshire for 12 years and now have my own business in Newbury,I employ 1 person,in the future I hope to employ more ,however it is difficult to find affordable and suitable accommodation when,others jump the housing queue because they have just entered the country and get everything handed to them on a plate,the people of West Berkshire have to be at the back of the queue.
- It is not very clear this period of been in or out
- This idea would help many families includining my own. I am a single parent with three children living in an over crowded property;i share my bed with my 5 year old son as we do not have the space for his own bed whilst my 2 daughters share the 2nd bedroom.
- Some people need to move for work purposes and would therefore not necessarily connected to west berks.
- I am a single parent - owner occupied but in a tiny one bedroom home with no garden and no means to move. I have tried to help myself by applying for shared ownership and to rent mine and use it towards the rent of a bigger place etc and I cannot do this so I have no means of helping myself
- Other councils are adopting or have adopted this policy,so why be different,jump on the bandwagon and exclude peoples only possible hope of getting housing,whether they were born in the county,schooled there,worked and married,buried their father there,but had to move away and are now desperate to return to their roots.
- ive been on the list for ages , this seems a fairer way

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- This is a much better way to allocate housing as I have lived in West Berks all my life.
- When I was stuck in ***** with epilepsy and a child all on my own and my family were up here I was given 70 points no1 helped me come home I now live up here in a lovely house but costs a lot of money a month just in rent because once again you didn't help me people like me need help more than foreigners who have too many kids or ave lived here only a few weeks I moved to ***** for 4 years before then I was west berks I was born and bread here and I still wasn't helped
- As long as those in genuine need are housed fairly, those that can afford to private rent should.
- Housing is fundamental to a persons life and the private sector is not a secure home and if you don't have the resources to find deposits and constant moving costs plus the upheaval to your life of moving all the time then it can have a detrimental affect on a persons life.
- Because there are people who want to start living there from different areas, and this is like there first time.they will not stand a chance of being allocated if they have to live in there first.
- I do agree as there are so many people in need of housing like myself! I live in a damp 2 bedroom flat which is privately rented & i do get help towards my rent, but i do also pay half. If this new scheme means that we can finally escape the damp flat & be housed, which I do contribute towards, I would be happy to back the plan all the way. I feel that the people who don't work & take drugs & have far to many children get all the benefits when it comes to being homed while the rest of us working single mums literally struggle by making ends meat & living in not very good conditions. But we go out to work to show our children the correct way in society! I would however be much better off not working! But to me that's not the right way to show an example to my children. Getting a house would be the icing on the cake! I do however think that the yearly salary should be brought up to £18,000 & not £16,000!!!
- how can you get a property with only £16k in the bank
- I have been on reading housing list for 10 years and west berks for 2 years and never been offered a house I'm private renting and over crowed I think new rules will help this problem
- I have been on the housing register for 2 years and all I can see that I am 'eligible' for is actually either quite expensive or retirement properties. I am now stuck paying about 70% of my income on accommodation. I do however feel that you have a lot of people moving here for work as a lot of large companies are based in the area. You will be discriminating against these people who are also contributing to the local economy. I don't know how most people can afford the rents in this area... please just have a look at the paper or search on Zoopla, it is insane.
- Private rental can be very unstable and require moving relatively frequently, for example in 12 years someone I know has moved 5 times due to being in private rented accommodation and has to rebuild their life accordingly. This has atleast two knock on effects which are increased stress thus impacting on health and insecurity of not knowing if tennabcy ageeements will be renewed as each landlord tends to opt for shorthold tensncy agreements of 6 to 12 months. Additionally some

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private landlords don't wish to be renting out their property yet do so to make ends meet which can and has led to very tense untenable situations. Personally I would love to have enough points to be able to settle, having lived in West Berkshire for decades.

- yes, i agree with this proposal but why are immigrants coming to this country and creating the housing problem. you yourselves know that there are too many people applying for too few homes. most of them come knowing they have a job but when they lose their jobs they are stuck in this country even though they are allowed to be resident here. I agree that some people can be guilty of bad behaviour in their present accommodation but that not necessarily mean that it will follow in their next accommodation.
- My daughter and son in law have been living with us for the past 3 years and they tick all of the requirements (including a disability) that your housing policy proposes
- Who clarifies the previous 'Unacceptable behaviour' and how is that managed, by whom and at what level - is there an appeals process - is it independent? Does it allow for people making changes in their lives post addiction / other issues? This may be a barrier to their continued progress and return to society
- I realise that I will be classified as "non-qualifying" but I have been registered with W. Berks for 7 years in August when I will have 75 points. I taught in ***** for 10 years+ and my father is buried in ***** church-yard
- The question does not arise. The conditions are the essence of social housing. Those who can afford to buy or rent privately, do not, in most cases, apply for social housing
- Why can you make the bidding system more disability friendly with a form that we can understand
- Because those who have houses aren't in desperate need and it's a good idea to house someone who has found themselves in need
- Because local people first

SUFFICIENT RESOURCES

Currently we do not look at applicant's assets or savings when deciding if they can join the housing register. We propose that those applicants who own a property or have sufficient resources from savings or income to secure and sustain alternative accommodation by way of outright purchase, obtaining a mortgage or renting privately should not 'qualify' on the housing register..

With demand so great we are only in a position to assist those in the most urgent housing need. Those who can afford to secure accommodation from other sources should not be denying accommodation from those who can't.

Do you agree with this proposal?

