

The Peterborough Housing Register

The Common Housing Register and Allocations Policy
for social housing in Peterborough

Axiom Housing Association
Cross Keys Homes
Minster General Housing Association
Nene Housing Society
Peterborough City Council

Informacioni që përmban ky dokument mund të përkthehet në gjuhën tuaj. Ju lutem na tregoni për gjuhën që ju kërkoni, detajet që të mund të ju kontaktojmë dhe dorëzoje këtë formë tek ndërtesa e kantsullit të qytetit Peterborough (Peterborough City Council).

Gjuha:
Emri:
Adresa:
Numri Telefonit:

ALBANIAN

我們可以把這份檔的內容翻譯成你的語言。請告訴我們你要求的語言，以及你的詳細聯繫地址，並把這張表格交到 Peterborough 市政廳大樓。

語言：
姓名：
地址：
電話：

CHINESE

Informace v tomto dokumentu můžou být přeloženy do Vašeho jazyka. Láskavě uveďte jaký jazyk vyžadujete a kde se s Vámi je možné spojit a odevzdejte toto tlačivo v budově městské rady v Peterborough (City Council).

Jazyk:
Jméno:
Adresa:
Tel. číslo:

CZECH

Le informazioni contenute in questo documento possono essere tradotte nella Sua lingua madre; ci comunichi in quale lingua desidera ricevere la traduzione insieme al suo nome e indirizzo e consegnaci questo modulo a uno degli uffici del Peterborough City Council.

lingua richiesta:
nome:
indirizzo:
telefono:

ITALIAN

આ દસ્તાવેજમાં જે માહિતી સમાવેલ છે તેને તમે તમારી ભાષામાં ભાષાંતર કરી શકો છો, તમને કઈ ભાષા જોઈએ છે અને તમારા સંપર્કની વિગતો કૃપા કરી અમને બતાવો અને આ પત્રકને પીટર્સ બરો, સિટી કાઉન્સિલ બિલ્ડિંગમાં આપો.

ભાષા :
નામ :
સરનામું :
ફોન :

GUJARATI

A informação constante deste documento pode ser traduzida para a sua língua. Queira fazer o favor de nos indicar a língua que requer e os pormenores para entrarmos em contacto consigo e, preenchido este impresso, entregue-o num edifício do Município da Cidade de Peterborough [Peterborough City Council].

Língua:
Nome:
Morada:
Telefone:

PORTUGUESE

ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਿਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਵੇਰਵਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਦੱਸੋ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਫਾਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਪੀਟਰਬਰੋ ਸਿਟੀ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੀ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ 'ਚ ਦਿਓ।

ਭਾਸ਼ਾ:
ਨਾਂ:
ਪਤਾ:
ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ:

PUNJABI

اس دستاویز میں جو معلومات دی گئی ہیں ان کا آپ کی زبان میں بھی ترجمہ ہو سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی ہمیں بتائیں کہ آپ کو کس زبان میں ترجمہ کی ضرورت ہے۔ آپ سے کس طرح رابطہ کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ اس بارے میں تفصیلات بھی بتائیں اور یہ فارم ذمہ طور پر پیٹربورو کونسل (Peterborough City Council) کی عمارت میں پہنچادیں۔

زبان:
نام:
پتہ:
ٹیلیفون:

URDU

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Aims	5
3. Scope	
Annual Lettings Plan	6
Allocations covered by the policy	7
Allocations not covered by the policy	7
4. Eligibility for Housing	
Who can join the housing register	7
Unacceptable behaviour	8
Local connection	9
Owner occupiers/ or people who own a property elsewhere and people with savings/capital	10
Young people aged 16 and 17	10
Keeping applications up to date	11
5. Information Required to Register	
Proof of identity and address	11
Rough Sleepers	12
Home visits	13
6. How needs are assessed	
Reasonable preference	13
Priority Bands	13
Moves on medical grounds	14
Applicants with a physical disability	14
Applications from people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness	14
Underoccupation	14
Statutory overcrowding of a Partner RSL tenant	15
Retiring or redundant Council or RSL service occupiers	15
Key Workers	16
Sustainable Lettings Policies: local people	16
Indirect Exchanges	16
Where there is no Right of Succession (when a tenant dies)	16
Reduced priority to those in breach of tenancy condition	16
Reduced priority for non local people	17
7. Sheltered Housing	
Who can register: conventional/Category 1 or 2 sheltered housing	17
Who can register: extra care/very sheltered housing	17

Table of Contents (continued)

8. How Choice Works	
Choice Based Lettings	18
The bidding process	18
Other lettings	19
Number of offers: non choice based lettings	19
Property size and type	20
Shared ownership	20
Homeless households	21
9. Social Services Supported Applicants	
Nominations	22
Children leaving care	22
10. Move On Accommodation	22
11. Removal from the Housing Register	22
12. Authorisation for an Offer	
Checking at point of allocation or choice based lettings bid	23
Viewing properties	24
Employees, Members of the Council, Board Members and their relations	24
13. Applicants Refused Admission to or Removed from the Register	
Re-application	24
Notification of Refusal of Application	25
Right to request a Review of the decision of ineligibility	25
Applicants already on the list who became ineligible	25
14. Witness Mobility Scheme	25
15. Exercise of Discretion in Exceptional Cases	25
16. Joint Tenancies	25
17. Applicants who need to move on social or welfare grounds	26
18. Right to Review and Appeals	26
Appendix 1: Priority Banding System	27
Appendix 2: Bedroom Standards Policy	29

1. Introduction: A single housing register for Peterborough

Peterborough City Council and the Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) listed below have worked in partnership with tenants and stakeholders to produce this common housing policy for allocating their properties in Peterborough.

Axiom Housing Association
Cross Keys Homes
Minster General Housing Association
Nene Housing Society

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are housing associations who provide affordable housing on a not for profit basis. They are regulated by the Housing Corporation.

Instead of each organisation having its own housing register, the Council maintains a single housing register for Peterborough. This makes it easier for applicants to find out about housing. Therefore, the likelihood of finding a home does not depend upon which landlord an applicant approaches.

Some allocations are not covered by this policy and this is explained later in this document.

