

*Housing
Services*

New Housing Policy – *Thurrock*

Choice Homes



About this document

<i>Title:</i>	Housing Policy - Thurrock Choice Homes
<i>Purpose:</i>	<p>To set out how Thurrock Council will allocate all permanent accommodation available to the council including those provide through Housing Association nominations.</p> <p>The policy deals with how applications are made including council tenants seeking transfer and provides details of how the council gives reasonable preference to applicants with certain indicators of housing need. In addition it details how the council determines priorities when allocating accommodation and the circumstances in which the council may decide not to give reasonable preference to individual applicants who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour affecting their suitability to be a tenant.</p>
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Housing Management Team

Landlord Management Group

Housing Options Team (Homeless)

Thurrock Choice Homes (Lettings)

Council Members

Thurrock Housing Association Group (T-HAG) Members

Thurrock Homeless Group (T-HOG) Members

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1.00 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document details the allocations policy for letting Thurrock Council properties and determines priorities for allocating council accommodation and nominations to Registered Social Landlords. The allocations policy has been revised to comply with the changes made to Part 6 Housing Act 1996 arising from the introduction of the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation issued by the Government in November 2002.
- 1.2 The allocations policy set out the rules for determining which applicants are given priority for offers of council accommodation.

2.0 Objectives

Thurrock Council has decided that the allocations policy will be guided by the following principles:

- 2.1 Compliance with statutory guidance set out in Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 and accompanying regulations and the Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation issued by the government.
- 2.2 Ensuring that accommodation is let to those in most housing need and homeless people and people threatened with homelessness are rehoused as soon as practicably possible.
- 2.3 The allocation policy is transparent, simple, fair and easy to understand for local people, staff, members and stakeholder which results in accommodation being allocated quickly and ensures equal opportunities to all sections of the community.
- 2.4 It anticipates the majority of housing problems so that the need for individual delegated decisions is minimized.
- 2.5 It complements Thurrock Council's other strategies and responsibilities, for example to meet social care needs, promote social inclusion and sustainable communities
- 2.6 Increase user empowerment by offering applicants and tenants more information and choice of accommodation which enables customers to make decisions about their future housing and simplifying the assessment process and reduce officer involvement in deciding who is allocated accommodation
- 2.7 Updates the list of applicants who should be given reasonable preference for council accommodation/housing association nominations.

2.8 Remove blanket exclusion policies.

2.9 Housing applicants and tenants to be treated in the same way.

2.10 Enables the introduction of a Choice Based Lettings scheme.

3.0 Other Policies

The Allocations Policy will work in parallel to a number of other key policies and priorities of the council these include:

3.1 The Homeless Strategy

The allocations policy will link strongly with the homelessness strategy and some of its key objectives. In particular, to identify and reduce the level of recurring homelessness, to reduce the in appropriate use of temporary accommodation

3.2 Supporting People Strategy

The allocations process will seek to ensure that there is greater focus on tenancy support services, and that support is available to applicants and tenants who may otherwise be at risk of being deemed to be unsuitable for a tenancy.

3.3 Private Sector Housing Strategy

The allocations process will complement the aims and objectives of the private housing renewal work, empty property and house in multiple occupation strategies, and will work with the Landlords Forum, to provide options to applicants and tenants requiring re-housing.

3.4 Domestic Violence Policy

To operate in partnership with this policy to ensure that people experiencing domestic violence are only offered a move as a last resort and where appropriate perpetrators are moved or lose their tenancy.

3.5 Learning Disability Strategy

This strategy recognises that people want to live in their "own place" with support that promotes their independence. The New Housing Policy will ensure that there is better information about housing and support options to enable people with Learning Disabilities to make informed choices and participate in planning and managing housing and support services.

3.6 Medical Priority Framework Policy

Provides a comprehensive medical assessment framework which is fair and transparent to all applicants for housing and offers advice, information and awards appropriate priority to applicants or a member of their households where their medical condition is severely affected or exacerbated by the accommodation they presently occupy.

3.7 Community Strategy – ASPIRE

Seek to building stable communities and raise community aspirations. By extending choice it is hoped that factors other than absolute need will influence applicants' decisions, including access to jobs and training opportunities.

Supporting the ideas of sustainable communities and encouraging extended family networks by allowing applicants to be specific about the individual property they are interested in should further benefit the opportunities for economic and social improvement. The policy continues to support regeneration initiatives Borough wide, and also gives priority to those living in accommodation too large for their needs to help free up larger family-sized accommodation both policies make better use of council stock, ease the management implications of overcrowding and improve the quality of life for many residents.

3.8 Diversity Statement

Thurrock Council has agreed a "Diversity Statement" which underpins all our work, and ensures the commitments within the Diversity Statement are embedded in our decision making and service delivery.

The New Housing Policy – Thurrock Choice Homes complies with the Council's Diversity Statement and guidance cited below. The New Housing Policy has been equality impacted assessed by the Housing Action Partnership Initiative Group (a group of independent voluntary and statutory agencies including Thurrock Racial Unit Support Team (TRUST) and Disability Information Action Team (DIAL).

3.9 The Commission for Racial Equality Rented Housing Code of Practice recommends that all housing organisations review regularly and systematically all housing policies to ensure they do not discriminate against any particular racial group. In addition it recommends that local housing authorities keep ethnic records and monitor them regularly. The council is legally obliged to ensure that the allocation of its homes is carried out in a non-discriminatory manner. S21 of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the CRE's Code for Rented Housing set out the Council's statutory requirements to ensure that it does not discriminate in relation to the provision of its housing and maintenance of the housing register.

3.10 It is vital to ensure that the New Housing Policy — Thurrock Choice Homes — is non-discriminatory and sufficiently transparent so as to be seen to be fair by applicants. The New Housing Policy will apply equally to everyone who applies to or is on the housing register. The Housing Options Service currently monitors and reports on letting activities this will continue to ensure that any trends that arise are identified and analysed for necessary corrective action.

4.0 DIVERSITY AND VULNERABILITY.

Thurrock is home to a growing number of diverse communities. We value diversity in our communities, promote an inclusive society and ensure all council housing and information about them are available to, and shaped to meet the different needs of all Thurrock's communities.

