

Housing Allocations Policy



If you have any queries regarding the content of this document please contact:

Neville Rowe – Principal Policy Officer
Strategy and Research Unit,
Partnerships & Housing Directorate,
Sandwell MBC



Tel: 0121 – 569 5316

E-mail: neville_rowe@sandwell.gov.uk

The responsibility for the content of this policy will at all times remain with Sandwell MBC, whilst through their management function, the officers of Sandwell Homes will carry out the majority of the processes and functions contained within it.

This policy is effective from 13th May 2009.

If you require any assistance in understanding the information please ask a friend or a relative who can speak English to call us on 0121 569 5316 .

Bengali এ তথ্যাদি অনুবাদে আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হলে, দয়া করে ইংরেজী জানেন এমন একজন বন্ধু বা আত্মীয়কে আমাদেরকে 0121 569 5316 এ নাম্বারে ফোন করতে বলুন।

Gujarati અ. માહિતીના ભાષાંતરમા જો તમને મદદ જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને અંગેજી બોલતા કોઈ ભાઈબંધ કે કુટુંબીજનને, કહો કે અમને 0121 569 5316 ઉપર ફોન કરે.

Punjabi ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਨੂੰ 0121 569 5316 ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ।

Arabic إن رغبتم بالحصول على مساعدة على ترجمة هذه المعلومات يرجى أن تطلبوا من صديق أو من أحد أفراد الأسرة ممن يتحدثون اللغة الإنجليزية الاتصال بنا على الهاتف 0121 569 5316 .

Urdu اگر ان معلومات کے ترجمے میں آپ کو مدد درکار ہو، تو انگریزی بولنے والے کسی دوست یا گھر کے کسی فرد سے کہیں کہ وہ ہم سے 0121 569 5316 پر بات کرے۔

Somali Haddii aad u baahantahay in lagaa kaalmeyo sidii aad u fahnto macluumaadka ku yaala qoraalkan akhbaarta, weydii saaxiib ama qaraabo, ku hadla afka ingriiska, inuu naga soo waco taleefan lambarka; 0121 569 5316

Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
A Policy aims and overview	4
1 Policy overview	4
2 Policy aims	4
B Registration with the CBL scheme	6
1. Joining the CBL Register	6
2. Notification of a change in housing circumstances	7
3. Giving false information or withholding information	7
4. Removal from the CBL Register	8
C Advertising properties	9
1. Advertisements	9
2. Low cost home ownership schemes	9
3. Extra care schemes	9
4. Publishing results	10
D Housing allocation process	11
1. Banding system	11
2. Expressing an interest (bidding)	12
3. Short-listing	13
4. Allocation of houses	13
5. Notification of bidding outcome and offers of accommodation	14
6. Providing choice for disabled people with access needs	15
7. Persons moving from supported accommodation	16
8. Households affected by clearance programmes and private sector enforcement action	16
9. Vulnerable persons	18
10. Direct offers of accommodation	18
11. Upgrading and downgrading of Housing Need Priority	19
12. Type of tenancy issued	19
13. Local lettings plans	20
E Non-eligibility and reduction or removal of housing priority	21
1. Persons excluded from joining the CBL Register	21

2.	Reduction or removal of housing need priority	22
F	Miscellaneous	23
1.	Confidentiality	23
2.	Conflicts of Interest	23
3.	Successions and Assignments and Non-Successors (including joint tenancy terminations)	23
4.	Mutual exchanges	25
5.	Terminating a tenancy	26
6.	Reviews and appeals	26
7.	Monitoring and reviewing the policy	26
G	Garage allocations policy	27
1.	Garage allocations process	27
<u>APPENDICES.</u>		
Appendix One:	Property Household Criteria (Preferred Household make-up/property type match)	28
Appendix Two:	Definition of Adapted Property	29
Appendix Three:	Housing Need Priority Bandings	30
Appendix Four:	Glossary of terms	36

Section A

Policy aims and overview

1 Policy overview

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authority landlords to develop housing allocation schemes that put the applicant at the centre of the decision-making process by offering:
1. a choice of housing accommodation
 2. the opportunity to express preferences about the housing accommodation to be allocated to them
- 1.2 In order to deliver the above Sandwell MBC operates a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme for allocating its own housing stock and stock managed by its partner housing associations. This policy sets out how these properties will be allocated.
- 1.3 To extend housing choice further, the Council also advertises properties from the Private Rented Sector (PRS). PRS properties fall outside of the scope of Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, and consequently the policy and procedure for advertising and allocating properties from this sector is dealt with in a separate document: *Policy/Procedure for Private Sector Landlords and Choice Based Lettings*.