Housing is in short supply in Peterborough and waiting times are very long. We use this policy to allocate homes to those in greatest need.

2. Aims

Through this policy we aim to

- provide a single route of access to social housing in Peterborough by using a common housing register and a common allocation policy
- allocate social housing fairly and transparently, according to the applicant's priority need
- meet the Council's statutory duties in housing homeless persons
- prioritise nominations to RSLs and other Councils
- prevent the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families
- minimise the cost of homelessness to the Council and to Council tax payers
- maximise choice for applicants as far as possible, whilst acknowledging that housing is in short supply
- make effective use of the social housing stock in Peterborough
- maximise opportunities for mobility among tenants of social housing
- help build and sustain cohesive communities
- contribute to the speedy allocation of properties
- recognise and support individual needs where appropriate
- enable partner RSLs to meet their charitable objectives

3. Scope

3.1 Operation of the housing register

The common housing register will be operated and maintained by Peterborough City Council on behalf of the Council and its RSL Partners.

3.2 Nominations agreements

The Council enters into nominations agreements with RSLs and the detail contained in these agreements is not affected or changed by this Common Housing Policy.

3.3 Annual Lettings Plan

An Annual Lettings Plan will be produced in consultation with the members of the Common Housing Register, covering:

- the percentage of void properties to be allocated between priority Bands as determined by the Council's statutory duties and the charitable or other regulatory requirements of the partner organisations;
- the level of nominations to be offered to social services and any other organisations;
- the operation of the Homes scheme or any subsequent replacement scheme;
- the nominations to be made to key workers;
- targets and actions required to deliver fair and equal access to housing;
- the number of voids to be made available for those in designated, short term move on accommodation
- and any other operational issues.

The Annual Lettings plan is bound by the contents of the Nominations Agreement. It cannot change the provisions in that agreement.

The plan will be produced annually and reviewed quarterly at which point changes may be made to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Common Housing Register are met. In the event of a change in the ability of the Council to meet its statutory duties, or the ability of an RSL to meet its charitable and regulatory objectives, the plan may be reviewed as and when necessary.

Any changes which amount to a change in policy will be subject to negotiation and ratification by the members of the Common Housing Register.

For properties owned by Cross Keys Homes, the percentage of void properties to be allocated to transfers, housing register, management moves etc is determined by the nominations agreement agreed at the time of the stock transfer.

3.3 Allocations covered by the policy

This policy sets out the arrangements for allocating social housing in Peterborough by the Council and its RSL partners.

It covers the selection of applicants to be offered accommodation.

- by way of transfer to existing tenants of the RSLs who are members of the Common Housing Register
- by nomination to RSLs by the Council from the housing register

3.4 Allocations not covered by the policy

The following are examples of lettings not covered by this policy.

- Offers of assured tenancies of their current homes to starter tenants
- transfers of tenancies made by court orders
- assignment of and succession to tenancies
- mutual exchange of tenancies by assignment
- cases where the landlord requires the tenant to move
- transfers to existing tenants on management grounds where approved by the landlord
- temporary tenancies offered to homeless families whilst applications under the homeless legislation are investigated
- temporary moves (known as decants) to enable the landlord to carry out repairs and improvements
- Cross Keys Homes five per cent nomination rights for management moves for its existing tenants

4. Eligibility for housing

4.1 The housing register

The Peterborough Housing Register is a list of people looking for social rented housing in Peterborough.

4.2 Who can join the housing register?

Anyone aged 16 or over (including those with no fixed abode) may be placed on the housing register except

- people from abroad subject to immigration control or regulations
- people prescribed as ineligible by regulations made by the Secretary of State
- people the Council considers unsuitable to be tenants due to unacceptable behaviour

4.2.1 People from abroad subject to immigration control

Applicants are excluded from the housing register if they are from abroad and are subject to immigration control under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, or by subsequent amendments, legislation or regulation by the Secretary of State unless they are

- already a secure or introductory tenant of the Council, or
- an assured or starter tenant of an RSL of housing allocated to them via a nomination by the Council to an RSL

4.2.2 Regulations made by the Secretary of State

From time to time the Secretary of State may make regulations which prescribe applicants as ineligible unless they are either

- already a secure or introductory tenant of the Council, or
- an assured or starter tenant of an RSL of housing allocated to them via a nomination by the Council to an RSL.

4.2.3 Unacceptable behaviour

In accordance with Section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996, the Council will not accept applications from an applicant where it is satisfied that behaviour has been unacceptable.

Applications will not be accepted where the Council (or in the case of transfers, the relevant RSL) is satisfied that

- the applicant, or a member of his/her household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make him/her unsuitable to be a tenant of any Council, and
- in the circumstances at the time the application is considered he/she is still unsuitable to be a tenant as a result of that behaviour

This includes behaviour by the applicant or anyone in his/her household, and anyone living with or visiting the applicant, including children.

4.2.3.1 Definition of unacceptable behaviour

This is behaviour which, if the person concerned were a secure Council tenant, would entitle the Council to obtain a possession order against them. These are grounds 1 to 7 of Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985 and subsequent amendments. Such behaviour includes:

- failing to pay the rent
- breaking the terms of a tenancy agreement
- causing nuisance to neighbours or anti social behaviour
- being convicted of using the home for immoral or illegal purposes
- being convicted of an arrestable offence committed in, or in the vicinity of the home
- causing the condition of the property to deteriorate by a deliberate act, or by neglect
- making a false statement to obtain a tenancy

Any person who is refused admission to the register will be notified by letter giving grounds for the decision. The letter will be posted to their home or mailing address and will also be made available for collection for the appropriate Council or RSL office for a period of 28 days. There is a right of appeal and details are given in section 17.

A final check will be carried out before offers are made to ensure the eligibility criteria are still met.

4.3 Local connection

4.2.1 Definition of Local Connection

The Council and its RSL partners have chosen, where appropriate, to give priority to people with a local connection. The definition used is the local connection requirements of the Homelessness legislation.