4.1 For those applicants or tenants seeking a move who are housebound, options such as directly mailing the newsletter or working with statutory and voluntary agency partners to provide personal customer support will be explored.

4.2 Applicants and tenants whose first language is not English will be offered a range of languages via the web-site, automated telephone system and all publications will advise where to get advice and support in the appropriate languages.

4.3 Properties that have disabled adaptations will in the first instance be labelled as available only to disabled applicants and tenants.

4.4 Properties available within sheltered schemes will be labelled as available only to those people that meet the council's requirements for entry to such schemes.

4.5 Other properties in blocks of dwellings that the council may designate for particular groups of people such as 'the elderly' will be labelled as only available to those people who meet the council's requirements for entry to such schemes.

4.6 As part of the assessment process, people with learning difficulties or mental health problems, may be awarded direct offer status. This will depend upon the severity of their condition and the support that is available to them.

4.7 The allocations policy will be monitored to assess the impact, if any, that offering choice has upon vulnerable and Black and minority ethnic groups and appropriate mechanisms put in place to ensure these groups are not excluded from housing opportunities.

5.0 HOUSING REGISTER

While there is no requirement to maintain a housing register, this is the most common and systematic way of recording information about people who requires alternative accommodation.

- 5.1 The council will maintain a housing register which include all people who apply for housing, including council tenants and tenants of Registered Social Landlords. The allocation of council accommodation and nominations to housing association properties will only be made from applicants on the register. The housing register is therefore made up of applicants or existing council or Registered Social Landlords' tenants seeking to transfer to other accommodation.

6.0 Eligibility Test

Applications will be accepted from anyone who is currently living in Thurrock and has lived in the borough for at least six months.

- 6.1 Applicants are not eligible to be included on the housing register if:
- 6.2 They are persons subject to immigration control where the status specifically excludes them from public housing assistance, or people who are not habitually resident in the UK.
- 6.3 If, in the past, their behaviour as a tenant, or the behaviour of a member of their household, has not been acceptable (for example, eviction from accommodation in the past because the tenant or member of the household was a perpetrator of serious anti-social behaviour).
- 6.4 Any person considered to be ineligible to be included on the housing register may request a review of that decision (**see section 10**).

7.0 Local Connection Requirement

People who live outside Thurrock can also apply to join the housing register if there is a local connection with the borough. These applicants must meet at least one of the following situations at the time of registration:

- 7.1 Have lived three years out of the last five years in Thurrock
- 7.2 Have lived six months out of the last 12 months in Thurrock
- 7.3 Work in Thurrock.

- 7.4 Have close relatives who presently live in Thurrock and who have lived in Thurrock for at least the previous five years (such as parents, children, brothers or sisters).
- 7.5 Living in temporary accommodation outside the borough placed by Thurrock or the local healthcare trust.
- 7.6 Living in a women's refuge outside the borough and referred there by the council or other Thurrock organisation, and living in Thurrock immediately prior to occupying the temporary accommodation.
- 7.7 Separated from other members of the household living in Thurrock and it is reasonable for them to live together
- 7.8 A member of Her Majesty's Forces, have served for at least five years, and either enlisted from an address in Thurrock or has permanent employment in Thurrock on discharge.
- 7.9 Thurrock 'resident' working/studying away from Thurrock.

8.0 Suitability Test.

Not everyone who is entitled to join the housing register will be suitable to be a tenant of the council or Registered Social Landlord. When an application is registered, or while it remains on the housing register, the council may withdraw the right to bid or an offer of accommodation or defer applications in the following circumstances:

- 8.1 Unless referred to above, people who live outside the borough
- 8.2 People who own, or have a financial interest in, a property. This means unless it is unreasonable to expect them to resolve their problem by: Selling the property and purchasing another one or adapting their present home.
- 8.3 In determining whether the application is eligible, account will be taken of the following factors:
 - Whether the applicant can sell their current home
 - The supply of accommodation suitable for the applicant's specific needs on the private market.
 - The expected equity after the proposed sale of the property.
 - The applicant's financial circumstances and commitments
 - The applicant's mortgage potential
 - Consideration as to whether the applicant's housing need can be met on the private market outside the borough. Special ties with the borough will be considered, as well as the cost of housing outside the borough
 - Whether the adaptation of the present property is a viable option.

- 8.4 Tenants with rent arrears.
Tenant with arrears of less than four weeks net rent (after any housing benefit entitlement) may bid for accommodation. However no offer of accommodation will normally be made unless all arrears are cleared.
- 8.5 Tenants with rent arrears greater than four weeks net rent will be deferred unless:
- exceptional circumstances exist i.e. there must be urgent grounds for re-housing (for example violence, decant, major works)
 - The tenant has entered into and maintained for six months an agreement to pay off the arrears where practicable and the arrears do not exceed the equivalent of a month's rent.
- 8.6 In making decisions, factors such as the exact level of arrears and the reason why the tenant fell behind with the rent will be taken into account. Conditions may be attached, for example that tenant can only be housed in same type and standard of accommodation as their present accommodation.
- 8.7 Where a tenant applies for a transfer and subsequently falls into arrears, they will not be made an offer of alternative accommodation unless arrears are paid.
- 8.8 When a tenant applies for a transfer but is not eligible because of rent arrears, their application will be registered, but deferred, and they will be told they will become eligible to make bids or receive offers of accommodation by paying off the arrears.
- 8.9 Any other property-related debts, for example, council tax arrears, a debt from a former council tenancy, or rent owed to a current landlord.
- 8.10 Breach of the terms of tenancy in other ways, such as committing anti-social behaviour, where court action could be taken
Unacceptable behaviour includes:
- Breaching a condition of the tenancy agreement
 - Causing a nuisance to neighbours
 - Being convicted of using their home for immoral or illegal purposes
 - Causing the condition of the property to deteriorate by a deliberate act or negligence.
 - Being convicted of an arrestable offence, in or in the vicinity of their home
 - Domestic violence, causing a partner or other family member to leave the accommodation.

8.11 Non payment of rechargeable repair
Where tenants have failed to repay charges as a result of a rechargeable repair or abortive call-out

8.12 Council tenants actively seeking to buy their home under the 'Right to Buy' legislation.

9.0 People with disabilities and adapted properties

Tenants whose property has been specially adapted for the needs of a current member of the household at a cost greater than £5000.