2 Policy aims

- 2.1 Through this housing allocations policy Sandwell MBC aims to:
- ensure that Council properties and partner organisation properties are let fairly to fulfil the Council's legal and equality obligations
 - help fulfil the Council's responsibilities to people in housing need
 - contribute to community sustainability, neighbourhood regeneration, social inclusion, and to promote the freedom to live in any part of the borough
 - give people as much choice as possible over where they live
- 2.3 This Policy is based on four key elements:
1. **Registration with the Housing Register.** Referred to as the 'CBL Register', in the majority of cases, anyone aged 16 or over can join the Register. Registration is covered in detail in Section B. Some households are excluded from joining the register and in certain circumstances an applicant's level of housing priority within the system can be reduced. This is detailed in Section E.

2. **Advertisement of Properties.** Vacant properties available for let are advertised on a weekly basis. Each advertisement will detail the preferred household size or composition that is best suited to the property. This is referred to as the 'Property Household Criteria' (See Appendix One). Other restrictions may also be included in the advertisement. The advertising scheme is outlined in detail in Section C.
3. **Housing Priority Banding system.** Some applicants have a greater level of housing need than others because of their specific housing circumstances. The Housing Act 1996 also requires that local authority allocation schemes should be framed around the 'reasonable preference categories' outlined in Section 167(2). To take account of these factors this policy operates a banding system whereby some households are placed into bands that give them priority over others. In all there are seven bands within this policy. The banding system is covered in detail in Section D.
4. **Expressing an interest in vacancies and the short-listing process.** Anyone registered with the CBL Register can express an interest in a property (so long as their household composition meets the requirements of the Property Household Criteria' referred to above). This is usually referred to as 'bidding' for a property. After the closing date the bids are sorted according to the short-listing process and the successful bidder is informed. The bidding and short-listing process is outlined in detail in Section D.

Section B

Registration with the CBL scheme

1 Joining the CBL Register

- 1.1 Sandwell MBC operates an open housing register, referred to as the 'CBL Register'.
- 1.2 All applications for housing will be considered in the proper way but, in law, certain households are excluded from receiving an offer of accommodation. Those not eligible are outlined in Section E.
- 1.3 Registration forms must be completed and returned to one of the Sandwell Homes Property Shops in order to join the CBL Register. Forms can be obtained from:
 - Any Neighbourhood Office
 - Sandwell Homes Property Shops
 - The Sandwell Homes website. The registration form can also be completed and returned on the website.
- 1.4 Help in completing the registration form will be available in the Property Shops or any of the Neighbourhood Offices.
- 1.5 Prospective applicants will be required to provide proof of identity. Applicants will have the choice of producing at least one of the following; Drivers Licence, Passport, Medical Card, Birth Certificate, Home Office documentation (where applicable). Proof of Child Benefit will also be required to confirm the residency of dependant children.
- 1.6 Prospective applicants who are tenants of either a Housing Association, another Council, or are privately renting will be required to produce a landlord's reference. If the landlord is unwilling to provide a reference at the request of the prospective applicant, Sandwell Homes will undertake themselves to request such a reference.
- 1.7 Once registration is complete, households will be sent notification of their registration date (usually the date of receipt of the application) and their registration number together with advice on how to bid for a property. They will also be informed as to which Housing Need Priority Band they have been placed into (See Section D/1).
- 1.8 In any event to Section 1.7 above, Sandwell Homes will undertake to inform in writing within 21 days on any decision regarding the eligibility of a household to join the CBL Register and also of the right to request a review of the said decision (see Section F/6).

- 1.9 All application forms will be available in Ethnic Minority Languages upon request

2 Notification of a change in housing circumstances

- 2.1 Applicants whose circumstances change are required to notify Sandwell Homes as soon as possible. Examples of a change in circumstance where notification should be given would include:
- Any confirmed pregnancy
 - Any member of the family or any other person on the application form who has left the accommodation currently in occupation
 - Any changes of name or address
 - Any additions to the household (proof of residence and identification will be required)
 - A change in status of accommodation (e.g. Notice to Quit)
 - A change in an applicants medical situation
 - A change in immigration status
- 2.2 If an applicant has changed address a Change of Circumstance form should be completed immediately. The date of application will be that of the first application (when it was accepted by Sandwell Homes). The level of housing need and corresponding banding placement may be adjusted to reflect the details outlined in the new application (See also Section D/11).
- 2.3 Where a CBL Register entry is amended following receipt of a notification of change, Sandwell Homes will inform the applicant in writing of any changes in banding placement etc.