- Applicants who have lived in the unitary authority of Peterborough for 6 months out of the last 12 months, or 3 out of the last 5 years, unless they came to the area to attend an educational establishment
- Applicants who work in the district full or part time in permanent employment
- Applicants who have close family (parents, children, brothers, sisters and other family members if there is a particularly close relationship) who have lived in the district for at least the past 5 years, or
- Other special reason for living in the district

Applicants who are leaving accommodation in the armed forces will be assessed on the basis of where their principal home was when they moved into forces accommodation.

Applicants cannot build up a local connection through time spent in prison in Peterborough.

Children for whom the Council is acting as corporate parent and who are placed outside the district will be deemed to have a local connection with Peterborough.

4.3.2 Applications from non local people

Applicants who do not have a local connection will be placed in Band 5 unless they can demonstrate a need to move on social or welfare grounds to a particular locality, in which case the application will be placed in Band 2.

4.3.3 HOMES and HEMS Schemes

In return for the opportunity to nominate people from Peterborough to other boroughs through the HOMES (Homes, Mobility and Exchange) or HEMS (Housing Employment Mobility) schemes, the Council may accept a quota of people nominated for accommodation in Peterborough.

Eligibility will be assessed in accordance with this policy but rather than being placed in a Band, applicants will be offered a suitable property. The schemes will only be used to let properties where there is low demand. Unless there is a specific need, HOMES applicants will not have a choice of area, and only one offer of accommodation will be made. The percentage of void properties allocated to the schemes will be contained in the Annual Lettings Plan. At present, HOMES is mostly used for older persons in Peterborough but this will be reviewed annually in the Plan.

4.3 Owner occupiers or people who own a property elsewhere and people with savings/capital

Applications will be accepted, provided all other eligibility criteria are met. However, low or reduced priority will be given and applicants will be placed in Band 5 where it is determined that the applicant

- is adequately housed *or*
- has sufficient resources to finance the purchase of a suitable home (outright or by way of a mortgage) *or*
- has sufficient resources to rent privately and in the circumstances it would be reasonable for them to do so *or*
- could reasonably be expected to occupy a property that they already own.

In determining reasonableness medical, disability, community care and other relevant needs will be taken into account.

4.4 Young people aged 16 and 17

Non dependent applicants aged 16 and 17 may join the housing register but priority will be given to cases where

- the Council has assessed that it has a statutory duty to provide accommodation
- the applicant is leaving the care of the local authority
- Social Services have assessed that accommodation, or supported accommodation is required.

People under 18yrs can not legally hold a secure or assured tenancy so will be given different occupancy agreements until they reach 18yrs.

4.6 Reciprocal arrangements

Other Councils or RSLs who are not members of the common housing register may occasionally approach the Council or partner RSL asking for housing for a person outside the channels established by the policy by offering a reciprocal vacancy for a Council or RSL nominee. The Council or partner RSL may also occasionally initiate such arrangements.

The members of the Common Housing Register reserve the right to initiate, accept or refuse such arrangements, according to circumstances on behalf of the Council. However, such arrangements will be rare.

4.7 Keeping applications up to date

Applicants must notify the Council when their circumstances change. This also applies to tenants of member RSLs seeking to transfer. The Council will operate the register on behalf of the member RSLs.

Approximately every twelve months, usually on a rolling programme, the Council will write to applicants asking them if they still wish to apply for housing, or to apply for a transfer. The Council will also ask for details of any change in circumstances or in preferences for accommodation. The applicant will be given 30 days from the date of receipt to supply the information requested. If applicants fail to respond in the specified period, or they indicate that they no longer want to apply for housing or a transfer, they will be removed from the housing register.

4.8 Giving false information and fraud

The Council and its RSL partners will take action where it is deemed appropriate in any cases where a tenancy has been obtained as a result of fraud or false information. The Council or the RSL may apply to the Courts for possession of the property and the subsequent eviction of the tenant. Action may be taken under the Housing Act 1996 which makes it an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement or withhold information. A person guilty of an offence under this Section is liable to prosecution and a fine.

5. Information required to register

5.1 Proof of identity and address

The Council will require proof of identity and proof of an applicant's current address *before* it will accept an application onto the housing register. In the case of joint applicants proof will be required for both applicants.

Applicants will normally be required to provide the documents listed overleaf.

PROOF OF IDENTITY AND ADDRESS

Necessary Documents	Comments
Proof of identity	Examples: birth certificate, passport, driving licence, identity card
Proof of National Insurance Number	Examples: pay slip, tax notification, National Insurance card
Two forms of proof of your identity at your current address	Examples: a bank statement, driving licence, utility bill, medical card
If you are not a British citizen but a citizen from with the EU we will need to see your passport	Legislation imposes some restrictions on the Council's ability to assist or house people from abroad and this needs to be verified
If you have been granted refugee status or have leave to enter or remain in the UK, you will need to bring your original Home Office documents with you	Legislation imposes some restrictions on the Council's ability to assist or house people from abroad and this needs to be verified
If you are living with family or friends we will need their names and dates of birth	
Dependent children aged under 18 and in full time education	We will need to see their birth certificates and your child benefit book or payment details

Once proof of identity and address have been provided, and the criteria for registration met, the application will be placed on the register. Where priority is requested for various needs, for example, medical, community care, disrepair, harassment, the application may be registered but these needs will be recognised and assessed only when supporting evidence has been obtained.

The Council may verify recent addresses by checking with an agency such as a credit reference agency.

The Council will not register the application if it is not satisfied that the applicant has given sufficient proof of identity and address.

Rough sleepers -the Council may consider letters of identity and referral from local agencies. However, the Council will need to be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the applicant has a right to reside in the United Kingdom, is not prohibited by regulation from accessing social housing and that the criteria for entry to the register are met.

5.2 Applicant's consent and declaration

Applicants will be required to sign a declaration that:

- a) the information they have provided is true and accurate and that they will notify the Council of any change in circumstances immediately it occurs;
- b) they will be asked to declare any incidents of anti social behaviour that they (or people living with or visiting them) have been involved in either as a victim or perpetrator
- c) they consent to the Council verifying the information that they have provided. This will include checking with
 - ⇓ a credit reference agency to verify address, household and income details

- ↓ checking with their previous and/or current landlords to establish whether tenancy conditions have been adhered to
- ↓ checking with the Council's Community Safety team to verify any incidents of anti social behaviour

If the above is not provided the applicant will not be registered because insufficient information will have been given.