Tenants in adapted properties may join the housing register but will be placed in bronze band and may only bid for properties that will meet their needs or are adaptable. Tenants in this position should seek advice from the Housing Occupational Therapist.

10.0 Appeals/Reviews to join the housing register.

If an applicant is excluded from joining the housing register the council is prevented from allocating a tenancy to the applicant even jointly with someone else who is entitled to join. Applicants who are not eligible or who are excluded from joining the housing register will be entitled to a review of that decision and this will be explained in the advice letter.

11.0 Annual Review of the housing register

The council will undertake an annual review of the housing register. All applicants and tenants with priority banding on the register will be contacted and asked to confirm whether they want to remain on the register and whether their circumstances have changed.

11.1 The review will take place on the anniversary of the original date of application. Applicants and tenants will be expected to respond to the letter within 14 days. Failure to respond will result in a follow up letter giving a further 14 days to respond and advising the applicant or tenant that their registration will be cancelled at the end of this period unless there is a response.

11.2 In the case of applicant any subsequent application will be treated as a new application. Existing Transfer Applicants will retain their current registration date but will lose their priority banding.

12.0 Cancelling an application

The council will cancel an application from the housing register where:

- The applicant has requested it.
- The applicant is deemed to be ineligible to be a tenant
- The applicant have found their own accommodation with a RSL or private purchase
- A reply to the re-registration request letter has not been received

(or any other reviews undertaken)

13.0 False statements and withholding information

Applicants and tenants are expected to provide the council with accurate information at the time of application and after an application has been submitted if there are any changes in their circumstance.

- 13.1 If an applicant or tenant knowingly or recklessly provides the council with information that is materially false or deliberately withholds or misrepresents their housing circumstances, this may result in a criminal prosecution. If a customer has been allocated accommodation in these circumstances then the council or the Registered Social Landlord may take court action to evict the tenant.

14.0 Registration date

The date of registration will be the date that a completed application for housing is first received. For tenants applying for transfers this will be the date they submitted their transfer application. For homeless households this will be whichever is the earlier of their application for homelessness assistance or any application to register for housing, which may have been received.

15.0 Appeals and Reviews about joining the housing register

If a decision is made to exclude someone from the housing register, they will be provided with a written notification of the decision. The notification will include clear reasons for the decision. The notification will also include how the person can request a review of the decision.

- 15.1 The council bases all decisions on the information provided on the completed housing registration form provided by the applicant. Should the person feel that their banding is incorrect then a review can be requested subject to further supporting evidence being provided. It is the responsibility of the person applying to provide this. The council will not review an application without details being provided in writing.
- 15.2 People wanting to request a review of the decision need to submit a written request within 21 days of the date on the notification letter. The request for a review should be addressed to:
The Housing Needs Manager,
Housing Options Service,
Thurrock Council,
Civic Offices,
Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

16.0 Restrictions on re-housing people who have not kept their council accommodation in satisfactory condition

Council tenants are expected to keep their home and garden in a satisfactory condition. Before an offer of accommodation is made a home visit must be carried out by the Estate Officer or other nominated officer of the council.

- 16.1 If the accommodation or garden is not in satisfactory condition we may defer the application and not offer another property until the accommodation is brought up to a lettable (the Council standard) standard. – do you have a published lettable standard?

17.0 Restrictions on re-housing people who have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances.

Where an applicant has deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to gain priority on the housing register the council may defer their application for 12 months.

DETERMINING HOUSING NEED AND PRIORITY BANDING

18.0 Assessment process

Some applicants have an urgent and immediate need to move because of their specific circumstances. Where this is the case we will give them priority over other applicants on the housing register. Priority will only be awarded where there is a recognised, urgent and immediate housing need that cannot be met through the normal wait process. Other applicants will have less urgent need to move because of their circumstances, these applicants will be given 'reasonable preference'.

- 18.1 Many applicants will not be given priority but will be offered additional advice and assistance in joining the housing register and in making bids for advertised properties. The Housing Options Service will work with the applicant, their advocates and our partner agencies to provide this advice and assistance.
- 18.2 Applicants must be prepared to make bids within the Choice Based Letting Scheme and make appropriate choices in the context of the local availability of council or housing association housing and the urgency of their own situation. The Housing Options Service will provide accessible information on available properties and appropriate advice and assistance with making choices.
- 18.3 All housing registration forms will be checked for eligibility and suitability to be included on the housing register. If the person is ineligible, they must be sent written notification with the reasons why and how they can appeal. If the applicant is entitled to register, the information will

be assessed and the application will be placed in one of the three bands:

- 18.4 **GOLD:** Those applicants who require urgent/immediate re-housing, where the council has a legal duty to consider them for accommodation.
- 18.5 **SILVER: Those** applicants who the council has a legal duty to give 'reasonable preference' in the allocation of their housing under the Homelessness Act 2002
- 18.6 **BRONZE:** Those applicants who have general needs or adequately housed and do not fit into the above categories or who have the financial resources to meet their housing need.

19.0 **Gold Band**

People suffering from severe harassment or have been assessed as having urgent (priority 1) medical or welfare reasons for moving, will be given time limited priority to bid for properties. Existing Tenants will be able to bid for the same property type that they currently occupy or the property that specifically meets their assessed medical needs, as assessed by our Health Advisor and the Housing Occupational Therapists.

- 19.1 Where an applicant is facing threats of violence in their current home the first steps will be to make every effort to ensure that the applicant can stay in their home and use their accumulated waiting time to achieve a move if that is what they want to do. Every effort will be made to remove the threat by taking action against the perpetrator where that is possible, or by making the home more secure. Where this action fails, and in the view of the agencies involved, including the police, the applicant is in danger of serious harm then a referral for alternative accommodation will be made. Tenants will be able to bid the same property type they currently occupy.

20.0 **Silver Band**

The Homelessness Act 2002 states that councils should give 'reasonable preference' in the allocation of their housing to people in the following categories:

- If they are homeless, or being threatened with homelessness. The council owes them certain duties under the Act because of this.
- People fleeing domestic violence or threats of violence.
- If they have been assessed as having other urgent (priority 2) need to move on medical or welfare grounds.
- If they live in overcrowded or unfit housing conditions.
- If they need to move to a particular locality in the district to avoid hardship either to themselves or to others (this might apply, for

instance, if they are elderly and/or disabled and need to move closer to a relative to enable them to give support).