3 Giving false information or withholding information

- 3.1 Under Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996, it is a criminal offence for applicants to knowingly give false information or to withhold information relevant to their housing application. An offence may be committed if an applicant knowingly gives false information, or knowingly withholds information which Sandwell Homes has reasonably requested on the housing application form. An offence is also committed if the applicant allows a third party to provide false information on their behalf or at their instigation.
- 3.2 If evidence is obtained that an applicant has gained a tenancy through providing false information or by withholding relevant information, the Council will, in all cases, consider prosecuting the tenant and taking possession proceedings. See also Section B/4.7.

4 Removal from the CBL Register

- 4.1 All registered applicants who fail to place a bid within a twelve month period will have their details and registration number removed from the CBL Register. Once removed from the register, applicants may register again in the normal way and will be awarded a registration date at the point that the new application is received. Applicants will be made aware of this procedure at initial registration.
- 4.2 Section 4.1 above will not apply to households:
- With a housing needs priority that has been extended
 - Where a statutory housing duty is owed
 - Where the applicant is aged under 19 years
- 4.3 Where a bid is successful and the corresponding tenancy is secured, the household concerned will have its registration details and registration number removed from the CBL Register. Once removed from the register, applicants may register again in the normal way and will be awarded a registration date at the point that the new registration is received.
- 4.4 In instances where a applicant has successfully bid for and subsequently received three offers of accommodation (including offers from housing associations but not private landlords), and has refused all three offers, the said applicant will have their registration cancelled. They will also be excluded from registering for twelve months commencing from the date of the third refusal.
- 4.5 Upon expiry of the twelve month exclusion referred to in Section 4.4 above, applicants will be required to re-register at their own behest. The date of receipt of the new application will be used in any short-listing process.
- 4.6 All housing applicants have a right to request a formal review of any decision relating to paragraph 4.4 above (see Section F/6). Applicants may also be removed from the register under circumstances set out in Section E/1.2.
- 4.7 Sandwell MBC will, in all cases, consider prosecution and the removal of an applicant from the CBL Register for a period of twelve months if there is evidence that the applicant (or a person acting on the applicants' request) has knowingly or recklessly made a false statement, or withheld information in connection with their housing application which has been reasonably requested.
- 4.8 Upon expiry of the twelve month exclusion referred to in Section 4.7 above, applicants will be required to re-register at their own behest. The date of receipt of the new application will be used in any short-listing process.

Section C

Advertising properties

1. Advertisements

- 1.1 All available properties will, as a minimum, be advertised weekly in:
- All of the Sandwell Homes Neighbourhood Offices
 - All of the Sandwell Homes Property Shops
 - The Sandwell Homes Property Shop website
- 1.2 Weekly mail-shots detailing all of the available properties will be despatched to any household on request. Where possible, the CBL scheme will also be promoted in libraries, community centres and religious centres etc
- 1.3 Each advertisement will contain information on:
- a. how to bid for the property
 - b. the closing date for bids
 - c. details of the property, outlining as a minimum its weekly rent and any other costs, number of bedrooms, special features/adaptations, other restrictions, and location.
 - d. the preferred household composition that is best suited to the property (referred to as the Property Household Criteria – See Appendix One)
- 1.4 The information in Section 1.3 above will be supplied by the appropriate neighbourhood office through the completion of a referral form
- 1.5 All advertising material and advertising methods used will include information presented in Ethnic Minority languages

2. Low cost home ownership schemes

- 2.1 The Council and its partners encourage Low Cost Home Ownership properties to be advertised through this CBL Scheme

3 Extra care schemes

- 3.1 Extra care scheme properties will be allocated in the first instance via the Extra Care Housing Allocations Protocol. In the event that properties are not matched with a household through the protocol, the said property will be advertised through the CBL Scheme in accordance with this policy.

4 Publishing results

- 4.1 In most areas across the borough, it is likely that competition for properties, particularly houses, will be high. Each week, a full list of information relating to properties let in the previous week will be made available for public information. This information will consist at a minimum the number of bids received per property and the date the successful bidder registered.
- 4.2 In addition to 4.1 above, where an applicant has made a bid and has not been offered the property, upon enquiry the household concerned will be entitled to be informed of their individual ranked bidding position for the said property.

