

# THE PETERBOROUGH HOUSING REGISTER



## THE COMMON HOUSING REGISTER AND ALLOCATIONS POLICY FOR SOCIAL HOUSING IN PETERBOROUGH

A PARTNERSHIP POLICY BETWEEN:

**ACCENT NENE**

**AXIOM HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

**BPHA**

**CIRCLE ANGLIA**

**CROSS KEYS HOMES**

**ECHG**

**HOME HOUSING**

**LONGHURST HOMES**

**MINSTER GENERAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

**MUIR GROUP**

**WHERRY HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

**AND**

**PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL**

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PUNJABI

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## 1. INTRODUCTION: A SINGLE HOUSING REGISTER FOR PETERBOROUGH

In accordance with the Housing Act 1996 Part VI (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), Local Authorities and/or agents administering the Local Authority's allocations scheme must provide a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme by 2010. Choice Based Lettings has been in operation in Peterborough since 2004.

Choice Based Lettings aims to provide applicants with as much choice as possible by openly advertising vacancies and inviting applicants to express their interest in voids for which they are eligible. This system further aims to simplify existing allocations procedures and provide an open and transparent service to applicants. For the purposes of this CBL scheme, an applicant includes anyone seeking housing through the scheme, including existing tenants of the Partners (see below) wishing to transfer.

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

Accent Nene	Home Housing
Axiom Housing Association	Longhurst Homes
BPHA	Minster General Housing Association
Circle Anglia	Muir Group
Cross Keys Homes	Wherry Housing
echg	

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
- encourage and support sustainable communities
- encourage and support social and financial inclusion
- ensure applicants are treated fairly, individually and in accordance with the Partners commitment to Equality and Diversity
- provide timely feedback about homes let through the scheme

### **3. SCOPE**

#### **3.1 OPERATION OF THE HOUSING REGISTER**

This CBL scheme has been designed to provide consistency across the Peterborough LA area. The scheme aims to take account of both the geographical and demographic make up of the sub region as well as the diversity of Peterborough's population.

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 amendments that 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.

### **3.4 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

### **3.5 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
- Five per cent nomination rights for management moves for existing tenants of partner RSLs

## **4. ELIGIBILITY FOR HOUSING**

### **4.1 WHO CAN JOIN THE HOUSING REGISTER?**

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

Existing tenants of partner RSLs Applicants will not normally be allowed to register for a transfer until they have maintained their current tenancy satisfactorily for a period of 12 months.

Requests for review of decisions concerning this policy will be considered by a panel comprised of representatives from partner RSLs and Housing Options.

#### 4.3 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

#### 4.4 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.

#### 4.5 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 (including children), has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour **serious enough** to make him/her unsuitable to be a tenant of any Council/ RSL, **and**
- in the circumstances at the time of application to join the housing register he/she, as a result of that behaviour, is still considered to be unsuitable as a tenant

Applications to join the Peterborough Housing Register will be assessed on a case by case basis, taking account of all available evidence.

Applicants who have four weeks arrears of rent (net of Housing Benefit) with an RSL or Local Authority will be given reduced priority for an offer of accommodation.

Priority may be restored for applicants who enter an agreement to re-pay and maintain the agreement for at least thirteen weeks.

Requests for review of decisions concerning rent arrears will be considered by a panel comprised of representatives from partner RSLs and Housing Options.

#### **4.5.1 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 may include:

- 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

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. Applicants who knowingly or recklessly give false information or withhold information relevant to their application may be guilty of an offence under section 171 of the Housing Act 1996. Under that Act, the local authority has the power to take action against an applicant which could result in a fine of up to £5000.

Applicants who have four weeks arrears of rent (net of Housing Benefit) with an RSL or Local Authority will be given reduced priority for an offer of accommodation.

Priority may be restored for applicants who enter an agreement to re-pay and maintain the agreement for at least thirteen weeks.

Requests for review of decisions concerning rent arrears will be considered by a panel comprised of representatives from partner RSLs and Housing Options.

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.

#### **4.5.2 MONITORING OF APPLICANT BEHAVIOUR**

The following applicants, provided they are otherwise eligible to join the scheme, may have their situation reassessed at six monthly intervals to determine whether or not their banding/ application should be reassessed:

- Applicants who have been found to be intentionally homeless under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- Households where the applicant or a member of the applicants household has been abusive towards either Council or Housing Association staff
- Households subject to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC), Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) or other order
- Households with rent arrears
- Applicants who have knowingly worsened their housing circumstances

Applicants who unreasonably turn down three offers of accommodation or who continually fail to attend viewings without good reason may be invited to an interview to discuss this.

If this behaviour continues consideration can be given to by-passing the applicant on relevant shortlists. A decision to take this course of action must be ratified by a panel comprised of representatives from partner RSLs and Housing Options.

Each application will be judged on its own merits.

#### **4.6 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.

#### **4.7 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.

#### **4.8 LOCAL CONNECTION**

##### **4.8.1 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 and the length of time spent in the forces.

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.