20.1 If, following appropriate assessment of needs (which may involve making further investigations into circumstances), one (or more) of the above situations applies then the person will be placed in the Silver Band.

21.0 Bronze Band

Those applicants who have general needs or adequately housed and do not fit into the above categories or have the financial resources to meet their housing need.

21.1 If none of the situations above applies, then the council is not allowed to give the application any particular priority within the law, and they will be placed in the Bronze band.

22.0 Direct offer group

The majority of lettings are made through the Choice Based Lettings scheme. However certain groups of applicants may still receive direct offers of accommodation, either because they have an emergency situation and are not able to use the Choice system because they are vulnerable in some way, or to facilitate moves relating to special schemes e.g. mobility schemes or as part of transitional arrangements e.g. homeless families.

23.0 Transitional arrangement

Up to the introduction of Choice Based Lettings, the council operated a policy of letting flats and maisonettes to first time council tenants. Houses under this policy would be offered to existing tenants only. In order to honour our commitment to tenants who have been waiting many years for a house, the council has agreed that half of all houses that become vacant will be offered to existing tenants who registered to transfer prior to 1 January 2004. This scheme will operate for five years from June 2005.

23.1 Flat to Flat scheme

The head of housing may agree an annual flat-to-flat quota. The purpose of this quota is to ensure that both council and housing association tenants living in a flat or maisonette, while generally adequately housed, may require a move to a larger flat or maisonette only.

This scheme allows the council to address the needs of tenants who would not ordinarily receive priority, while continuing to ensure that those with reasonable or cumulative preference are given priority.

Tenants being transferred under this scheme may only bid for alternative flats or maisonettes.

24.0 Selecting applicants for offers

Shortly after registering to join the housing register, the applicant or tenant will be notified in writing of their registration number, registration date (which would normally be the date the completed housing register application form is received) and the relevant priority banding. Applicants eligible to bid for properties will also be told the size of property they can bid for.

- 24.1 Anyone awarded direct offer status, or priority-bidding status, will receive only one reasonable offer. If accommodation is refused, the priority status will be removed and the application re-assessed to either silver or bronze status.

25.0 Time limited priorities bidding

Tenants and applicants who are awarded Gold band may be granted this priority on a time-limited basis. This acknowledges the urgency of the situation, both for the applicant and for the council. The initial time limits are:

- **Immediate** – A maximum of four weeks for homeless, domestic abuse, harassment, service tenants and special case priorities. An earlier offer may be made under the provisions below for final offer;
- **Urgent** - Six weeks for all other priorities
- **Planned** - 13 weeks for decant, under-occupancy priorities;

- 25.1 A priority can be reviewed and cancelled at any time if the applicant's circumstances change.

- 25.2 All priorities will be monitored closely throughout their initial period. During this time we will expect applicants with a priority to bid for any suitable advertised properties. Tenants will be able to bid for the same property type they currently occupy. This means that applicants will sometimes need to compromise on their ideal choice of housing in order to achieve the urgent move they need. It will not always be possible to meet all their aspirations within the time available. The council will offer support with making bids, including making bids on the applicant's behalf if they need this or if they are not making bids or are bid unrealistically.

25.3 If the initial time limit is reached and the applicant has not been rehoused the council will review the priority and may cancel it. In conducting the review the council will take into consideration the following factors:

- Have there been any properties advertised that would have met the person's needs?
- If so, have they bid for them? If so, why have they been unsuccessful? If not, why not?
- Do they have a specific need for property that has not been available in the time period and no other property will resolve their housing need, e.g. they have a disability and they need a ground floor property in a specific area so they can get family support?
- Have they received appropriate support and help in accessing the Choice Based Letting scheme?
- Do the person's circumstances remain the same or has the need for priorities gone?
- Is the applicant holding out for something that is unlikely to become available in a reasonable timescale, even though their need could be resolved by a more readily available property?

25.4 Having considered the above factors, the council may:

- Cancel the priority; or
- Extend it for further period; or
- Make one offer (called a final offer) of an available property that it deems suitable before cancelling the priority.

25.5 Examples of circumstances where the council will make a final offer are:

- To bring an end the council's duty toward a homeless applicant who is acting unreasonably by refusing to make reasonable bids; or
- Where it is felt that an applicant is at particular risk, for example they are suffering domestic abuse or harassment and are failing to make reasonable bids; or
- Where someone is refusing to make reasonable bids and is holding up a major works programme or;
- To enable the council to make best use of its available stock.

25.6 The council will effect a final offer by making a bid on behalf of the applicant and, if successful, offering the property to them. If the applicant refuses this offer their priority will be cancelled.

26.0 Other limits on priorities

A priority will only be given for a property that will resolve the applicant's housing need within the necessary timescale. This may not always meet all the applicant's aspirations. Some examples of what this means in practice are:

- An applicant who has priority for accommodation because they are fleeing harassment or violence are not expected to move to neighbouring streets or accommodation in the area of their current home.
- An applicant with mobility needs for level accommodation will not be given priority to move from a house with stairs to another house
- An applicant with priority for a three-bedroom accommodation because they are homeless can bid for houses, but are expected to bid for flats and maisonettes. Homeless applicants are currently given direct offer status *of flats and maisonettes only*.

27.0 Choice Based Lettings

Most properties that become available for letting will be advertised through the choice based lettings scheme and eligible applicants on the housing register, who are not deferred, can apply for individual properties that are advertised.

- 27.1 To ensure that the council fulfils its legal duties to give reasonable preference to those groups specified in the Homelessness Act 2002, a significant number of properties will be advertised as being available to those applicants in the Silver band.

28.0 Priority Bands

Priority Bands Gold, Silver and Bronze set out the criteria by which applicants will be made an offer of accommodation from the housing register (**see Appendix 1**). The Gold band is the highest priority. The priorities are based upon the council's statutory duties in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) and accompanying Code of Guidance.

- 28.1 The criteria set out in Priority Bands **Appendix 1** are illustrative descriptions and not absolute rules. The composite housing need of the applicant must be undertaken when making a judgement on the level of housing need and priority.