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- WHY???? If you can pay your rent and actually work for a living, you get nothing. Nice policy!!!!
- There does not appear to be any thing in your proposed policy to take into account those who may be over 45 with sufficient income to sustain a mortgage but unable to obtain the offer of a mortgage due to their age. This is discrimination on grounds of age.
- Some people's capital would very soon be used up in paying for privately rented accomodation in West Berkshire. This would mean families who need to remain in a certain area for mental or physical disability reasons or to care for elderly or disabled relatives or who have a life long connection with a certain area in West Berks would be forced to move away from the area. I agree that those who can afford alternative housing should not be eligible but those who only have a finate source of savings or income should be also be assed on other criteria, eg how long they would be able to remain in the area before all their resources are depleted, mental and disability implications, family care commitments
- because as you say the need is so much greater than the accessible housing available
- I agree with the points regarding savings and income re out right purchasing of a property. But, NOT the piece re the rent. Private renting is extremely high round here, and myself for example, I am desperate to be housed but am currently struggling to maintain private rents while waiting for points. My proposal, is if those with all the other pre requisites are struggling with private renting due to to high rents and low income, Qualify for additional points to increase the chance of getting housed by the council. I am currently in the situation where I am close to havign to be declared bankrupt as I cannot maintain private rents and am desperate to be housed. Due to the delay and lack of allocated points, my whoel credit rating is in jeopardy as well as my whole future finances, purely down to not being able to get allocated suitable accomodation while struggling to keep a roof over my head, in the private sector. I am in this situation through no fault of my own, and have been made redundant twice in the last 3 years.. I am a honest decent West Berks citizen who has worked all my life for the past 23 years, and now at the point I need help, can't qualify enough to get it.. Yet, I see people with no input into our economy, as well as knowing drug addicticts, people who do not care for the council homes they have been allocated, being a social intimidation to their neighbours, getting all the help in the world thrown at them. Therefore, if I was allocated a few more points, this would increase my chance of saving myself. The measure re those in privated rental properties needs carefully consideration. It is not as easy as it first looks. Maybe a good compromise shoudl be those, in private rented where their income is no where near enough to sustain this. ie: those on benefits, or low incomes. To maintain private rentl accomodation, one needs to be bring in net income of at least £30,000. Please consider the impact of my comments drawing the rental piece to your attention. This is crucial for me. I am desperate to be housed...
- I was blackmailed into joining the housing register as i requested help with my rent for a set period (not continual). If it were

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up to me, abortion services would be offered as a realistic course for girls getting themselves pregnant in order to get housing. There are legitimate families struggling out there who actually DESERVE the help, rather than self-centered teenagers looking to get free 'pads'.

- As a single mum of a 15 year old I have for any years struggled to pay private rent, if we had a social housing the pressure to meet the demands of rent & bills would not have been so great. I feel you should help those who have shown that they can keep up with payments more.
- I rent privately but cannot afford this so have to claim housing benefit. People in my situation would not qualify
- Any applicant who can not afford a mortgage or rent privately should be carefully considered for a council accommodation because one may not be able to afford to pay any sort of rent.
- I don't believe that people who own their own homes should be on the housing list.
- I am still residing at my Mother's House and sleeping on a couch in a 2 bed house there is currently 4 people living here. 4 people share 1 small kitchen 1 lounge and 1 bathroom. I work full time as a land scape gardener, and have tried renting privately but I am on a low wage ,was not able to afford it. I am in desperate need of rehousing, I do also have some learning difficulties. I have 60 points.
- This is fine ,however it is under other circumstances that people find themselves only able to afford council accommodation, such as divorce, loss of job or on low income. Just because people find themselves in circumstances mentioned, they should not be discriminated against, it is meant to be equal.
- Yes I'll like to agree but we should set few figures out.
- As long as the amount of said resources is realistically set at a level that an individual can realistically afford to live/buy/rent
- Its no always so black and white and why should people who have in the past worked hard be penalised and be over crowded when someone who has done nothing to help themselves can get better accomodtion to suit their needs
- i know of a property that has recently been allocated, the residents actually live else where at a business they run leaving their son in a 3 bedroom house that could be used for a family in more need
- I agree, I am on a low medically retired pension, have been taken off Inc. Support because I can raise my arms and walk, am on ESA until the powers that be decide I am only good for jobseekers allowance of £52 a week, yet I am still paying my private rent, gas-elec, water and rates, but can get NO help because I `earn` more than £71 per week yet have to forgo luxuries like meat and green veg to pay these bills.
- I live in an old mobil home with no heating, but it is mine but would mean I am not eligable for social housing
- I had to be in private renting to get back to west berkshire as the council wouldn't help me now u want to say because I'm in private I'm now not important
- People who have lived in west berkshire for years who have been struggling to pay private rented accomodation should be

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able to register on the housing register. Especially if they have family in west berkshire.

- That is wrong! Working people with a low income under £18,000 should still qualify.
- Yes this will help find the people most in need
- Private renting can be very insecure and demoralising. One can never be confident that they can stay for a lengthy period and so added constant stress is in the background. Further to this added cost for tenancy agreements and renewal costs. Bullying from some landlords (ones that are in need of the income yet don't really want tenants). Having moved very frequently, due to necessity it is depressing and actually making a home feels pointless as tenancy agreements in private sector tend to be 12 months maximum and hope for renewal. Frequently tenancy agreements are 6 months and some go on a week by week basis.
- Yes, I do agree that the most urgent should get priority but if there was not so much demand even the less urgent people would not have to wait so long.
- If they can afford to provide their own housing they do not need social housing, it should be for people who are unable to do this.
- Exceptions could be made to those fleeing Domestic abuse
- People who live in mobile homes should have enough money to buy a flat etc. I know of a family of mother and son who had [unreadable] accommodation 3 big bedrooms and a [unreadable] big apartment and they have a spare bedroom there, when selling their mobile home they had enough money to buy a small flat etc. I think there are people with low wages who are living in West Berkshire to house them
- For the above reasons
- All applicants who qualify [unreadable] should have a right to apply. The decision is then left to your department after all considerations including financial to advise applicants as to their best options for them.
- I think the proposal is a good idea. It protects those who need social housing and those who can afford housing should go to the estate agents to buy their own homes.
- Some times people can't pay their rent so they find themselves homeless, then they are in need
- At some later date I will need housing. I just have my pensions etc.
- Rents are quite high for those on limited income.

In deciding the level of sufficient resources we will look at applicants' savings and income. It is proposed that those with savings in excess of £16,000 or those with a household income in excess of £60,000 per annum should be classed as 'non-qualifying' households.