#### **4.8.2 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.

#### **4.9 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.

#### **4.10 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 cannot legally hold a secure or assured tenancy so will be given different occupancy agreements until they reach 18yrs.

**4.11 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.

**4.12 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 remain on the housing or transfer registers. 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.

**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 be required to provide the documents listed overleaf. In exceptional circumstances a senior manager may agree to accept alternative proofs of identification and/or address.

**Proofs of identification for each applicant:**

- Two items from Group A for each applicant,
- OR one item from Group A for each applicant and two items from Group B for each applicant:

Group A	Group B
Passport	Short Birth Certificate
National Identity Card	Marriage Certificate
Driving Licence	NHS Medical Card
Full Length Birth Certificate	Bank Card

	<b>Other Photo</b>
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Other personal information required	Comment
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 proofs 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 will not register the application if it is not satisfied that the applicant has given sufficient proof of identity and address.

**5.2 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.

### **5.3 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 may 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.

#### **5.4 HOME VISITS**

The Council or RSL may visit applicants in order to verify medical or other information. 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.

### **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 following categories:

- 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)

Reasonable preference will also be given to applicants who have lived in Peterborough for at least 12 months.

#### **6.2 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 will involve an interview and/ 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:

- a) the applicant(s) have held a tenancy for at least twelve months,
- b) and there are no rent arrears,
- c) and the property is in good condition,
- d) and there are no breaches of tenancy conditions.

### **6.3 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 re-housing 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 be overriding, 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.

### **6.4 APPLICANTS WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

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

### **6.5 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 unless there are exceptional mitigating circumstances. 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.

### **6.6 UNDER-OCCUPATION**

Priority within the allocation scheme is awarded to tenants of RSL partner landlords who are under-occupying their home. Tenants under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms will be placed in Band 1.

RSL partner tenants under-occupying by one bedroom will be placed in Band 2.

#### **6.7 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 re-housing), except where they have caused the overcrowding by unreasonably inviting additional persons to live with them.

#### **6.8 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 post-holder 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 re-housed in schemes or establishments in which they were employed, or in the locality of such schemes.

In all cases of re-housing 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 post-holder. If the offer is refused, possession proceedings will be commenced and the applicant will not be given preference on 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.

## **6.9 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.

## **6.10 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).

## **6.11 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.

## **6.12 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 under-occupation, 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.

## **6.13 REDUCED PRIORITY TO THOSE IN BREACH OF TENANCY CONDITIONS**

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.

## **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 section 4.6. 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 an age of 55 plus *and*
- have an assessed need for housing related support (scheme manager services)
- would benefit from the social activities available *or*
- a different level of support need e.g. life skills support for people with mild learning disabilities.

Younger persons may be accepted under certain circumstances for sheltered housing where individual need is demonstrated. In these circumstances the minimum age of consideration will be 50.

Applicants 50 plus will be considered for sheltered housing where;

- principal applicant in a couple is 55 plus and partner is younger
- there is assessed risk, vulnerability or disability and living in sheltered accommodation will improve quality of life
- a different level of support need e.g. life skills support for people with mild learning disabilities is required

There is no maximum age limit for applicants to our sheltered housing schemes. Though applicants must be able to live independently in their home with the support of care where this is provided.

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 PROPERTIES 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 re-let 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 bid for all areas of the city but can only bid for the size of property they are eligible for in accordance with the bedroom standards policy.

#### **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.

If, however, the applicants falls into one of the following groups:

- 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

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. 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.

Where applicants do not make a bid under the choice based lettings scheme, generally no priority is lost as a result of not bidding. However Applicants who unreasonably turn down three offers of accommodation or who continually fail to attend viewings without good reason may be invited to an interview to discuss this.

If this behaviour continues consideration can be given to by-passing the applicant on relevant shortlists. A decision to take this course of action must be ratified by a panel comprised of representatives from partner RSLs and Housing Options.

## **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 under-occupying 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 Housing Assessment Panel.
  - \* In the case of housing register or homeless applicants, approval by the Council's Housing Assessment Panel.

### **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. 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 choice based lettings let the shared ownership property, 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.

### **8.8 HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS**

Applicants who have had a duty accepted to them under the homelessness legislation 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 his or her 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. Landlords will make nominations 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 onto the Housing Register.
- 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 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**

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. 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 section 4.6.

### **14. EXERCISE OF DISCRETION IN EXCEPTIONAL CASES**

Exceptional circumstances will be taken into account and priority awarded by the Housing Assessment Panel 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 re-housing. 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.

### **15. JOINT TENANCIES**

The Council and its RSL partners encourage joint tenancies by people who are:

- a) Married or Civil Partners
- b) Co-habiting as a couple

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 under-occupation.

### **16. 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.

### **17. RIGHT TO REVIEW AND APPEALS**

#### **17.1 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.

## **17.2 RIGHT TO REQUEST A REVIEW OF THE DECISION OF INELIGIBILITY**

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. A panel of officers who were not involved in the original decision, and who are senior to the officer who made the original decision will carry out the Review.

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.