5.3 Home visits

The Council or RSL may visit applicants in order to verify information and applicants may not be registered until this has taken place and any queries arising resolved. Visits may take place at any stage whilst an applicant is on the housing register in order to verify information provided.

6. How needs are assessed

6.1 Reasonable preference

In accordance with the Housing Act 1996 and subsequent amendments, reasonable preference will be given to applicants who fall into the categories below

- People who are homeless (including those applicants in the non priority groups and those who have been deemed intentionally homeless)
- People who are owed a duty by any local authority under Section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 or who are occupying property secured by any authority under Section 192(3)
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the Peterborough district, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)

5.2 Priority Bands

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria for registration will have their individual housing needs assessed and their application will then be placed in one of five priority Bands according to their circumstances. Where there is accumulation of need, they may be placed in a higher Band. The Banding scheme is attached in Appendix 1. The assessment may involve an interview or home visit.

Tenants of partner RSLs wishing to transfer to alternative accommodation will be assessed in the same way.

Allocation is firstly by Band order (Band 1 being first priority) and then by the date that the applicant was placed in that Band. In the case of homeless applicants this means the date that the applicant is informed in writing that the Council has decided that it has a duty to secure accommodation for them, and not the date the applicant was placed in temporary accommodation.

Generally, tenants of RSL partners who wish to transfer will not be allowed to move unless their landlord is satisfied that there are no rent arrears, that the property is in good condition and that there are no breaches of tenancy conditions.

5.3 Moves on medical grounds

Applicants who feel they need to be housed on medical grounds will be required to complete a separate medical assessment form giving details of their health problems, how their current accommodation affects their condition and how rehousing will help.

The Council will consider advice before determining the level of priority that will be given. The advice will be sought either from an internal suitably qualified or experienced officer such as an occupational therapist or from the Council's medical adviser. The priority awarded will override, high, medium, low or nil. Applicants should note that whilst advice will be sought, the decision will be made by the Council. In some cases the Council may feel that in the circumstances it is not appropriate or reasonable to accept the advice. If this is the case reasons will be given.

5.4 Applicants with a physical disability

The Council may seek the help of an occupational therapist to determine whether a property is suitable.

5.5 Applications from people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

Applications from people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days will be assessed under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

Priority need applicants may be placed in temporary accommodation whilst their eligibility is assessed. If the Council accepts that the applicant is eligible for housing, in priority need and either homeless or threatened with homelessness unintentionally the Council may secure one reasonable offer of accommodation. This offer may be secured by the Council requiring the applicant to bid under the Choice Based Lettings Scheme; by the Council bidding on behalf of the applicant; by the making of an offer of tenancy through the Council's nomination rights; or by securing a private sector tenancy. Secured through one of these sources, only one offer of accommodation will be made and this will be a final offer under Section 193(7) of the Housing Act 1996. In this way, the Council will have discharged its duty - the applicant will be notified at the time of the offer of this and the consequences of refusal.

5.6 Underoccupation

Priority within the allocation scheme is awarded to tenants of RSL partner landlords who are underoccupying their home. Tenants underoccupying by 2 or more bedrooms will be placed in Band 1. Where a five bedroom property is underoccupied, additional priority may be given to release the property as soon as possible for allocation

RSL partner tenants underoccupying by one bedroom will be placed in Band 2.

5.7 Statutory Overcrowding of a Partner RSL tenant

If the tenant's household is statutorily overcrowded as defined in Part 10 of the Housing Act 1985, (or any subsequent replacement legislation or regulations) they will be placed in Band 1 (urgent rehousing), except where they have caused the overcrowding by unreasonably inviting additional persons to live with them.

Applicants overcrowded by two or more bedrooms will be placed in Band 1 even if the accommodation is not statutorily overcrowded.

5.8 Retiring or redundant Council or RSL service occupiers (tied accommodation)

A service occupier is someone occupying tied accommodation as a condition of their employment with the Council or with a partner RSL (who is a member of the Common Housing Register) for the better performance of their duties.

When a service occupier retires, is made redundant, leaves after a reasonable period of service (other than as a result of disciplinary investigations or proceedings), or is no longer required to occupy the accommodation for the better performance of his/her duties, he/she will be made one suitable offer provided they meet the eligibility criteria for registration onto the register, do not own a property elsewhere which is, or could be, available for their occupation, and it is not reasonable for them to purchase a home. Where the property is required quickly to enable the new postholder to carry out the essential requirements of their job description, additional priority may be awarded and an offer made as soon as possible.

Service occupiers who are dismissed for misconduct, who resign as a result of disciplinary investigations or proceedings, who fail to satisfactorily complete probationary periods or who resign within a year of appointment will not receive any additional priority as a result of having to leave a service tenancy.

Former service occupiers will not normally be rehoused in schemes or establishments in which they were employed, or in the locality of such schemes.

In all cases of rehousing from tied accommodation, the unacceptable behaviour test will be applied and applicants will be required to meet the criteria for entry to the register as specified in Section 4.

Only one suitable offer will be made. Note will be taken of the applicant's choice of area and property type, but it may not be possible to meet these. The property will be required urgently for the postholder. If the offer is refused, possession proceedings will be commenced and the applicant removed from the Council's housing register. If the applicant re-applies to go on the register, no further offers will be made whilst the applicant remains living at this address. Note will, however, be taken of individual and any changed circumstances.

Applicants will need to be aware that the Housing Corporation normally prohibits the housing of former employees unless this is a contractual right. In these cases, it will be necessary to

nominate to a different RSL and this could, depending upon demand for that RSL's housing, result in a longer waiting time.

5.9 Key Workers

The Council is working with a number of partners to deliver affordable housing for key workers. The arrangements for the nomination will be contained in a separate Key Worker Policy document which the Council will negotiate with its partners, and will be subject to separate consultation. Priorities under these schemes will be defined in the individual schemes that are produced.

5.10 Sustainable Lettings Policies

In rural areas, there may be some sites where planning permission and/or funding was given subject to a condition that the development should be for local people. In such areas, priority will be given to local people.