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Is the savings level of £16,000:

Too high Too low About right

- Those with savings over £16,000 may be able to rent a property on the private rental market, but you appear to be 'punishing' those persons who have managed to be frugal and saved. Usually but not always these tend to be older persons. Those persons would have great difficulty in obtaining a mortgage once over the age of 40 to 45.
- Privately renting would only allow 16 months of accommodation at roughly £1,000 per calendar month as an approx rent payable in this area
- wouldn't it depend on the size of the household
- Does this apply to pensioners who have accrued a higher level of savings in an attempt to top up their pension with interest? They would still be categorically 'poor' and having been encouraged to save for retirement by the state they should not be penalised.
- Savings?? If people have that kind of money available to them then they shouldn't be on the housing register. A family can survive on half the £60,000 income per year you mention. If you're struggling for accommodation then you shouldn't have savings. A £5000 backup is acceptable for 'emergencies' but people with £16,000+ in the bank shouldn't be eligible for free housing. Nor should people with cars, if you can afford to run a car in this day and age then you can afford rented accommodation.
- should be anything over a few grand!
- As the deposit requirement to gain a mortgage to purchase is high at least 10 to 20 % of a portion of the asking price, I would suggest £25,000, now days it is very difficult to save for a deposit to buy or go into private sector renting, it is very expensive as much as a mortgage monthly payment, I'm sure quite a few people would prefer to buy, it is out of their reach.
- If you have savings of £10,000 or more, then you could easily afford a private property. Whether it mortgage or rent.
- Why penalize and outline the needs of hard working and sensible people? Saving of £16,000 is nothing, really nothing these days. Can not even pay a 5 % deposit let alone solicitor fees and ext... These amount has to go to £ 100,000
- Savings should not be taking in consideration unless considerably high. 16000 can only cover just over a year and half of rent.
- £5000 worth of savings should help to secure a privately rented property whilst still being able to save
- £16,000. I am on £10,475 with no savings, damn right, if they have £16,000 they can get a 5% mortgage.
- I have tried to save throughout my working life and I know times are tough in the present economic climate but so many people are not prepared to forego luxuries and have a spend ethic whether they have the money or not.

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- It is the amount used for JSA(IB) and ESA(IR)
- It seems a very small amount to cover necessary expenses in a very insecure and unstable future.
- 16000 is enough for a deposit on some houses, and if they have saved 16000 they obviously have enough money to private rent
- if you can afford a deposit (usually 1.5 months rent) a months rent and household bills then you should privately rent
- the average wage for one person is 14000!!!!
- Needs to be proportional to number of people in household and medical needs.
- In this economic climate who has that kind of savings unless their doing very well for themselves, people with 10,000 or more must be doing better than people like us who have no money left over to save!
- I feel that this should be higher, perhaps £20,000 as, if a person is keeping funds for a funeral, this alone could be £5,000.
- Difficult to make a blanket statement if the person had worked most of their life and these savings were part of their pension fund would appear harsh to make them spend on housing but do appreciate we have to make sacrifices and its hard to manage grey areas
- The amount of £16,000 is the borderline at which a person is not eligible for social benefits, including housing. Having £16,000 in one's bank account should not prevent them from applying for social housing otherwise the scheme becomes a means tested one. It should be open to all regardless of their financial situation.

In deciding the level of sufficient resources we will look at applicants' savings and income. It is proposed that those with savings in excess of £16,000 or those with a household income in excess of £60,000 per annum should be classed as 'non-qualifying' households.

Is the household income level of £60,000 per annum:

Too high Too low About right

- Depends where you live. Nothing in Newbury with over inflated prices for everything from petrol to housing to food prices
- To sustain a mortgage for a property of £250,000 which would be a two bed poss three bed property the income those persons needs to be around £75,000.
- Again wouldn't it depend on the size of the household
- Inconsistent. Households on this income have an income is higher than the average wage even if there are two working adults. Benefits are capped at this average and we're all endlessly told it's apparently enough to live on. Why would a

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household earning £10k above the average (far more if a single income household of one) be considered to have financial need for social housing.

- As stated above; a family can survive on £30,000. I've only ever earned over £30,000 a year once in my life, and i couldn't find enough to spend it all on. Granted that was 10 years ago, but £60,000 is still WAY too high. I'd call those applying with that kind of income piss-takers.
- For a couple bringing in a combined income
- as a pensioner i exist on less than a third of this
- I get 10000 a year!!!
- The figure mentioned is about right, if 2 people in the household are both working.
- I would say a joint income of £40000 would be high enough.
- This is easy to pay for own housing within this threshold. £40000 top would be more appropriate.
- £40000
- Unfortunately to purchase a property in this area, one would have to have a high mortgage which of course means that a large income is required to pay for it
- Due to shared ownership thresholds and to assess for housing need when allocating shared ownership properties. Young people should be assisted where possible to get onto the property ladder.
- Myself and my wife,combined,together,joined salary,£19,000.With £60,000 a year,tell them to try no holidays for 15 years like me, because I can` t afford one.
- I think the level should be about 30k...any one earning above this would be able to rent privately without having to worry about providing a deposit of on average £3000 + estate agency letting admin fees (which are non returnable) of on average £300 every time they have to move home.
- Any household with this level of income should be able to buy/rent property without assistance from the Council. Far too many households live way beyond their means and expect help when the level of debt catches up with them.
- You can have a mortgage with this type of wage, housing associations should be for people who earn less and can not afford a mortgage or to rent privately
- Anyone who has an income of £40,000 pa or above should be able to find their own housing
- With this level of income you could afford to get a mortgage and therefore choose where you want to live
- If you make upwards of £30,000 per annum you are well off and should not need social housing
- Needs to be proportional to number of people in household and medical needs.
- People on a high wage such as this can afford to privately rent or buy. We earn half that and were forced to pay high

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private rentals because we were told we would never get our own home otherwise! If we can manage on half that amount higher earners are laughing!

- I earn roughly 20k and I can just about manage in private accommodation on a shoe string. Someone on 60k shouldn't even be considering support from the local council...
- Can rent privately with joint income of less than this
- Think that this is a large enough income to access accommodation through private landlords so that those in most need are given an opportunity for affordable living
- If people had that amount £60,000 per annum, they should not be on the waiting list, they could afford to buy their own accommodation. I'm going by my own wage. I've worked for ***** 30 years and only take home pay £900 per month. People with low wages should get the first chance on the housing list.
- For people on benefits (minority) these figures may be considered too high but for people in employment (majority) these figures are about right.
- I have been retired for 26 years and am not conversant with today's salaries but feel that £60,000 per annum is far too high.
- When I live the flats down from the road from us there are some undecent people who live in *****. When summertime comes they play veare loud muicsceit conteaes all night and throughe aeceye ouers and in the moring and allso they sel drugs down the road.
- 60,000 per month they can afford to save up and buy their own house. Can't buy a house with 16,000.
- 25k is about right. I can't make my income up by having kids.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