Section D

Housing allocation process

1. Banding system

- 1.1 In order to ensure that the Council fulfils both its statutory duties and strategic commitments (as they relate to housing), this policy is structured so as to ensure that households in certain specific types of housing need have a degree of priority over others. This is achieved by operating a banding system based on the level of urgency of their respective housing need. All households are placed into one of seven bands (See Appendix Three). Those households placed into Band One have the most urgent housing need. Those in Band Two have a higher need than those in Band Three, and so forth (See also Sections 1.3 and 1.4 below).
- 1.2 In order to accommodate instances of composite need, the following will apply:
- a) applicants who qualify for more than one category of housing need outlined in the same priority band will be placed into a higher priority band to reflect this additional composite need (e.g. a household who has two housing need circumstances outlined in Band Three will be placed into Band Two).
 - b) where a household has additional composite need identified in a lower band (e.g. a person at risk of hospital admission (located in Priority Band One) who needs to move to a particular locality to receive care (identified in Band Three), the additional composite need will be factored into the short listing process (See Section D/3). See also Appendix Three, Note 3.
- 1.3 In order to make the best use of the existing housing stock, households who under-occupy their current property and who wish to move to accommodation with fewer bedrooms will be awarded varying degrees of priority (dependant on the level of under-occupation) within the banding system (See Appendix Three). Households in these instances may be entitled to receive support and assistance (including financial assistance) in their move.
- 1.4 In addition to 1.3 above, households moving from adapted properties (where the adaptations are no longer in use) to more suitable accommodation will also be awarded a housing priority. Households in these instances maybe entitled to receive support and assistance (including financial assistance) in their move.
- 1.5 Whilst all applicants are encouraged to seek accommodation via the CBL process, where a statutory housing duty is owed, the Council

reserves the right to offer suitable accommodation to discharge any such duty at any time during the CBL registration

- 1.6 With the approval of the Council, Sandwell Homes will determine which of its officers and/or panels and committees will hold the authority to place households in the respective priority bandings outlined in this policy.
- 1.7 Where an applicant's circumstances change, Sandwell Homes will review the degree of housing need priority given to the applicant (See also Section B/2 and B/3)
- 1.8 Where there is evidence that a housing applicant has either acted unreasonably or has deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to qualify for a higher banding position, no additional priority shall be given
- 1.9 If the initial time limit attached to Priority Band One or Two expires and the applicant has not been successful in securing a property Sandwell Homes will review the situation. In conducting the review, Sandwell Homes will take into consideration the following factors:
 - The availability of suitable properties during the term of the Priority that would have met the applicant's needs
 - The bidding activity of the applicant
 - The level of support and help received by the applicant from other agencies and/or Sandwell Homes in accessing the scheme
 - The current level of housing priority need

Having considered the above factors, Sandwell Homes may:

- Review the level of housing priority need awarded
 - Extend the priority for a further period
 - Where a statutory housing duty is owed, make a direct offer of accommodation that the Council deems suitable before cancelling the priority (See Section D/10).
- 1.10 All housing applicants have a right to request a formal review of any decision relating to the above (see Section F/6).

2 Expressing an interest (bidding)

- 2.1 Homeseekers can express an interest in a property (often referred to as 'bidding') via the Sandwell Homes website, in person, by telephone to any of the Sandwell Homes Property Shops, or via the touch-phone bidding system.

- 2.2 To make the best use of the available housing stock, each property has a household criteria that best matches it with a particular household composition. This match is referred to as the Property Household Criteria which is set out in Appendix One. Other than in instances referred to in Sections D/6.2 and D/13, applicants can only bid for properties for which their household qualifies based on the Property Household Criteria.
- 2.3 Applicants are limited to a maximum of three bids per advertising cycle.

3. Short-listing

- 3.1 With the exception of properties allocated under Sections D/4 and D/6 below, all other properties advertised through the CBL scheme will be subject to the short-listing procedure set out below:

1. Within the pool of applicants who have bid for the property, the household in the highest ranking Housing Priority Need Band is considered first
2. Where the highest Housing Priority Need Band is represented more than once, from within that pool, the following will apply:
 - a) Any household(s) with additional composite needs (identified from a lower band) will be shortlisted above those with none. An example in this instance of composite need would be a person at risk of hospital admission (located in Band One) who needs to move to a particular locality to receive care (Band Three).
 - b) where none of the households have any additional composite need or where there is a tie with additional composite need, the applicant with the oldest registration date will be offered the property

4 Allocation of houses

- 4.1 Research has shown that demand for larger accommodation designed to accommodate families with children is likely to remain high across the borough. To ensure that homeseekers across all bandings have a genuine chance to acquire this type of accommodation, the following procedure will be applied:
- a) forty percent of houses (i.e. two in every five) that become available for rent through the property shops will be advertised using the date order of registration and the Property Household Criteria guidance as the sole short listing process.

