



TOWER HAMLETS

The Common Housing Register Partnership

New Lettings Policy

With effect from 29th October 2010

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is there a new Lettings Policy?

Public consultation showed that many people were unhappy with the old Lettings Policy. People found it hard to understand and felt that the way homes were allocated was unfair to many applicants.

2. How was the new policy developed?

It was developed by the Council and the twenty housing associations who are members of the Common Housing Register Partnership after extensive consultation with housing applicants, councillors and the public.

3. Will there be more housing available under the new policy?

No, the new policy will not increase the supply of housing each year but it will be a simpler and fairer way of offering the homes that are available.

4. What are the main differences with the old policy?

The new policy has four bands that are set out on page 2 of the policy summary. Preference is given to applicants who have waited the longest in each band. Under the old policy preference was given to those in the most housing need. The length of time applicants had waited was a lesser consideration.

5. How long will I have to wait for housing?

This depends upon the band you are in and the amount of housing available which varies each year. The majority of housing will go to applicants in Bands 1 & 2 as they are in the most housing need. Even these applicants may have to wait a long time because of the shortage of suitable housing in the borough.

As preference in a band will be in date order it will be easier to give better information about how long applicants may have to wait although this will still depend on how much housing becomes available and your housing preferences. If you are more flexible on your choices of floor level, areas and property types, you will have less time to wait for rehousing.

An advantage of giving preference in date order is that you will only move up in the band. Under the old policy you could move up or down, for example, if someone more overcrowded than you joined the Housing List they would be given preference ahead of you.

Partner landlords



6. Why does Band 1 have two groups, A and B?

This band contains all applicants with a special reason to be given high priority such as emergency, priority medical cases or tenants who must be moved because their home is to be demolished (decants). Most are in Group B, however a small number of urgent cases need to be helped more quickly such as emergencies, urgent decants or very high priority medical cases. These applicants are in Group A and will be given preference ahead of those in Group B.

7. I am an overcrowded applicant in Band 2. What does this mean for me?

You will be in a date order queue of overcrowded applicants. When bidding for a home, preference will be given to those who have been in the band the longest.

8. What happens if someone more overcrowded than me is put in Band 2?

They will not be given preference ahead of you. All overcrowded applicants in Band 2 will be given preference in date order of joining the band, not by the level of overcrowding as under the old policy.

9. What happens if I am on the Housing List and then apply as homeless?

If the Council accepts a full homeless duty to you, you will be placed in Band 2. However, your preference date will be the day you applied as homeless. You will lose any previous waiting time on the Housing List.

10. I am in Band 3, what are my chances of being offered a home?

Band 3 is for applicants who are not overcrowded. You will have very little chance of being offered a home as there is not enough social housing available for all who apply. The majority will go to Band 1 and 2 applicants. However, each year a small amount of housing will be offered to applicants in Band 3.

11. I am an applicant in Band 4, what are my chances?

You will have virtually no chance at all as there are very many applicants with higher priority than you in Bands 1,2 and 3.

12. Will I always be in the same band?

It depends. If your circumstances change, after re- assessment you may be moved to another band.

13. If I move up a band do I keep my previous preference date ?

No, you will join the queue behind applicants already in the band who have had the higher priority for longer than you.

14. If I move down a band what happens to my preference date?

You will keep the waiting time you already had.

15. What size home can I bid for?

You can only apply for a home that has the number of bedrooms considered suitable for your household and your assessment letter will tell you what this is. You can also apply for a home that has this number of bedrooms but has one bed space less than your household requires. The table in the policy summary sets out how this work. The policy summary is also available on the Homeseekers website www.thhs.org.uk

16. What happens if an offer of a home is refused?

If you are a homeless applicant no further offer will be made and you will be asked to leave temporary accommodation.

If you are an applicant with priority social status, you will not be made another offer and your priority will be withdrawn.

Other applicants who unreasonably refuse an offer of a home may have their priority reduced.