The Council wishes to encourage financial responsibility and good neighbourliness. It is therefore proposing to apply sanctions to applicants who demonstrate behaviour that does not demonstrate these two qualities. The sanctions would be to defer 'qualifying' applicants to the 'non-qualifying' group or to remove the application from the housing register. Sanctions would be applied in the following circumstances:

- To households who owe money from the Threshold Loan Scheme or have failed to keep to rent arrears repayment plan schedules
- Households who have been excluded for bad behaviour
- Households who have supplied false or misleading information on their application for housing
- Households who have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances
- Households who have refused three reasonable offers of accommodation

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- Households who are violent or abusive towards staff

As previously demonstrated social housing in West Berkshire is in significant demand and many who register will never be successful in being allocated a property. We propose that the people who behave in an anti-social manner or do not meet their primary obligations as a tenant and ensure their rent is paid should not be prioritised for accommodation.

Do you agree with this proposal?

Q4. Do you agree with this proposal?

- With other policies this is all you will end up with though. Why not give housing to those who can prove they can pay?
- There are many reasons why people fall into rent arrears. For example a number of persons I have encountered have rent arrears because they have mental health problems and spent 6 months not opening mail or engaging in any day to day activity that are necessary to sustaining a tenancy.
People do change behaviour as their circumstances change and any of your proposed exclusions from the register would need to be investigated thoroughly and rigorously to ensure those with mental health disabilities are not discriminated against when looking at their housing needs.
- I would go further and evict anyone who has displayed any ASBO things to neighbours and stop pandering to the asbo families and Vicky pollard types who display this behaviour and take the victims of this type of behaviour complaints seriously . Why should law abiding people have to move away from their homes and these ASBO idiots remain!!!!
- Agree with all criteria except the one regarding three reasonable offers. What is considered 'reasonable'
- BUT, APART FROM THE RENT ARREARS piece.. I am fast heading to that place myself. Due to No FAULT of my own. This is purely down to being made redundant in the last 3 years, twice. And to the councils own policy of bed room tax and reducing single person benefit.. SO NO, this piece has to be removed..
- I agree in the most part but not the 'deliberately worsened their housing circumstances' I was told that i had made myself homeless after marriage breakdown, i did not deliberately make that happen, so the circumstances need to be clear on this point. Leaving an abusive partner is not something that should be held against you when applying for housing.
- Mostly. Though i'd seek more information on the point of "Households who have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances". One could say i've deliberately worsened my circumstances by refusing to indulge in seeking council housing. But psychologically it's better for me and my prospects of having a normal life not to be accepting hand-outs on

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every level, and to have my own responsibilities. It shouldn't be a goal in life to spend one's entire existence being looked-after by other people (unless disability demands it). Also men are at a severe disadvantage being we can't go out and deliberately get ourselves pregnant in order to be bumped-up the list. Abortions should be an enforced suggestion for women under 26 who do that.

- All of the above could be the reason why I have never secured a social accommodation
- As we at present are not able to view property when we are given an offer and then when we view it is unsuitable we decline this would prevent being on the list. if as an older person trying to move nearer my daughter due to medical reason the distance prevents many viewing property
- Don't agree with the clause requiring someone to have only three strikes at accepting housing - without consideration given for reasonable and specific requirements not being met by the properties being offered.
- every one needs a chance in life.but some you just cannot help at all.give them one chance to prove them selfs.screw up and you out.end of story.
- I think it is important that there is an ability for people to 'redeem' themselves, i.e. if someone has previously been excluded for bad behaviour but that was a number of years previously, and they can demonstrate change then I think they should be in the qualifying group
- It is fair to say the above statement is correct and just.life is for living and is too short to be harrassed by neighbours that have ASBOS or are of the don't care how I conduct myself or keep my home,if I were in the business of letting any property to people I would choose very carefully and set down regulations to keep the living environment pleasant and tidy.
- If taking an applicant off the qualifying list for refusing houses offered, the reasons should be considered carefully before this decision is made.
- Yes strongly agree to discipline, just about time.
- Should also be added estimate of monies from the applicants spent on pleasure such a cigarette or alcohol
- No 4. deliberately worsened their housing circumstances. Too vague, define deliberately worsened
- Yes I strongly agree - help those who help themselves
- Who,in their right mind would want to live next door,or opposite,a loud,aggressive,probably violent person or people.I agree,chuck them out,they don`t deserve help.
- it rather depends on what you call three 'reasonable offers' and how you define 'deliberately' worsened their housing circumstances. Otherwise yes
- each case is different and unfortunately once a rule is in place the council rarely deviates from it.
- Completeing forms is stressful and it can be helpful to ask for clarification rather than assuming something has been deliberately misleading. 3 reasonable offers would be helpful to clarify and agree the definition of 'reasonable' as people are

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individuals, eg some might be ok with living in a rural location, whilst others would only feel urban living reasonable. Deliberately worsening housing their circumstances, I do not understand why anyone would do this and find it hard to believe that people would really worsen their situation consciously and deliberately. It may for example have been deemed that not staying in lodgings was worsening their situation deliberately, however when one finds their landlord has been in their room uninvited and also makes unwanted and inappropriate advances then not staying in lodgings might be deemed realistic, yet the landlord would probably have denied the situation and gathering evidence would likely have been impossible whilst within the landlords property. Additionally bringing situations to the awareness of others can cause more stress in an already unbearable situation.

- You need to remove the first one. Sometimes people will fall behind due to reasons beyond their control.. to punish them for this is not a good move on your part
- Too many people don't realise how lucky they are to have these homes, they should pay rent on time and take good care of their homes! If we didn't do this privately renting we would lose our home, it should be the same for them!
- Yes, I agree with this proposal. If people behave anti-social on purpose and deliberately they should not be prioritized. I also agree that people should keep up their rent payments for shelter.
- Some of the properties in my area are social housing and in a very bad state, rubbish outside, making the area look bad to live in.
- It feels too exclusionist and generalistic - all people are different and where ever possible should be asked to demonstrate that they have changed their behaviour first - this may be by asking them to link in with specific organisations to support change in their lives - for instance the aggressive mannered person may be asked to link in with an anger management group and demonstrate change - one who owes money on threshold loan should be asked to start paying back and address the issue that caused it in the first place - these rules could be used as a good way to get people to address issues and change rather than being punitive and exclusive.
- People have the ability to change and previous mistakes should not result in people not being housed if they have demonstrated change in old behaviours
- People with wages of £60,000 per annum should not be on the waiting list as I have said, it should be for people on low wages only.
- For all the reasons above
- At a time of high unemployment when many people cannot afford to buy their own homes, there is bound to be a high demand for social housing. The local authorities should prevail on the Government of the day to allow local communities to build social houses instead of delegating that responsibility to housing associations.
- Rent is needed to be paid it is [unreadable] scary violence should not be tolerated

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- Only if you are fair and stop people joining the housing register. I am 67 and people on benefits etc are better off than me.