29.0 Making a Bid

Applicants can make bids for any property that is advertised as being available to their particular category. Properties will be advertised in the Thurrock Gazette weekly and on the council's website. Bids can be made by telephone or via the website. Couples normally eligible for one-bedroom properties may bid for two-bedroom accommodation however; priority will always be given to families needing a two-bedroom property in the first instance.

29.1 When bidding closes, lists are drawn up of bids that have been received for each property. The bids will be sorted first by applicant category: Gold
Silver
Bronze

29.2 The successful person will be the one who has been continuously registered on the list the longest. Final checks are then undertaken to confirm the eligibility and suitability of the applicants. Those applicants at the top of the list are contacted to make arrangements to view the property. If the applicant at the top of the list decides not to accept an offer of a property, it will then be offered to the applicant who is second on the list, and so on.

30.0 Viewings

In order to minimise the length of time a property is empty; arrangements should be made for multiple viewings wherever possible. This would mean the top three applicants would be offered the opportunity to view the property. This must be made very clear to all people viewing the property.

30.1 On particular 'hard-to-let' accommodation we will encourage the use of tenanted pre-void accompanied viewings only with the current tenant's prior written consent. The tenant may qualify for a rent-free period of up to four weeks, or other equivalent incentive agreed by the Head of Housing.

31.0 Offer of accommodation

It is important to accept that when giving choice to people, this means they also have the choice to refuse a property. However, because of the effect this may have on refusal rates and the possibility that void periods could increase, **where applicants refuse two offers of accommodation they have bid for, their application will be deferred for six months.**

31.1 Applicants can appeal against this decision and advice about the appeals process will be included in information sent confirming the deferment.

32.0 Spirit of choice

In certain circumstances applicants and tenants may not have sufficient waiting time for their ideal property or there are very few properties of the type needed in a given area or the applicants' circumstances are so severe that they are unable to wait for a property which complies with the bedroom standards contained in **Appendix 2**.

32.1 In these circumstances and in the spirit of choice, applicants and tenants can bid for properties outside the bedroom standards and retain their application date (they may lose their priority) while they wait for the 'best fit' home. The resulting move cannot make the household statutorily overcrowded, but should alleviate hardship or improve the household housing condition.

33.0 What can people bid for?
See Appendix 2

34.0 Detailed Policy on Priority

34.1 Financial Assessment

All applications for council accommodation will be considered against the financial resources available to the applicant to meet their housing costs. If an applicant's financial resources exceed the limits set in **Appendix 3** the applicant will not normally be given any priority for council accommodation, but will be encouraged to secure alternative accommodation in the private sector; buy a home on the open market or shared ownership schemes.

34.2 Capital Assets

The council will carry out a capital assessment for all new or repeat applicants to the housing register. For the purposes of this economic assessment, capital includes any holdings that have a clear monetary value, savings, investments, land and property. Where the applicant has provided evidence that the capital value of assets cannot be realised, the value of that asset may be disregarded.

In calculating the net capital the council will:

- Add together the total assets of the applicant and partner
- Deduct from the value of an asset any loan or mortgage secured against that asset.

34.3 The capital limit for cases where the applicant requires non-sheltered accommodation is £20,000. For applicants that require sheltered accommodation is £120,000.

34.4 The capital limit may be reduced if the applicant can demonstrate there are exceptional circumstances and hardship would be caused if they were given no priority on the housing register. The council will review the capital limit on an annual basis.

34.5 Key Workers

A Key Worker in Thurrock is defined as someone who is employed by a public sector organisation in the following or similar key worker position, Health Worker, Teacher, Police Officer, Fire Fighter, and other essential Public Service Workers such as a Social Worker.

Subject to the availability of resources Thurrock Council will aim to nominate assessed Key Workers to affordable housing opportunities specifically designed for key workers this includes Shared Ownership, Home Buy and affordable rent Schemes.

Council housing will not normally be allocated to key workers unless one or more of the needs criteria are met.

35.0 FRAMEWORK FOR REHOUSING ON WELFARE AND HARDSHIP GROUNDS

Housing Act 1996 Part VI – Allocation of Housing Accommodation

35.1 Local authorities allocation schemes must be framed so to ensure that reasonable preference is given to:

People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7);

People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2), or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985 or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3);

People occupying properties that have been assessed under the Housing Health & Safety Rating assessment process, and where Category 1 hazards have been found to exist.

People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds; and

People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

- 35.2 For the purposes of this policy framework the focus is on people who need to move on welfare grounds and people who need to move to a particular locality in Thurrock, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

36.0 Welfare Grounds

The Code of Guidance states that:

Welfare grounds is intended to encompass not only care or support needs, but also other social needs which do not require ongoing care and support, such as the need to provide a secure base from which a care leaver or other vulnerable person can build a stable life. It would include vulnerable people (with or without care and support needs) who could not be expected to find their own accommodation.

- 36.1 The following is a list of possible indicators that a person or their family may need to move on welfare grounds and should be awarded reasonable preference (Silver band)
- The need to give or receive care
 - The need to recover from the effects of violence (including racial attacks) or threats of violence, or physical, emotional or sexual abuse
 - Young people at risk
 - People with behavioural difficulties
- 36.2 Housing and Social Care officers will jointly agree and make a recommendation that reasonable preference is awarded following receipt of advice from social services.
- 36.3 Where accommodation is allocated to a person who needs to move on welfare grounds, it is essential to assess any support and care needs that are required. Prior to agreeing alternative accommodation, housing and social services should consider with the applicant whether his/her needs would be better serviced by staying in their current accommodation with appropriate support or additional security.

37.0 Hardship grounds

The Code of Guidance states:

This would include, for example, a person who needs to move to a different locality in order to give or receive care, to access specialised medical treatment or to take up a particular employment, education or training opportunity.

- 37.1 The following is a list of possible indicators that a person or their family may need to move on welfare grounds and should be awarded reasonable preference (Silver band)

- length of specialist hospital treatment, availability of public transport or hospital transport facilities
- whether there are any alternative employment/education or training opportunities, public transport facilities, help with transport costs, child care arrangements

37.2 Housing, in consultation with Social Care or Children Services will jointly agree and make a recommendation that reasonable preference is awarded (Silver band)

38.0 Sheltered Housing and Community Alarm Services (Pull Cord Alarm)

Sheltered and older persons housing is designed and built with needs of older people in mind. Most of our sheltered schemes and older persons housing are made up of one-bedroom flats or bungalows, although we do have few two-bedroom homes.