<b>BAND 1</b>	
OVER	Overriding medical or community care priority
DEMO	Property demolished due to disrepair or compulsory purchase
CLOS	Property deemed unsuitable (by the Council's Private Sector Housing team) for habitation due to disrepair, stability or lack of amenities
STOC	Statutory overcrowding as defined in the Housing Act 1985, unless caused deliberately
ACAH	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	High medical priority and substantial disrepair (assessed by Medical Advisor and Environmental Health)
MPRO	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
2OVP	RSL tenant overcrowded by two or more bedrooms
CARE	Re-housing required to avoid child being taken into care
PUN2	Under-occupation of RSL partner property by more than 2 bedrooms
<b>BAND 2</b>	
ACTH	Accepted as threatened with homelessness (including tied accommodation, agricultural workers, others on service tenancies)
INTE	Intentionally homeless
2OVE	Overcrowded by 2 bedrooms (not partner RSL tenant)
NONP	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
HARA	Harassment /violence/abuse/other risk (proven) – including young people at risk
HIGH	High medical or community care priority (including requiring heating on health grounds/need adapted property)
LACK	Lacking any or all of: internal toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities
	Partner RSL tenant overcrowded by one bedroom
MED	Medium medical and disrepair
SHOV	Shared facilities (kitchen/bathroom/toilet/cooking/living) and insufficient bed spaces for the household
MEDR	Medium disrepair (repair notice)
PUN1	Under-occupation of partner RSL property (one bedroom surplus)
SHEL	Sheltered tenants of partner RSLs with medical priority needing to move to more suitable sheltered accommodation.
SEPF	Separated family due to no suitable accommodation
SOCW	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)

<b>BAND3</b>	
MED	Medium or community care medical priority
1OVE	Overcrowded by one bedroom (not partner RSL tenant)
LOWR	Low medical priority and disrepair
LREP	Low disrepair
SHAD	Shared facilities but sufficient bed spaces
CHL2	Child under 7 years living on 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor or above
<b>BAND4</b>	
ADEQ	Generally the current accommodation is of the right bedroom size and has all facilities
LOW	Low medical priority
RECI	Reciprocal arrangements with other local authority or RSL
CHL1	Child under 7 years living on 1 <sup>st</sup> floor or ground floor in flat or maisonette
<b>BAND 5</b>	
AWAY	Applicants who do not have a local connection with Peterborough unless they need to move to a particular locality on social and welfare grounds
CARO	Applicants with sufficient resources to purchase a property (outright or by way of a mortgage) or who can afford to rent privately
OWN	Owner occupiers who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* are adequately housed, or</li> <li>* have sufficient resources to finance the purchase of a suitable property (outright or by way of a mortgage), or</li> <li>* have sufficient resources to rent privately and in the circumstances it would be reasonable for them to do so, or</li> <li>* own or rent a property elsewhere which it would be reasonable for them to occupy.</li> </ul>

## 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.

<b>Studio Flat</b>	Single Person
<b>One bedroom flat / two person flatlet / 1 bedroom bungalow</b>	Couple without children Single person (subject to demand)
<b>Two bedroom Ground / 1st floor flat / maisonette, house or bungalow</b>	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)
<b>Three bedroom ground / first floor flat / maisonette, house or bungalow</b>	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)
<b>Three bedroom 2nd floor flat / maisonette</b>	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
<b>Three bedroom parlour / parlour- type house</b>	Applicant with a need for a ground floor bedroom, or applicant with 4 or more children
<b>Four bedroom house</b>	Applicant with 4 or more children
<b>Larger dwellings</b>	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

## **APPENDIX 3: HOUSING REGISTER REVIEW PANEL – UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

### **Objectives**

To assist the Housing Options Senior Officer(s) where applicants have requested a review of a Housing Register or Allocations decision that involves unacceptable behaviour (including rent arrears)

To consider and seek a resolution to 'special cases' which require input from partner RSLs. These will include Emergency Transfers and applicants placed in Band 1 where there are issues concerning unacceptable behaviour.

### **Membership**

Housing Options Senior Officer

Representatives from:

Main Partners

Accent Nene  
Axiom Housing Association  
Cross Keys Homes  
Minster Housing Association

Other Partners

Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association  
Circle Anglia  
English Churches Housing Group  
Home Housing  
Longhurst Homes  
Muir Group

### **Standing Orders**

The Panel will meet on a fortnightly basis but can also be convened at any time should the need arise.

Members will be given at least 24 hours notice of changes to meeting times.

Members should give at least 48 hours notice if their organisation cannot attend.

A list of cases to be discussed will be distributed at least 24 hours before the Panel convenes.

One Housing Options Senior Officer and representatives from two main partner organisations must attend for the meeting to be quorate.

The final decision concerning requests for a review will rest with the Housing Options Senior Officer.

Unless agreed otherwise, decisions concerning 'special cases' will be binding on all members.

Minutes of Panel meetings will be taken by Housing Options and distributed to members within 7 days.

Where appropriate the applicant and/or their representative will be invited to attend.

The Panel can invite other professionals and agencies to attend where this would be beneficial to the decision process.