UNDER OCCUPATION

We are proposing social tenants who are under-occupying their property will be given additional preference on the housing register.

Why are we making this proposal?

This proposed change will give greater priority to existing social tenants who are under-occupying their homes. Those who are under-occupying accommodation and in receipt of housing benefit will be at risk of financial hardship if they are not given assistance to move. In addition we are committed to making the best use of the limited housing stock available. Family sized homes released through this additional priority will be allocated to other households on the Housing Register.

Do you agree with this proposal?

- It's still not going to sort out the register just push some even further down
- I disagree in principle to the under occupancy reduction in housing benefit but accept that it is here and we need to work with it.
- I just wish ***** Housing Trust did the same , I am Still in a 2 bedroomed Maisonette and desperate to move to a 1 bedroomed property but I am not a removal company or painter, decorator or plasterer. As I suffer with Arthritis and Severe Back Problems, and struggle with stairs plus there are not enough 1 bed properties for 30 to 60 year olds, its all for over 60's .
- need clarificaton on 'assistance to move'
- If people are forced to move from their homes they have raised a family in, where can they keep the links with their family? Grandchildren to stay, children to stay.. Where will they put all their family's things? Ensuring people stay in the homes where they have raised families, is crucial to social supporting the famil. There also needs consideration as to who would pay for any deposits? Moving and storage costs etc? This bedroom tax iw WRONG, and VERY badly thought out.. It is a disgrace and potentially will remove vital support from the family for pople as they familys grow and people get older..
- I have no idea what you mean by "under-occupying"
- These people may be under-occupying but they do have somewhere, where as singles desperate to move for health reasons or peace of mind (ie potentially suicidal) are in my opinion of greater need.
- if they have been in the property for over 25 years

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- Some people will have raised families in the property they are renting and children may return. Given the requirement to accept a property within 3 offers a like for like offer should be available for tenants moving for release of under occupied property
- Under occupancy is the main cause for families registered on the housing list waiting a long time, even people who want to downsize should be offered alternative accommodation that is acceptable to their needs, or other schemes developed, for example tenants wanting to do up a run down property to live in, so many properties are left empty and eventually get in such a state it seems to me that it is more cost effective by the authorities to leave them empty, instead of making tenants that are willing to make good the property themselves and maybe purchase the property to create revenue for the council. Not enough is being done to help tenants who are willing to develop a scheme that would be successful and help the housing list.
- Older people who are under occupying houses are often not in receipt of housing benefit, so this is not going to help the situation. More over 55 properties should be built so there is a decent option for older people to move onto thus freeing up family homes.
- Would free up houses with more rooms for the people that need them in the long run.
- Certain disabled people need a second bedroom if they have a carer who has to live in from time to time. Married couples might have to sleep apart because due to the partner's illness, night terrors etc.
- Helps to get people off the register and into accommodation
- But at first, give them the option of taking in a lodger. I knew an old lady who lived, with her husband until he died, in a council house for 57 years, she was given the option to move to a smaller 'house' but declined and it's a three bed, still there as far as I know.
- we all deserve to be treated the same
- Each according to their need. Not all under-occupying tenants are unable to manage the situation.
- Good idea to help tenants downsize by helping with moving costs, otherwise they may not be able to afford to transfer.
- definitely a good move
- will you offer the same help to those who are overcrowded to move into bigger homes? They also suffer financial hardship.
- You are prioritizing people who already have somewhere to live. And why are these people in financial hardship? No one asks this question. Maybe build a school or a university around here that helps the community get in to better paid jobs. I saw an advert for a college on Thatcham station... free evening classes. Sounded great, but they were basically face painting and outdoor activities. Try and find a job with Vodafone after doing that.
- I agree this would help families who have grown since occupying their current home but what about people who are waiting for the smaller homes they will have to wait even longer.

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- How are separated parents to have children to stay at weekends and longer if no appropriate room for children is available.
- I think it will free houses up and help older people on their own out as family homes with extra rooms are hard to keep tidy and are expensive for a single older person to keep
- Move the people that have too many rooms. Make the HA's do it .. the only reason they don't want to do it, is because of masses of paperwork and cost. People who are waiting to be housed would suffer because of this proposal
- Too many single people living in big family homes while families in flats it's insane and makes no sense make them swap!
- Yes, I agree with this proposal. People in receipt of housing benefit would suffer financial hardship if not given assistance.
- Possibly in some instances. In our circumstances my daughter and son in law qualify for a one bed flat, this is fine, but they want children so it means more upheaval supposing you can get someone to swap with you.
- Lots of elderly people have lived in their own homes a life time. I think it is all wrong to make them move if they don't want to move, it's very upsetting for everyone, let it be their choice
- For reasons given
- Many may be glad to have the opportunity to "down-size"
- Yes. This seems an equitable way to use social accommodation. Steps should be taken though that it does not act as an encouragement for those on the housing register to become [unreadable] in order to be allocated a large accommodation.
- The couple may have children but can't register them,. 50% of families are split up and can't move in together so single persons should start with houses then they can gather their family together
- I haven't made my mind up yet. I need a small another bedroom for my grandkids to stay over etc.