38.1 All applicants and tenants who meet the criteria below will be eligible for:

Sheltered Accommodation full/ part warden service

Criteria for housing

- 60 years or older and / or 55 to 59 years old in receipt of high level DLA
- Requires housing related support
- Single or couples without children

Owner-occupiers aged 60 or over, who have been assessed by the Housing Medical Advisor as having the ability to live in accommodation above ground level.

Tenants of Thurrock Council and housing association properties who are 60 years and over. (Where there is a specific age criterion a married couple will qualify once one spouse has reached the qualifying age.)

Tenants of private accommodation who meet the age criteria. Unless, previously having been owner-occupiers, or having assigned their home to relatives within the last five years. (Please see sections **8.2 People who own, or have a financial interest in, a property** and **34.2 Capital Assets**).

Community Alarm Service (Pull Cords Alarms):-

Criteria for housing

- 60 years or older and people with a physical or sensory disability regardless of age.

For Applicants under 60 years of age to be considered for this Community Housing normally an Occupational Therapy Assessment or a Care Assessment completed by Thurrock Social Services Department is required. (an assessment of need may be required)

- An Applicant who has been assessed as requiring on - call support
- 38.2 A priority move to a lower floor/ground floor within the same scheme may be considered for tenants who are resident in the scheme and have been assessed by the Housing Health Advisor as having a need under the medical Procedure stated in this policy (sections 18 to 22).
- 38.3 A priority move to a lower floor/ground floor with in the same scheme may be considered for tenants who are resident in the scheme and have been assessed by an officer of the council as needing lower/ground floor accommodation.
- 38.4 Applications from homeowners for sheltered housing without medical priority will only be accepted for hard to let first floor accommodation or other special letting schemes. Each application will be assessed on its own merits. This includes taking account of the following factors:

- Age of applicant
- Support needs
- Local community link including family or friends
- Whether the applicant can sell their current home
- The supply of accommodation suitable for the applicant's specific needs on the private market.
- The expected equity after the proposed sale of the property.
- The applicant's financial circumstances and commitments
- The applicant's mortgage potential
- Consideration as to whether the applicant's housing need can be met on the private market outside the borough. Special ties with the borough will be considered, as well as the cost of housing outside the borough

38.5 Where the council does agree to re-house the applicant, the applicant must undertake to place their home on the open market immediately. They may not rent their home or make any financial gain while waiting to sell.

39.0 Anti social behaviour – re-housing options for the victim

Where a council tenant is the victim of anti-social behaviour, Housing's first priority is to tackle the perpetrator and stop the unreasonable behaviour while supporting the victim in remaining in their home. This may be through a range of initiatives, which include emergency injunctions, Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and possession proceedings

39.1 Re-housing can be offered in the event of exceptional circumstances as set out below.

39.2 Permanent moves for council tenants suffering anti-social behaviour

In rare situations it may be clear that it is necessary to re-house victims of anti-social behaviour permanently in order to protect them.

The tenant may be offered permanent re-housing if they or their family:

- Are the victims of severe anti-social behaviour; or
- Have suffered violence or received threats of violence which are likely to be carried out; and
- It is no longer reasonable for them to remain in their home; and
- Measures to support them to remain in their home have been or are likely to prove ineffective; and
- The request is supported by a police officer of the rank of Inspector or above, and
- It is anticipated that this will be a permanent situation.

39.3 In most cases, this new tenancy will be on a non-secure basis until legal proceedings against perpetrators are concluded.

39.4 If it is felt that permanent re-housing is necessary this will be dealt with as Gold Band (time limited bidding) as detailed above in section 25.2.

40.0 Domestic Violence

Applicants can be assessed for priority if it is essential they move because:

- They have been treated violently or threatened with violence by their partner or someone else who lives with them
- Have been treated violently or threatened with violence at or near their home by someone who does not live with them. Tenants will be able to bid for the same property type they currently occupy.

40.1 Victims of domestic violence could be male or female however most victims of domestic violence are women. This policy applies equally to men and women and to people in gay as well as people in heterosexual relationships. It also relates to applicants who are abused by household members other than a spouse or partner and applicants regardless of landlord.

40.2 If the applicant is a council tenant and the perpetrator is not a tenant (or eligible to be a joint tenant) then the applicant must 'quit' the accommodation when they are re-housed. Anyone who remains in the property will be treated as an unauthorized occupier.

40.1 Where the applicant and perpetrator are joint tenants, the applicant, when re-housed, will be expected to sign a formal termination of the original tenancy allowing the council to repossess the property.

41.0 Homelessness

Where an applicant presents as homeless or threatened with homelessness they will be offered a Housing Options Interview and offered advice and assistance in the first instance. Where they are assessed and found to be statutorily homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need, and unintentionally homeless and the council has a statutory duty to secure accommodation for them they will be awarded Silver Band.

42.0 Supported Housing Move-on

The Head of Housing may agree a supported housing move – on quota for bed sit or one-bedroom accommodation each year.

42.1 The purpose of this quota is to ensure that residents can move out of supported housing to allow access to other people who have a need for the facilities and support available in the scheme.

43.0 Shared care of children

Only in exceptional circumstances will an applicant with shared care and not in receipt of the child benefit for a child/ren be eligible to include those children as permanent member/s of the household for purposes of determining property entitlement.

44.0 Mutual exchange

Secure tenants have a right to exchange their homes. A mutual exchange occurs when a secure Thurrock Council tenant exchanges their home with another secure or assured tenant (each moving into the other's property) with the written permission of both landlords.

44.1 An exchange will normally be allowed. The following is a summary of Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985 which set out grounds when an exchange will be refused:

- The tenant has to give up the tenancy under a court order
- Possession proceedings are being taken to regain the property
- The property is larger than the tenant needs
- The property is too small for the needs of the tenant and their family and would result in overcrowding or would break the normal letting criteria.
- The property has been let as a service tenancy
- The property has been adapted for a person with a physical disability and if the change were to go ahead, such a person would no longer live in the property
- The property is one of a group, near to a special facility, and if the exchange were to go ahead someone needing those services or facilities would no longer be living in the property (e.g. sheltered housing).