- b) in order to add transparency to this process the said properties will be chosen randomly

5 Notification of bidding outcome and offers of accommodation

- 5.1 Where a bid has been successful for a Council property the household concerned will be invited to attend a offer interview. Unsuccessful applicants will not be notified (see also Section C/4).
- 5.2 At the offer interview stage and before a formal offer of accommodation is made checks will be made to ensure that the household's details held by Sandwell Homes are still accurate and up to date. The details to be checked will include current address, household make-up and any other relevant details specific to their housing application. Applicants may be required to produce proof of residence (e.g. utility bills). Child Benefit books may also be required to confirm the residency of dependant children. In instances where the property is owned by a housing association, the said association will carry out the necessary checks.
- 5.3 The Council and its partner organisations reserve the right to refuse a successful bid made for one of its properties:
- on risk or management grounds, for example where a perpetrator of domestic violence, hate crime or other offences would be rehoused close to previous victims
 - where an applicants housing details differ from those held by Sandwell Homes so as to affect the suitability of the applicant taking up a tenancy in the property concerned (See also Section E/1.5)
- 5.4 Normally, only persons aged eighteen years or over will be offered a Council property to let. The exceptions to this will be where the applicant is either sixteen or seventeen years of age and the said household:
- has one or more children
 - would have their welfare seriously jeopardised if accommodation was not made available
 - is statutorily homeless
- 5.5 It will normally be necessary to secure a rent guarantor in the above circumstances.

6 Providing choice for disabled people with access needs

- 6.1 As part of its strategic approach to meeting housing need, the Council has a strong commitment to ensure that the best use is made of properties adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities. As part of this commitment households who are living in a property where the adaptations are no longer in use and who wish to vacate it will be placed into Priority Band Two (see Appendix Three). Households in this category may be entitled to receive support and assistance (including financial assistance) in their move.
- 6.2 All vacant properties that have been designed or adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities will be advertised through the CBL scheme. The short-listing process in this instance will be:
- a) in the first instance and based on registration date order, to make offers to those households whose needs are matched with the adaptations attached to the property and whose household make-up matches the Property Household Criteria.
 - b) in the second instance and based on registration date order, to make offers to those households whose needs are matched with the adaptations attached to the property but whose household make-up does not match the Property Household Criteria. In this instance under-occupation by up to two bedrooms will be permitted.
- 6.3 In all circumstances an Occupational Therapist assessment will be required to ascertain the extent to which a household's needs match the adaptations attached to the property. This assessment will be based on existing and future predictable need.
- 6.4 The short-listing process identified in 6.2 above will be clearly stated in any advertisements relating to adapted properties.
- 6.5 All adverts advertising adapted properties will provide sufficient information about the level of adaptations and/or accessibility features in order for disabled persons to make an informed decision on whether or not to bid for the property. When properties of this nature are advertised every opportunity will be taken to market their availability, this will include informing suitable applicants on the CBL Register.
- 6.6 Where a disabled person bids for and is subsequently short-listed for a property that does not meet their access needs, the Council will assess (in accordance with its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996) if it is reasonable or practicable for the property to be adapted.

- 6.7 With the exception of purpose built sheltered Schemes, disabled persons who need single level ground floor accommodation will be exempt from any age restrictions or any other restrictions placed on such accommodation
- 6.8 Consideration will be given to extend both the notice period given to accept or reject an offer of accommodation and/or the tenancy commencement date in circumstances where a disabled person(s) requires such additional time on account of their personal circumstances. This includes any extra time needed for a Occupational Therapist to make an assessment as to the property's suitability to be adapted to meet the applicants needs.
- 6.9 For the purposes of this policy, the definition of an 'Adapted Property' outlined in Appendix Two will apply at all times.