This policy contains provision to maximise choice and this is seen as a key step in achieving cohesive communities (*See "Offering Communities Real Choice – Lettings and Community Cohesion" from the Chartered Institute of Housing*).

5.11 Indirect Exchanges

Mutual exchanges by assignment are not governed by this policy. An indirect exchange occurs when one tenant is offered a vacant property, which will then enable a chain of exchanges to take place and to free up a much needed property. Such indirect exchanges will be allowed only at the discretion of the Housing Options Manager where they best make use of all properties involved and where it is reasonable to do so, taking into account supply and demand issues.

5.12 Where There is No Right of Succession (following tenant's death)

In cases where there is no statutory or contractual right of succession, requests are often received from those remaining in the property to be granted the tenancy. The designated officer may agree to such requests after taking into account how long the applicant has lived in the property as their sole or principal home, the size and type of the property, particularly any underoccupation, whether there are special facilities or adaptations which would be unused, whether the applicant benefits from any local support networks and any other relevant issues. However, in all cases, the applicant will be required to meet the criteria for entry to the housing register as specified in Section 4.

5.13 Reduced priority to those in breach of tenancy condition

The Council will reduce priority to applicants who breach their tenancy conditions. For example, tenants of partner RSLs who have rent arrears in excess of one month's gross rent or who have broken their tenancy agreement in other ways, such as damaging the property or engaging in anti social behaviour, will not receive offers of a transfer or have bids accepted unless there are special circumstances.

5.14 Reduced priority for non local people

Applicants who live outside Peterborough other than those who need to move to a particular locality on social and welfare grounds, thereby qualifying for Band 2, will be placed in Band 5.

7. Sheltered Housing

7.1 Conventional/Category 1 or 2 Sheltered Housing: Who Can Register?

Applicants will need to be eligible to register on the Council's housing register as specified in Sections 4 and 5. Priority will be given to applicants with a local connection in accordance with paragraphs 4.3.1 and 4.3.2. Applicants who do not have a local connection will be placed in Band 5 unless they can demonstrate a need to move to a particular locality on social or welfare grounds, in which case, the application will be placed in Band 2.

In addition, applicants should generally:

- Be aged 60 or over and retired from full time employment (younger persons, for example aged 55 and above, may be accepted on to the housing register for sheltered housing where individual need is demonstrated, such as having a physical disability or community care need);
- Be able to live independently with the support that can be provided;
- Be willing to accept support services provided by the landlord or outside agencies and be able to benefit from the environment provided;
- Need the support that sheltered housing (for example its warden, alarm system and environment) can provide;

Applicants' housing need will be assessed taking the above into account and their application will be placed in the appropriate Band.

7.2 Extra Care/Very Sheltered Housing: Who Can Register?

In addition to the above, applicants for this form of housing will require assistance with daily and or personal care and support tasks but will be able to care for themselves and live independently with the support of community care services such as home care and meals on wheels. The needs of carers and their ability to cope and provide the support required will also be taken into account.

A joint housing and community care assessment will be carried out by a panel of professionals dealing with the case, (for example, housing, health, social care) who will recommend allocation on the basis of individual need. The Banding system will not be used. Priority will be given to those applicants at greatest risk as a result of living in unsuitable accommodation where adequate support cannot reasonably be provided, who are requiring discharge from hospital or who would otherwise have to go into residential or nursing care.

Priority will be given to applicants with a local connection in accordance with paragraphs 4.3.1 and 4.3.2. Applicants who do not have a local connection will be placed in Band 5 unless they can demonstrate a need to move to a particular locality on social or welfare grounds, in which case, the application will be placed in Band 2.

8. How Choice Works

8.1 Choice Based Lettings

When the Council becomes aware that a property is due to become available for allocation, an assessment will be carried out to determine whether the empty property will be allocated through the choice based lettings procedure. In the majority of cases, properties will be let through the choice based lettings scheme and applicants will need to bid for the home they wish to secure rather than waiting for the Council to make them an offer when they reach the top of the list.

The partner RSL will specify if a property is to be let through choice based lettings or through the traditional route of being offered to the applicant with the highest priority. Where properties are offered through a traditional route, an available property will be designated for allocation to a particular Band in accordance with the Annual Lettings Plan. Where properties are offered through choice based lettings, priority will be given to applicants in greatest housing need. This means that Band 1 applicants will receive priority. If there are no qualifying bids from that Band, priority will then be given to Band 2 applicants, and then subsequently, Bands 3, then 4 and then 5.

8.2 Some Properties Will Be Reserved For Transfer

The Council will, in accordance with its lettings plan and the nominations agreement agreed with Cross Keys Homes at stock transfer, designate some properties as being available only for existing RSL tenants who wish to transfer. In the majority of cases, offers will not be made and applicants will need to bid for a property.

8.3 The Bidding Process

Properties available will be advertised and applicants may bid for up to three properties within the timescale specified. In the case of vulnerable applicants or those with support needs, the Council may bid on behalf of the applicant if it is considered that the property is suitable.

The three applicants with highest priority, taking account of the bedroom standard and property type criteria (see Appendix 2) will be selected to view. Priority will be by date order of the applicant being placed in that Band. For example, three applicants from the relevant Band would be chosen to view. If all three expressed an interest in the property and the Banding dates were 2001, 2002 and 2003, the property would be offered to the applicant who had been placed in that Band in 2001. If they turned it down, it would then be offered to the applicant who had been Banded in 2002. If they turned it down, it would be offered to the applicant who had been Banded in 2003.

Properties will not normally be offered to applicants who do not express an interest unless they are statutory homeless or the Council or RSL requires them to move.

Where historically the property types takes longer than average to let, more than three applicants may be invited to view.

If there are no successful bids, a further selection of three applicants from the original advertisement may be made and offered the opportunity to view. Alternatively, the property may be re-advertised, depending upon the timescales and the need to let properties quickly.

Where there is low demand (or there has been more than two refusals) the property may be offered to a lower priority Band or the bedroom size requirement relaxed. This supports the aim to relet properties effectively and quickly.