44.2 In addition to the above conditions being met exchanges are **only** approved on the following conditions:-

- Each tenant has a clear rent account or no debt arising from rechargeable repair.
- Each property is accepted in its present condition.
- No expense is incurred by the council, including loss of rent. Any work necessary by the council after the exchange has taken place may be charged to the tenant.

45.0 REVIEWS AND APPEALS

45.1 Review of Decisions

Under section 167 (4a) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, applicants have the right to

- 45.2 Request a review of the council's decision in respect to their application for housing.
- 45.3 Be notified in writing of any decision not to give any preference under the allocations policy.
- 45.4 Be notified in writing of any decision and the reasons why an application has been prevented from joining or excluded from the housing register because of unacceptable behaviour or conduct of the applicant or member of their household.
- 45.5 Be informed on request of any decision about the facts of the applicant's case, which has been or is likely to be taken into account in considering whether to make an offer of accommodation.
- 45.6 Applicants who wish to challenge a decision of the council made within its allocation procedures should try to resolve the problem informally in the first instance.
- 45.7 Council tenants should approach their Area Housing Office, and all other applicants should approach the Housing Options service. Any time limits relating to a statutory right of review will be extended to compensate for time spent seeking informal resolution of the challenge.
- 45.8 If the applicant is still not satisfied, they may request a formal review if one of the following is in dispute:
- The eligibility of the applicant to join a housing list or to receive offers of housing
 - Removal of an applicant from a housing list
- 45.9 Formal reviews are considered by the Housing Needs Manager or other senior officers who have not been directly involved in the original decision.
- 46.0 Appeals against offers**
- 46.1 Applicants who believe an offer of housing is not suitable have a right to an internal appeal against the offer. Head of Housing or nominee considers the internal appeals.
- 46.2 When transfer and other applicants refuse a property it will be offered to another applicant immediately. If they are successful in their review they will receive another offer according to their level of priority. If they are unsuccessful they will lose their priority status.

47.0 APPENDIX 1

Priority Band	Illustrative description of housing need	Offer method
Gold	<p>Harassment</p> <p>People facing threats of violence, or have suffered actual violence, and all agencies involved, including the police at Inspector level, agree that a person would be in serious danger by remaining in their home. However, every effort will be made to remove the threat by taking action against the perpetrator. A direct offer or priority bidding status for <i>the same property type</i> will only be agreed if this action is unsuccessful, or is considered inappropriate. This will be decided by the Anti-Social Behaviour Panel or senior officers within the Housing Department and members of the panel for cases requiring a decision within hours.</p>	CBL - up to 3 months priority
Gold	<p>Retiring resident staff (caretakers or wardens) with 2 years continuous employment.</p>	CBL – Up to 3 months priority from the date of notification of termination of employment
Gold	<p>Tenants requiring smaller properties, where their council accommodation is needed by the council.</p>	CBL
Gold	<p>Involuntary removal of tenants (decant)</p>	CBL – Up to 3 months priority
Gold	<p>Additional preference</p> <p>Applicants whose households are</p>	CBL

	<p>entitled to reasonable preference in the allocation of housing on more than one of the grounds outlined in the section on the assessment process.</p> <p>An assessment of the needs of the household is made in order to determine whether the household should be accorded any ADDITIONAL PREFERENCE in the allocation of housing, over and above the reasonable preference already enjoyed by virtue of the household's position in the silver band. Consideration will be given to applicants who are vulnerable and need to move as a result of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old age • Mental illness • Physical disability or other impairment • Other special reason <p>Suffering harassment, but it is not life threatening.*</p> <p>Recovering from the effects or threats of violence, sexual violence or physical, emotional or sexual abuse.*</p> <p>S17 Children Act Assessment</p> <p>Carers Priority 1 Applications as assessed by the Medical Advisor for Housing*</p> <p>An Applicant who needs to move in order to access specialised medical treatment.*</p> <p>Where an Applicant needs to take up particular employment or training opportunities.*</p>	
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Gold	Under occupation of social housing in	CBL
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	<p>current accommodation where the Applicant wishes to move into accommodation that is in line with our bedroom standard.</p> <p><i>*Existing tenants will only be eligible to bid for the same property type they currently occupy.</i></p>	
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Gold	<p>Medical priority 1 will only be awarded for conditions that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe and Chronic <p><u>Medical Priority 1</u> will only be given to the most urgent of cases. The Housing Health Adviser will award priority 1 under the following circumstances:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a person is at risk due to the inadequacies of their home or is unable to go or be taken out. • Where a hospital in-patient or a person staying temporarily in residential care cannot be discharged home only because of the total unsuitability of their home, and where temporary accommodation is not suitable. i.e. where an adapted home or costly adaptations are required • E.g.: If a person is unable to access the toilet and or they are at serious risk on the stairs. • Where a S47 Community Care Act 1990 Community Care/Specialist Assessment has been carried out and it is confirmed by those professionals involved in the assessment that the provision of essential care or support service are not possible in the present home because: 	CBL
Gold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person is (in the opinion of those professionals involved in the community case assessment), at serious 	CBL

	<p>risk of either injury or harm or self or others if they remain in their present home. The home currently available is unsuitable for essential adaptations to be made or for essential equipment to be installed.</p> <p>E.g. If a person requires a 24 hour live in carer or needs major life saving equipment to be installed within their home.</p>	
Silver	Applicants in hostel accommodation to facilitate move-on and where the applicant is subject to a Multi Agency Public Protection Agreement.	CBL
Silver	Court Order where the council is obliged as result of a court order to provide suitable alternative accommodation. The applicant may be given additional priority to reflect the Court Order.	CBL
Silver	People who are homeless , in priority need and unintentionally homeless in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002.	CBL
Silver	Tenants and applicants who live in a property that has been assessed under the Housing Health & Safety Rating assessment process, and where Category 1 hazards have been found to exist. The property will be assessed by the council's private housing service,	CBL
Silver	<p>who will gather the appropriate evidence and carry out the necessary property inspection, to assess for hazards and harm, and how this would affect the most vulnerable group.</p> <p>the accommodation is owned by the applicant and in the opinion of the Council is for any other reason is clearly unsuitable for the household and the accommodation could not be readily sold, or if sold would not realise enough to repay debts reasonably secured on the accommodation leaving sufficient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> equity to secure alternative, suitable accommodation; 	CBL