ADDITIONAL PREFERENCE

We are proposing that applications received from certain groups of people are given priority over others who may be in a similar level of housing need. These groups are:

1. Armed Forces Personnel (required by legislation)
2. Households who do not have the finances to secure accommodation in the private sector
3. Households who have a defined local connection to West Berkshire
4. Witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remain in their current homes
5. Households that contain a member who needs to move as a matter of child or adult protection
6. Households who need to move urgently because a member of the household requires substantial care that cannot be

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- provided or received unless they move or who requires adaptations that cannot be made unless they move
7. Households who are experiencing multiple problems, which can only be resolved by a move, and who have a care or support plan in place supported by relevant agencies

West Berkshire Council believes that those who have a local connection with the district, should benefit from local services. In addition, the Council recognises that there are some households who will need to move urgently as a consequence of social or medical reasons. In addition we are now required to give additional preference to those serving and former members of the armed forces.

Do you agree with this proposal?

- 2 - They may have a deposit but have you looked at prices in Newbury in Private? Ok if you getting housing benefit, but if you work hard it's impossible
- I have had issues with an ex-partner, who has a restraining order. However he knows where I live and is a danger to my child and myself. So the fact you now take this into consideration is helpful.
- Not enough information to agree or disagree, however, I believe that priority should be given to the homeless who are in priority need, and others should come secondary to that.
- But only to a certain degree. Disability needs to be taken into account. Disability is not only physical-many disabled people are also affected mentally. They may need continuity-needing to be familiar with an area and routine. They may suffer stress and anxiety by having to move away from family, friends and familiarity which could cause extreme anxiety and put carers under further, unacceptable pressure in having to deal with the consequences
- I don't understand the Armed Forces requirement, it seems unjust to give priority treatment over other applicants who are newly out of work, unless there is injury or illness or some other additional need. I appreciate that the council don't have a say in this though.
- In the main agreeable. However, family members from away who have reached an age where they need help with their living from long term West Berks residents, should be considered equally.
- it would be helpful to include priority for people who are suffering mentally due to a broken relationship and don't have the means to move to a place of their own
- All are worthy of finding a home for, what it doesn't mention is that ex armed forces people, some have served over 20 years for Queen and country in difficult circumstances, these people should also be included.
- I agree with the armed forces, local connection and the financial aspects but I'm unsure on the others. Victims of crime and

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people who have committed crimes, im not sure why this would be an issue for the council, surely a police matter.

- Why someone who's a troublemaker, alcoholic, dis-respectful to law and neighborhood, unemployed or not willing to work should get a priority to the hard working families? Back in the good old days when my auntie had trouble with her husband (they had two kids) she came back to seek refuge to her own family. 100 % agree with armed forces personnel to be a top priority. Second priority it must be the hard working people, law abiding citizens, who have kids and stress and problems like no one else. I partly agree with this proposal. I don not agree with giving priorities to troublemakers, no matter what.
- There are many people who are in greater need of housing than others; i do find it frustrating when so many homes are given to young Teenage single mums!! I dont want to discriminate against them but its not like they stop at one the continue having more and claiming money from the state whilst working parents single or otherwise work hard and have to live in overcrowded homes.
- They can be in a better position to house themselves than many others that they get priority over.
- Why.The armed forces look after their own.
- They all have choices, we should all be treated the same
- i grew up in newbury and having left due to unforeseen circumstances cannot get back i have no savings and am classed as vulnerable, all my family and freinds live in newbury and i would very much like to move back. if people have the finances or means to secure thier own accomadation they should do just that and stop clogging the system up preventing those in real need
- you should be offering all this on a case by case basis anyway!
- i only agree with accounts 1 - 3
- U choose your job an career, thats not fair, and they have dorms, jo public dosnt even have hostile space anymore as iv been trieing.
- Yes, i agree that all those groups mentioned should be given priority.
- It is nothing more than you would expect from your local council to house people who have famil connections/jobs and lived here all their lives.
- If people have lived in the District should benefit from choice, moving or staying its there choice
- For all the above reasons
- Priority should be given to those who are urgently in need of rehousing. Homelessness is not what a human being should be allowed to endure.
- Having house where criminals don't be can be highly dangerous cause these criminals can hurt you through to jealousy and they could even burn your house down
- Only if given a choice of staying local etc. Not being moved miles away

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OTHER CHANGES

There are a number of other changes being made to the Housing Allocations Policy, as outlined in the covering letter you have been sent. This includes changes to the housing needs points assessment. Having read the draft Housing Allocations Policy, are there any other comments that you wish to make?

- Publish what the points actually mean. I asked 5 different people there and not one of them knew just that the more points you have the more chance you have. When I asked what I could do with the points I had was told nothing. So what's the point in issuing something if it doesn't mean anything?
- I don't think the impact of your proposals for the new Policy have properly taken into account those with mental health disabilities, and those who are at an age where they would experience difficulty in buying a property.
- I would like to see specific mention regards allocations for those who have a Learning Disability and need to move into Supported Living because of ageing parents struggling to provide care.
- not all people living in the private sector can afford to move even though they need to as they dont have enough income
- No
- I have tried and failed to find the Housing Allocations Policy on the WBC website.
- Elderly occupants should be made aware that they can downsize if they wish as so many do not realise this. It is a delicate issue as so many have lived in these properties for many years and all their memories are there ...raising their family there etc..but this would release family home to those who need them
- I agree with the proposal that more priority should be given to those who need it most. But do not agree that this should only be provided to people who live in the West Berks area because many people that do not live in the area are in need of the housing but would be restricted if they are not given a chance by yourselves.
- Please read and note the comments already added. I am one of those in desperate need for more points as I am fast sinking into a financial abyss.....Please also note that the bedroom issue, does NOT take into account those that are supporting members of their family who are sick and who look after children etc to ease the burden. This saves the state a fortune by ensuring any children or family members of those who are sick, are taken care of in a loving environment. But , therefore an extra bedroom is vital to do this. And the bedroom tax is penalising those who support and care for sick members of the family. Just as the government wants. To enable carers to do this, there has to be exemptions, understanding and support. Therefore myself for example, desperately need a 2 bedroom property, with no penalties, as I care 45% of the time for my daughters son, and need a safe constant room for him..... Exemptions and unusual

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circumstances re caring for family members needs to be considered re the hated bedroom tax and cutting back support for single carers.. WE save the council and government a fortune by caring.. We need the support too