8.4 Other Lettings

Applicants may choose the areas in which they wish to live. However, if accommodation is in short supply in the area chosen, the applicant will have to wait for a significant period (usually several years unless in Band 1) and may be asked if they wish to widen their choice of area.

Applicants may register for all areas if they wish.

Applicants may choose the type of property they require, but houses are generally allocated to families with dependent children. Applicants cannot choose properties larger than they need and the bedroom standard will apply.

8.5 Number of Offers

Where properties are offered through the traditional route (i.e. by offer rather than by the applicant bidding) and the Council allocates the property to the person with the highest priority, there is no penalty if the offer is refused and no limit to the number of offers that will be made unless

- The applicant is statutorily homeless; or
- Is homeless and in temporary accommodation; or
- Is required to leave a service or tied tenancy; or
- The policy specifies that in the particular circumstance only one offer will be made

in which case only one reasonable offer will be made and the applicant will be removed from the housing register. Applicants in temporary or tied accommodation will be required to leave at the expiry of their notice period and to find their own accommodation. The application will be re-assessed based on the new accommodation and any applicant who is still homeless will be placed in Band 2 of the register rather than Band 1.

Where applicants do not make a bid under the choice based lettings scheme, generally no priority is lost as a result of not bidding or turning down an offer following a successful bid. However, if the applicant is in one of the above categories, the Council may bid on their behalf. If the applicant refuses the tenancy, no further offers will be made, and the applicant will be required to move out of the temporary accommodation and the above re-assessment criteria will apply.

8.6 Property Size and Type

8.6.1 Size

The size of property will be in accordance with the Bedroom Standards Policy which is attached in Appendix 2.

Exceptions may be made to the size rules where

- The Council is satisfied that medical advice has established that a larger property is required on medical grounds;
- In cases where a carer is required to live with the applicant in order to prevent entry into residential care or hospital;
- Tenants of landlords who are part of the common housing register who are underoccupying properties of four or more bedrooms – one bedroom in excess of their assessed need may be allowed;
- The property has been refused twice and demand is low;
- Other exceptional cases approved as below:
 - * In the case of transfers of existing tenants partner RSLs, approval by the designated officer.

In the case of housing register or homeless applicants, approval by the Council's designated officer.

8.6.2 Type and Area

Certain properties may be designated for occupation by particular groups, or designated as not appropriate for certain applicants, either temporarily or on a longer term basis, including flats designated for occupation by elderly or disabled persons; temporary accommodation for homeless families; to address the particular management needs of an area; or to ensure that the Council facilitates the development of diverse and sustainable communities. For example, some RSLs have developed accommodation for BME tenants (black and minority ethnic) and priority will be given on this basis.

Bungalows and ground floor flats are in short supply. Preference is usually given to applicants with mobility, disability or other special support needs. In some cases, it may be necessary to allow a bedroom for a live in carer.

From time to time, it may be necessary for the Council to restrict the offers of accommodation it makes to families, in order to meet the child density rules required by the Housing Corporation, or to meet the management needs of an area in order to build sustainable and balanced communities.

8.6.3 Shared Ownership

Applicants who wish to be considered for shared ownership dwellings will be required to show that they can afford and obtain a mortgage to the required level.

Applicants will need to demonstrate they cannot afford to buy a property of a suitable size in Peterborough on the open market. The following will be considered:

- Income of applicant(s)
- Essential expenditure
- Purchase price
- Whether the combined housing costs are 35% or less of the applicant(s)' net income
- Any special circumstances relating to the applicant

Once these factors have been determined, priority will be assessed in accordance with this policy. The applicant with greatest housing need will be nominated for the property. In the event that the shared ownership property is let by choice based lettings, the applicant with the greatest housing need will be selected.

8.7 Nominations

When RSLs request a nomination from the Council, they often require more than one applicant to be put forward. Applicants need, therefore, to understand that a nomination may not result in an offer being made.

8.7 Homeless households

Applicants who are accepted by the Council as being statutorily unintentionally homeless and in priority need will be placed in Band 1. In most cases temporary accommodation will have been provided.

Applicants who are homeless but not in priority need or who are intentionally homeless will be placed in Band 2.

Homeless applicants in Band 1 must bid for suitable properties. Applicants cannot remain in temporary accommodation delaying bids until their preferred property becomes available. Where applicants fail to bid, the Council may either nominate to an RSL to secure a tenancy or bid on their behalf.

If the applicant subsequently refuses the offer of a tenancy, provided the offer was suitable in terms of size and property type and any special needs, the Council will have discharged its statutory homeless duty to them.

If the applicant is in temporary accommodation secured by the Council, a notice to quit will be issued and the applicant will need to find their own accommodation.

If the applicant wishes to remain on the housing register, the application will be reassessed based on the individual circumstances. If the applicant had been placed in Band 1, the reassessment may result in their being placed in a lower priority Band because they will no longer receive homeless priority as the Council will have discharged its statutory duty.

9. Social Services Supported Applicants

9.1 Nominations

Nominations will be given to Adult Social Care (now part of the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership) and Children's Social Services between them as below:

- Nominations may be made to the Council for one, two or three bedroom properties
- The eligibility criteria for entry on to the register must be met. The unreasonable behaviour test will be applied.
- The nomination must be authorised by the Head of the Division (for example, Head of Adult Social Care, or Head of Children's Services or their equivalent).
- Offers will be made outside the Banding system and within a reasonable time, usually within 3-6 months. Choice of area will not normally be possible, although account will be taken of a need for a particular locality. Where it is agreed that a particular locality is required, the waiting time is likely to be longer. Although the applicant will be given priority, it will not always be possible to offer the next available property as there may be competing cases with similarly high priority.
- Appropriate care packages must be in place before an offer can be made.

The Annual Lettings Plan will review this arrangement and will consider the number and type of properties to be made available for the coming year. In year one up to four properties will be made available. When reviewing the operation of this clause regard will be paid to housing need pressures.

9.2 Children Leaving Care

The Annual Lettings Plan will contain details on the numbers of properties that may be offered to this client group. Generally, the Banding system will not be used and instead, one suitable offer will be made. In cases where the Council has been the corporate parent, children will be offered a tenancy when they leave care and will not be required to enter temporary accommodation. Children placed in care outside the district will be deemed to have a local connection.