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> they are prevented from occupying the property by a court order. 	
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Silver	<p>Overcrowding</p> <p>In line with section 324 of the Housing Act 1985 statutory overcrowding occurs when the permitted number of people for a property exceeds the following standards;</p> <p><u>Table 1 Room Standards</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No of rooms</th> <th>No. of people</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>7.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6+</td> <td>2 person per rm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No of rooms	No. of people	1	2	2	3	3	5	4	7.5	5	10	6+	2 person per rm	CBL
No of rooms	No. of people															
1	2															
2	3															
3	5															
4	7.5															
5	10															
6+	2 person per rm															

Silver	<p><u>Table 2 Space standards</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Floor area of Rm</th> <th>No. of persons</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Over 110 sq ft</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>90 – 110 sq ft</td> <td>1.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>70 – 90 sq ft</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50 – 70 sq ft</td> <td>0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less than 50 sq ft</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Both tables are used. The lowest number reached is the permitted number for the accommodation.</p>	Floor area of Rm	No. of persons	Over 110 sq ft	2	90 – 110 sq ft	1.5	70 – 90 sq ft	1	50 – 70 sq ft	0.5	Less than 50 sq ft	0	CBL
Floor area of Rm	No. of persons													
Over 110 sq ft	2													
90 – 110 sq ft	1.5													
70 – 90 sq ft	1													
50 – 70 sq ft	0.5													
Less than 50 sq ft	0													

	<p>All living and sleeping rooms are included when the permitted number is used. Bathrooms, toilets and kitchens are excluded.</p> <p>When working out the number of persons sleeping in the property, occupants are counted as follows:</p> <p>Over 10 years – 1 person</p> <p>1 – 9 years – 0.5 person</p> <p>Under 1 year - not counted</p> <p><u>Thurrock bed room standard</u></p> <p>As set out in Appendix 2</p>	
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Silver	<p>Domestic Violence</p> <p>The re-housing category awarded will depend upon the individual circumstances following an interview and discussion with a housing options officer. Tenants will only be able to bid for the same accommodation type they currently occupy.</p>	CBL
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Silver	<p>Welfare grounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the applicant or a member of the household is in danger of being placed in residential care unless suitable housing is provided or; <p>A person (or a household member) is already in institutional care but cannot be released because they do not have any suitable housing.</p>	CBL
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Silver	Medical Priority 2	CBL
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	<p>Medical Priority 2 will be awarded to less urgent cases, where an Applicant's quality of life is compromised and they do not meet the criteria for priority 1. The Housing Health Adviser will award Priority 2 under the following circumstances:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where more suitable housing would make a substantial improvement in the quality of life of the person. • E.g.: Presently unable to access the bath to attend to personal hygiene and alternative accommodation may have a shower. • Where a hospital in-patient or a person staying temporarily in residential care cannot be discharged home only because of the total unsuitability of their home, and where temporary accommodation may be provided on an interim basis to release a hospital bed or a residential care placement. 	
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Silver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g.: Unable to access the bath to attend to personal hygiene and alternative accommodation may have a shower. • Where a S47 Community Care Act 1990 Community Care/Specialist Assessment has been carried out and it is confirmed by those professional involved in the assessment that; • The provision of essential care or support is being significantly limited in the present home and • An alternative more appropriate home would allow a significant improvement in the level of care or support that could be provide • E.g.: A tenant requiring an Extra Care facility. 	CBL
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Silver	Applicants in hostel accommodation to facilitate move-on.	CBL
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Bronze	Tenants or applicants who are adequately housed Tied tenants	CBL

48.0 APPENDIX 2

What can people bid for?

48.1 The table below shows the size of home that people can usually apply for:

SINGLE APPLICANT	STUDIO
SINGLE APPLICANT TWO ADULTS (MARRIED/CO-HABITING)	1 BEDROOM

<p>PARENT/S WITH ONE CHILD TWO ADULTS (NOT CO-HABITING COUPLE TWO ADULTS (MARRIED/CO-HABITING)</p> <p>PARENT/S WITH TWO CHILDREN (SAME SEX)</p> <p>PARENT/S WITH TWO CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT SEX WHERE BOTH ARE UNDER NINE YEARS OF AGE</p> <p>* Applicants with a child/children will always take priority for 2 bedroom properties over couples without a child/children</p>	<p>2 BEDROOMS</p> <p>2 BEDROOMS Max 3 BEDROOMS</p>
<p>PARENT/S WITH TWO CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT SEX WHERE ONE IS OVER NINE YEARS OLD</p> <p>PARENT/S WITH THREE CHILDREN</p> <p>PARENTS WITH FOUR CHILDREN</p>	<p>3 BEDROOMS</p>
<p>PARENTS WITH FOUR CHILDREN</p> <p>PARENT/S WITH FIVE OR MORE CHILDREN</p>	<p>4 BEDROOMS</p>
<p>FAMILIES WHO FALL OUTSIDE ANY OF THE ABOVE EG WHERE THERE ARE 3 GENERATIONS WILL BE ADVISED OF THE PROPERTY SIZE THEY CAN BID FOR. THE KEY PRINCIPAL WILL IS THAT ONLY SIBLINGS OR MARRIED/CO-HABITING COUPLES WILL SHARE A BEDROOM.</p>	

49.0 APPENDIX 3 Income Limits

49.1 The income limits are set out in relation to the indicative rent levels for Housing Benefit as at 1 April 2005 in relation to the size of the property required by an Applicant and his/her household. The income limits for 2005/2006 are set out below.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	INDICATIVE RENT ROOM NUMBER	INDICATIVE.04. RENT as at 1.04.2005	WEEKLY INCOME LIMIT	ANNUAL INCOME LIMIT
Single	2	£98.65	£394.60	£20,519.20

Applicant or couple				
Single applicant or couple with one child	3	£122.60	£490.40	£25,500.80
Single applicant or couple with two children	4	£138.46	£553.84	£28,799.68
Single Applicant or couple with three or more children	5	£155.44	£621.76	£32,331.52
Single Applicant or couple with four or more children	6	£199.04	£796.16	£41,400.32