- I find the whole point-allocation and "ebay-style" means of bidding on a property degrading and counter-productive to finding those who actually need the housing.
- no
- None
- The general policy of not only West Berkshire but of England overall requires a certain amount of flexibility built into it, which it doesn't appear to have. Applicants who feel that they require slightly different from the norm because say they were born with an impairment should have their voice listened to.
- no
- No
- I think under-occupying is a big issue. Also priority should be given to those with local connections.
- The present system of being offered a property before you can view it is very difficult . It is hard to accept a property as a senior until you can view inside and see if the facilities - ie bathroom which you cannot see through a window-is going to be suitable in the years ahead
- Not really because I absolutely agree with the decisions that took place.
- well other than the charges to bedroom taxes. Also disability people should be able to stay in their homes with adaptations and if its a couple on their own in a two bed home shouldn't be charged bedroom and council taxes as they may need two bedrooms as one may need a bedroom on their own.
- No comments
- I wonder if we should recognise those who have been Looked After Children in the policy?
- It takes so long even with the bidding on homechoice to be considered and very little choice when a pet has to be considered.Why are there no other schemes available to cut the demand for housing.
- Each case must be looked into individually whilst following this policy as a guideline.
- I can't find the policy on your site. When I type it in I get over 100 references
- Mainly all the councils and the government seems to outline the needs of the hard working, decent and law abiding citizen. Do we forget that these people are paying the taxes to keep the state system working? Penalized for saving, why? When an alcoholic will spent everything on drinks because the state will help him, why?! In the meantime the sensible ones who save for the rainy days are been penalized?!
- Not having financial possibility to pay for a house is one thing but a proper job search from applicants should be followed up

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by council to ensure no abusive conditions

- no
- not read yet.
- I have been unable to read the housing allocations policy updated document, as unable to access it on the said site.
- no
- no
- The web- site could be more flexible and user friendly. It gives very little information about individual properties.
- were is it??
- I think people who don't want to work and laze around in hostels should not just bring given a place. I know many who have just been handed a flat who don't respect or look after it. I work but can not afford to private rent and would love my own place, I would respect the property and make it look very nice. But I can't get any where because people who don't work get all the. Houses. I feel like this is very wrong, and this is the reason people are not working.
- I agree with most things in the new policy but think people who earn alot should rent privately or get a mortgage, there are others in much more need of a house. Some housing association homes who have well paid people living in them look like show homes. How can they afford to do this?
- No
- why is there no council owned property in this area? Surely this should be a priority?
- I think this area is of great extremes. Especially places like Newbury. You have the wealthy racecourse goers and business owners scattered around, but the un-educated people on the council estates. It makes it impossible for the man in the middle to find somewhere affordable to live. There are people living in 2 bed apartments for free because they didn't do anything at school or got pregnant at 14... whereas I have to live in a tiny bedroom in someone else's house so I can pay for them to watch Jeremy Kyle because I tried to do something with my life.
- It's pretty sound. It seems to be following what most council's have already done for many years
- none
- Not at this time .
- still think people from newbury from birth should have priority. also people who private rent helped to get a council place. just because we private rent doesn't mean we can afford to..quite the opposite.
- Firstly if any see the new draft policies on the site! Secondly I have been on there since 2007 an in my paperwork it states would receive 5 points per yr for being locally connected etc have received none an have 55 points (not enough to bid on a house which is what I need) can anyone explain why?

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- Homeless should be top of list and prioritised.
- I am so sorry that you have such a high demand for housing and that people have to wait so long but my belief is that there are just too many people in this country.
- A couple should be entitled to a two bedroom property on medical grounds
- The proposed changes are sensible in the current climate of making best use of stock for those most in housing need
- No
- There doesn't seem to be any mention of prison releases - there is a great issue where clients who are coming out of prison drug free with a wish to make changes are unable to access accommodation (normally wayfaring at 210 Newtown Road) this leads to an almost certain cycle of release / use / offending
- There should be no restrictions for anybody living with a local authority's jurisdiction from applying to be on the housing register. Applications should be thoroughly [unreadable] to see those who can be persuaded to buy or rent at reasonable price. Local government need to revert to building social homes for the benefit of people in their areas of authority instead of delegating the provision of homes to Housing Associations who are nothing but private landlords who can only make profits for their share holders by making sure that there are limited supply of houses with the attendant rent increases for which Local Councils will have to pick up tabs.
- No comments
- Your staff better trained to answer to older people etc.

We have published an Equality Impact Assessment with the draft Housing Allocations Policy. Do you think any of these proposals will have a negative or positive impact on any particular group of people e.g. due to their age

- People are not going to react well if they are deemed non-qualifying. We live in a society now of a spoilt brat culture. I have lived in my current home for 13 plus years and have tried to move. Others have come and gone before me and haven't needed to be moved. Watching them get their new homes has been hard to see. But now, those who are not in need directly won't get this option.
- I think the proposals would have a disproportionate negative impact on those with mental health disabilities. I also think you should look again at the impact your policy may have on older persons above 45.
- Too many grey areas. Present seem arbitrary, more consideration need to be given to individual cases
- Those who are caring and supporting sick members of the family who are in independent homes of their own. Frequently those who are sick, have children who need to be cared for at times on a regular basis by others. Those people are currently being impacted by the bedroom tax, and the lack of points, consideration and need for accommodation. In order to enable the stress to be eased, and caring to continue. It is not taken into account, that if this support is not given to the

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careres, the whole support system falls don. Help please

- I don't know because having to read through both the existing and the draft policy in an attempt to find out which bits were being changed was hard going. I can't even work out whether the points allocated to me will change. I am in private rented accommodation and currently get 20 points for insecurity of tenure. Are these points to go? I just couldn't tell and I'm generally reasonably bright. To make this process truly inclusive then changes between the old policy and the new should be highlighted in a separate and clearly worded document. Preferably as bullet points
- Won't make a difference as any number of circumstances that matter or not can skew favour based on nothing in particular. People who don't deserve it will continue to be given it, and people who NEED it will continue to be ignored, such is life.
- you are putting elderly persons in a very position
- it sound like its going to have a positive impact on some part, but if someone from outside uk has lived here atleast 6 mths or worked ect they should be put on non qualifying list IF they also choose to go back now and then to there original country and claim taxes back or send benefits over to children who are not residents in this country! i feel really selfish and nasty saying this but its true, if they want to be a uk citizen and get treated the same then they need to stay fully and be fully uk citizens 100%
- Low income families with a child going to university will be then under occupying and will either have to move leaving the child without a room or if they stay then they face hardship as they will not be entitled to housing benefit for that bedroom so will have higher out goings
- The negatives are where a woman is pregnant with two other children under the age of ten in a three bed house on benefits, would need to pay bedroom tax and council tax too, when its already difficult to live on the money they get, you still make them pay leaving them less money to feed and cloth their children. Family's like that shouldn't be penalized.
- The offer of only 3 properties without recourse is wrong
- I feel that I will never get allocated, I am single no children, I work but do not earn enough to afford accommodation in Newbury. So I am having to live with my parents at the age of 43. Which is causing issues with my mental health
- I feel the grading on properties for disabled people to be very unfair, for instance levels 1 to 3 don't even apply to some houses that have adaptations for disabled people, yet they aren't eligible to bid
- immigrants will not benefit but this is not a bd thing as they can take properties that would otherwise go to a local resident
- Each case should be considered on their own merit,however priority should be given to West Berkshire people living and working in the said county.
- But all for the better. I do personnally think that people who are born in Britian and work hard to contribute to our country should get priority over immigrants who have only been in the country a matter of months or years.
- Very negative impact to the hard working and sensible people who save for their kids and for the rainy days.