10. Move On Accommodation

There are a number of establishments in the district that provide accommodation of a short stay nature with a view to the applicant moving on.

The Annual Lettings Plan will contain provisions to allocate a percentage of void properties to this group. These allocations will be made outside the Banding system but applicants will still be required to meet the entry criteria for the housing register. Nominations will be made by Landlords on the basis of who is most ready to move on, in terms of being able to cope with independent living.

11. Removal from the Housing Register

Applicants will be removed from the list in the circumstances below:

- If one or more acts of unacceptable behaviour occur after an applicant has been accepted.

- The applicant is living in a service tenancy or tied accommodation provided by a partner RSL and has refused an offer of accommodation.
- Applicants who cease to meet the eligibility criteria for entry to the register as specified in Section 4.

Where the Council has reason to believe that an applicant has become ineligible, it will inform the applicant in writing. The applicant will be given 28 days to provide information showing that he or she is eligible. If no reply is received within this period, or the Council receives a reply but is not satisfied that the applicant is eligible, the application will be removed from the housing register.

12. Authorisation For An Offer

12.1 Checking at the Point of Allocation or Choice Based Lettings Bid

When an offer is about to be made, or a choice based lettings bid accepted, a final check will be carried out to ensure that the applicant is still entitled to receive the offer. In particular, the Council will consider the following:

- Whether there are rent arrears in excess of one month's rent (this may not apply to homeless applicants in temporary accommodation or someone waiting for housing benefit). If so, no offers will be made until the debt has reduced as required.
- Whether the applicant or someone who lives with them or who visits them has committed acts of unacceptable behaviour such as anti social behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant of a partner RSL. In such cases, the applicant will be removed from the register.
- Whether the applicants (other than those who are already tenants of partner RSLs) are considered to have sufficient financial resources to buy a property within the district. If this is the case, and the property is in demand, the offer will not be made.
- Whether the applicant has deliberately disposed of property or other assets, including savings, to avoid the criteria in the above paragraph. In such cases, the offer will not be made and the applicant will be removed from the list.
- In cases where the applicants are considered to have voluntarily worsened their circumstances within the previous 12 months, with the effect of increasing their priority under the Allocation Scheme, no offer will be made.
- Partner RSL tenants whose property is in poor state of decoration or in need of repair that is the tenant's responsibility (other than those in Band 1) for example caused by neglect or damage. In such cases, tenants will be required to bring their properties up to a reasonable standard before an offer will be authorised. However, elderly or disabled tenants may be exempt from this requirement, as may others with special circumstances.
- Whether, in the case of a transfer of a partner RSL tenant, vacant possession will be given. An offer will not be made until the landlord is satisfied that vacant possession will be given.
- In cases where the applicant has given false information in order to receive priority, no offer will be made until a reassessment has been carried out. The void property will not be held whilst this is done and will be offered to the next highest priority applicant.

Authorisation for an offer may be withdrawn at any time if it comes to the Council's attention that an applicant who has been authorised for an offer falls into any of the above categories. Where appropriate applicants will be removed from the list.

12.2 Viewing Properties

Under the choice based lettings scheme, information published on available properties includes the date upon which viewings will take place. Once bidding has closed, a shortlist of, normally, three applicants will be invited to view. If applicants cannot or do not subsequently attend, their bid will not be considered further. The property will be let to the applicant with the greatest priority determined in accordance with this policy.

Where a property is being offered through the traditional, non choice based lettings route and a tenancy is subsequently offered, the successful applicant will be notified of the viewing date and if they are unable to attend, or fail to attend, the offer will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

Regard will be paid to special circumstances.

12.3 Employees, Members of the Council, Board Members and Their Relatives

All housing applicants will be required to declare whether they or any of their household or relatives work for the Council, or a partner RSL, or are an elected Member/Councillor or RSL Board Member.

The terms relative and household include:

- Anyone living with the applicant as a partner, or as a member of their household
- Natural/adoptive/step parents
- Natural/adoptive/step children
- Brothers and sisters
- Daughters or sons in law
- Grandparents
- Aunts and uncles
- Cousins
- Estranged spouses or partners, regardless of whether they live as part of the applicant's household.

Applicants' applications or priority level will not be affected.

Applicants to whom any of these descriptions apply will be required to have their offer authorised in writing by the designated officer.

13. Applicants Refused Admission to or Removed from the Register

13.1 Re-application

Any person refused admission may re-apply when he or she considers that the Council should no longer treat him/her as ineligible. The Council will consider the application on its merits and will consider whether there has been a change in relevant circumstances. It will be for the applicant to show that his/her circumstances or behaviour have changed substantially, and unless they are able to do so, admission is likely to be refused.

13.2 Notification of Refusal of Application

Any person who is refused admission to the list will be notified of this by means of a letter sent to their home or mailing address, giving grounds for the decision. The letter will also be made available for collection from Bayard Place for a period of 21 days.

13.3 Right to Request a Review of the Decision of Ineligibility

Applicants excluded from the list on ground of ineligibility may request a review of the decision.

13.4 Applicants Already on the List who Became Ineligible

If at any time the Council obtains information that leads it to believe that an applicant already on the housing list is ineligible, they will be removed from the list. Such applicants will have a right to request a review of the decision.

14. Witness Mobility Scheme

The Council and its partner RSLs support the witness mobility scheme and may consider at its discretion referrals made to house witnesses. The Banding system will not be used and one reasonable offer will be made. When making the decision to accept, the Council will take into account the level of risk the applicant is facing and the demand and supply issues at the time in Peterborough.

It will be necessary for the applicants to meet the eligibility criteria for entry on to the register in accordance with section 4 of this policy, and the proof of identity requirements in section 5. Priority will be given to local people in accordance with paragraphs **4.3.1** and **4.3.2**.

15. Exercise of Discretion in Exceptional Cases

Exceptional circumstances will be taken into account and priority awarded by the designated officer according to the individual needs of the applicant. One example would be exceptional cases where the composite overriding housing needs justified immediate or more urgent rehousing. Other examples include placing an applicant in a higher priority Band or allowing tenants with rent arrears to transfer. The Council and its partners will ensure that they do not fetter its discretion and will treat each case on its merits.

16. Joint Tenancies

The Council and its RSL partners encourage joint tenancies. Both the parties to a joint tenancy must individually qualify to be placed on the housing register. Joint tenancies will not normally be offered to parents and children in order to prevent future underoccupation. Generally partners will be required to accept joint tenancies.

Applications will be accepted from same sex households and joint tenancies will be granted.

17 Applicants who need to move on social or welfare grounds

Applicants who need to move on social or welfare grounds to a particular locality, for example, to give or receive care from someone, will be placed in Band 2.

18 Right to Review and Appeals

Applicants dissatisfied with a decision that has been made, including a decision to refuse entry to or remove them from the register, may request a review of the decision. The Review will be carried out by a panel of officers who were not involved in the original decision, and who are senior to the officer who made the original decision.

Requests for a review must normally be made in writing within 21 days of the date the decision was notified to the applicant, and should include the applicant's reasons for believing that the decision made was inappropriate.

Extensions to the 21 days will be allowed where justified by special circumstances.

APPENDIX 1: PRIORITY BANDING SYSTEM

Providing the eligibility criteria for entry to the register are met, an application will be placed in one of the bands below. The Bands are listed in priority order with Band 1 being the highest.

Band 1

- Overriding medical or community care priority
- Property demolished due to disrepair or compulsory purchase
- Property deemed unsuitable (by the Council's Private Sector Housing team) for habitation due to disrepair, stability or lack of amenities
- Statutory overcrowding as defined in the Housing Act 1985, unless caused deliberately
- Accepted as homeless, in priority need, and the Council has not yet met its duty to secure accommodation in the public or private sector
- High medical priority and substantial disrepair (assessed by Medical Advisor and Environmental Health)
- The Council is satisfied that the applicant (or a member of their household) has medical priority and is a victim of harassment, or violence, or abuse, or is at significant risk of harm
- RSL tenant overcrowded by two or more bedrooms
- Rehousing required to avoid child being taken into care
- Underoccupation of RSL partner property by more than 2 bedrooms

Band 2

- Accepted as threatened with homelessness (including tied accommodation, agricultural workers, others on service tenancies)
- Intentionally homeless
- Overcrowded by 2 bedrooms (not partner RSL tenant)
- Other Homeless including non-priority groups and those who have refused a reasonable offer of accommodation in the public or private sector resulting in the Council discharging its homelessness duty
- Harassment /violence/abuse/other risk (proven) – including young people at risk
- High medical or community care priority (including requiring heating on health grounds/need adapted property)
- Lacking any or all of: internal toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities
- Partner RSL tenant overcrowded by one bedroom
- Medium medical and disrepair
- Shared facilities (kitchen/bathroom/toilet/cooking/living) and insufficient bedspaces for the household
- Medium disrepair (repair notice)
- Underoccupation of partner RSL property (one bedroom surplus)
- Sheltered tenants of partner RSLs wanting to move to alternative sheltered accommodation or to move within the same sheltered scheme
- Separated family due to no suitable accommodation
- Need to move on social or welfare grounds, including needing to move to a particular locality (cared for/carer; children leaving care, education/training; specialist medical treatment; needing or giving support; move to or from supported housing; job reasons)

Band 3

- Medium or community care medical priority
- Overcrowded by one bedroom (not partner RSL tenant)
- Low medical priority and disrepair
- Low disrepair
- Need to move on from recognised short-term accommodation (existing agreements)
- Shared facilities but sufficient bedspaces
- Child under 7 years living on 2nd floor or above

Band 4

- Generally the current accommodation is of the right bedroom size and has all facilities
- Low medical priority
- Reciprocal arrangements with other local authority or RSL
- Child under 7 years living on 1st floor or ground floor in flat or maisonette

Band 5

- Applicants who do not have a local connection with Peterborough unless they need to move to a particular locality on social and welfare grounds
- Applicants with sufficient resources to purchase a property (outright or by way of a mortgage) or who can afford to rent privately
- Owner occupiers who:
 - * are adequately housed, or
 - * have sufficient resources to finance the purchase of a suitable property (outright or by way of a mortgage), or
 - * have sufficient resources to rent privately and in the circumstances it would be reasonable for them to do so, or
 - * own or rent a property elsewhere which it would be reasonable for them to occupy.

APPENDIX 2: BEDROOM STANDARDS POLICY

Please note that some properties are designated for occupation by certain groups of people. For example, in the case of bungalows or ground floor flats, preference is given to households with mobility or disability needs. Please read the policy in full for an explanation.

Studio Flat	Single Person
One bedroom flat / two person flatlet / 1 bedroom bungalow	Couple without children Single person (subject to demand)
Two bedroom Ground / 1st floor flat / maisonette, house or bungalow	Couple with medical need for 2 bed (flats or bungalows only) Applicant with 2 children of same sex (under 10 yrs) Applicant with 2 older children of same sex (if requested) Applicant with 1 child 2 Adults of same sex who need ground or first floor accommodation (flats, bungalows only) Applicants expecting their first child (subject to demand) Single person (flats only subject to demand) Couple without medical need for 2 bed accommodation (flats, bungalows only - subject to demand)
Three bedroom ground / first floor flat / maisonette, house or bungalow	Applicant with 3 children Applicant with 2 children of opposite sex Applicant with 2 children of same sex (preference to families where age difference is 5 years or more or one child is over 10 years)
Three bedroom 2nd floor flat / maisonette	Applicant with 1-3 children all over 7 years Applicant with up to 3 younger children (if requested) Couples and single people (subject to demand) 2/3 single applicants wishing to share
Three bedroom parlour / parlour- type house	Applicant with a need for a ground floor bedroom, or applicant with 4 or more children
Four bedroom house	Applicant with 4 or more children
Larger dwellings	Larger properties are in very short supply. The same method of grouping adopted above will be used. The Council will aim to allocate on the basis that children of the same sex will be required to share a room, and a separate bedroom will be allocated (where possible) where a child is over 10 years or there is a five year age gap