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- no
- Any who have worked hard and have no due to unforeseen circumstances need help
- As long as it's fair and open to all.
- Will impact positively on the older tenants who may be glad to move to smaller properties if they get priority points and help with moving.
- the real need is for more Homes to be built. Making parents leave a long term family home because their children have moved out is wrong as it's their HOME, insisting that a young struggling family with 2 children cannot have a three bedroom house dictates to them that they should not have a third child without a long wait on the housing list and more costs of moving. If these houses were allowed to become people's homes instead of just housing association houses they may feel it's for the long term and look after the homes, the surrounding community and their neighbours better. Look at Rowan Drive, Maple Crescent, long term residents of social housing many have gone on to buy their home but a sense of community exists. There are lots of empty houses that need work, lots of land that could be built on. Yes it costs but in the end of the day how much money is wasted on talking about solutions rather than providing them.
- A negative impact on people moving to the area for work, who as I mentioned also contribute to the community. Probably much more significantly than the so-called 'locals'. I can see it will have a positive impact on those who need it the most but I hope that this does not negatively affect the people who think that they are owed a house because of their own mistakes.
- If someone is privately renting and is needing to move due to access general amenities, e.g. church, cultural groups, shops, schooling and work as they are in accommodation they will not qualify under the proposals.
- Can't find them on the website!
- The positive impact is likely to be that the urgent and needy get priority and the less urgent due to the housing demand have to wait far much longer.
- I don't think forcing people out of homes they have lived in all their lives because of an extra bedroom is beneficial for anyone. It sounds like desperation and ill thought out.
- I do think that the housing policy doesn't help address the issues of addiction and offending in West Berks - whilst it shouldn't be weighted towards them I believe we are missing an opportunity by helping people to change with the carrot of stable housing.
- The housing register should be open to all. No restrictions should be imposed on any grounds whatsoever
- Those who are in the cattery who have specific needs and they have help from social services
- Those who are good people can be spoiled too soon those who are bad are still in need of houses
- Don't know about details etc
- Would like to see more 1 bed bungalows for old people with resident warden so they can still live in their own homes rather

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than going into care homes that take all their savings

Non-survey Responses

Conference & Review Team

- 1.1 IROs have suggested a new section is included in the West Berkshire Housing Policy to explain how we will meet our responsibilities for housing Looked After Children, including setting aside some of the 'qualifying criteria' for LAC. For example if a young person has resided in a placement outside West Berks this needs to be addressed in the Policy.
- 1.2 Many young people aspire to having their own accommodation on leaving care but are not yet capable of managing this. It would help to have a scheme introduced whereby those who can demonstrate over a period of time (through competent independent living skills, good behaviour, personal achievement, contributing to the lives of others, etc.) that they have the ability to live independently, could be allocated additional housing points. This would be an incentive to care leavers to work towards this aim.
- 1.3 RECOMMENDATION: Amend Housing Policy (currently in draft form) to ensure this meets the needs of care leavers. (11.19)

SEN/Disabled Childrens Team

5.3 We very strongly agree with the comment that there is **"a shortage of family homes with three or more bedrooms"**. Are you aware of any strategic plans to address this issue with Registered Providers?

13.18 Adapted Homes. How are these listed/recorded and circulated? We do not see or hear about these properties in Disabled Children's Team. Occasionally Sovereign Housing may advise that there is an adapted property however this may just mean it has

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a level access shower and rails at the front door. Are there any plans to improve communication about these properties (detailing the type of adaptations) in order that we can match prospective applicants?

14.9 Lacking or Sharing Amenities Does this apply to lack of access for disabled children? eg. if they are wheelchair user and essential amenities are on first floor for example.

14.15.1 Accommodation with no garden We note that some children over 10 may not be able to share a garden due to their disability and their vulnerability. An enclosed safe, play area is frequently necessary for children with severe learning disabilities however their lack of stranger awareness and/or risk of running away, lack of awareness of road safety makes them highly vulnerable and puts them at risk. Can points for children over 10 be awarded in these circumstances?

14.14.2 Accommodation above or below floor Non ambulant (wheelchair users) or mobility impaired children over 5 cannot manage steps and stairs. Will they be awarded points?

14.18 **"The award of medical needs points may be accompanied by a condition that the applicant is only considered for certain types of accommodation (for example, ground floor or adapted accommodation).** In DCT OT's experience the properties that Sovereign Housing offer and identify as "adapted" does not necessarily mean that the property is suitable. A ground floor property may not automatically be suitable just because it is ground floor. There are many complex factors including individual children's and family's needs ie. wheelchair circulation space, storage space for essential equipment/specialist beds, social and family networks and many other reasons that do not make a specific ground floor property automatically suitable. The lack of suitable "adapted" properties and unsuitability of some ground floor properties suggests that there should be flexibility around this condition?

14.23 Welfare & Social Needs (for example, that the applicant can only be considered for a property in a certain area or for ground floor/adapted accommodation). Same query as above, the lack of availability in certain areas and lack of suitable adapted properties can create an ongoing high risk situation to a child/family living in unsuitable accommodation. What if there is no availability? There needs to be some flexibility around this condition?

16.3 Housing Benefit. Should severely disabled children be included in this section as they are now exempt by court ruling?