7 Persons moving from supported accommodation

- 7.1 Residents of Supporting People funded short-term supported accommodation in Sandwell will receive additional preference when they register with the CBL scheme when the following conditions have been met:
- They are in supported housing having had an appropriate assessment of housing need
 - They have engaged with the supported housing project to acquire the skills needed to live independently
 - The supported housing project provides evidence by way of a move-on report highlighting the applicants readiness for move-on
 - The applicant's readiness for move-on is verified by a officer of Sandwell Homes

8. Households affected by clearance programmes and private sector enforcement action

8.1 Public Sector

- 8.2 Households who are resident in properties that are subject to an approved demolition programme will be invited, at the point that Notice is served, to apply to join the CBL Register. Those that do register will normally be placed into Housing Need Priority Band Two (See Appendix Three).
- 8.3 Households identified in Section 8.2 above who are particularly vulnerable (for example being isolated and surrounded by void units), will be placed into Housing Need Priority Band One

- 8.4 Households identified in 8.2 above may be offered alternative suitable accommodation, as per the statutory duty owed under the Housing Act 1985, at any time whilst registered with the CBL Register.
- 8.5 Those households who upon invitation, choose not to join the CBL Register, will be offered alternative suitable accommodation as per the statutory duty owed under the Housing Act 1985.
- 8.6 Occupants who take up residence as their principle home of a dwelling subject to a clearance order *after* the Council has made the said order will not normally be awarded a Housing Need Priority.
- 8.7 Sub-tenants or lodgers living in a dwelling subject to a clearance order may be re-housed with the tenant or separately if they took up residence *before* the order was made. Alternatively, they may be considered as housing applicants in the normal way.
- 8.8 Reference should be made to the joint protocols that exist between the Council and Sandwell Homes covering the re-housing of residents from Council owned accommodation which has been designated for renovation (Decants) or clearance.
- 8.9 Private Sector**
- 8.10 Households who are resident in properties that are subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order will be *invited* at the point that Notice is served to join the CBL Register. Those that do register will normally be placed into Housing Need Priority Band Two.
- 8.11 Households identified in Section 8.10 above who are particularly vulnerable (for example being isolated and surrounded by void units), may be placed into Housing Need Priority Band One
- 8.12 At the point of agreement of the compensation, any remaining occupiers registered on the CBL Register will be placed into Priority Band One. This will provide them with the opportunity to bid for properties of their choice over a period of 28 days. After this 28 day period, if a property has not been secured then three offers of suitable alternative accommodation will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable to fulfil the requirement to secure accommodation in accordance with the Land Compensation Act 1973.
- 8.13 Those households, who upon invitation choose not to apply to join the CBL Register will receive three offers of suitable alternative accommodation which will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable to fulfil the requirement to secure accommodation in accordance with the Land Compensation Act 1973.
- 8.14 Households subject to enforcement action that renders occupation of a property unlawful, a General Vesting Declaration or a Home

Improvement Scheme are exempt from this process. These households will then receive three offers of suitable alternative accommodation as soon as reasonably practicable.

- 8.15 Reference should be made to the Joint Protocols that exist between the Council and Sandwell Homes covering the above process, Enforcement Action, General Vesting Declaration and Private Sector Improvement Schemes.

9 Vulnerable persons

- 9.1 SMBC has a strong commitment to actively ensure wherever possible that vulnerable persons are fully empowered to actively take part in the CBL process.
- 9.2 This policy will adopt the definition of a vulnerable person outlined in Sandwell Homes' Vulnerable Persons Strategy.

10 Direct offers of accommodation

- 10.1 In some circumstances it may be appropriate for households not to participate in the CBL process and to be made a direct offer of accommodation. At all times households should be encouraged to seek accommodation through the CBL process with a view to keeping the number of direct offers down to a minimum.
- 10.2 To ensure consistency and fairness all direct offers of accommodation will be coordinated and monitored by a single officer within Sandwell Homes (to be determined by Sandwell Homes).
- 10.3 Where a statutory duty to provide accommodation is owed, the Council reserves the right to offer suitable accommodation to discharge any such duty at any time during the household's housing registration. In addition, those households who are subject to enforcement action, a General Vesting Declaration and Home Improvement Schemes are entitled to receive direct offers as per the statutory duty owed to them under the Housing Act 1985 (See Section D/8).
- 10.4 Direct offers are also appropriate to those tenants of the Council who require the offer of temporary accommodation during major works, which require the occupants to be decanted for reasons of safety or whose home is not fit for occupation for reasons of flood, fire, tempest or other unavoidable incident.
- 10.5 In addition to Sections 10.3 and 10.4 above, other circumstances where a direct offer of accommodation could be made would include:
- Households who may not be able to partake in the CBL bidding process due to vulnerability or urgency

- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement cases – where there is a need to control where a person is placed
- Households left in occupation
- Family Intervention Project cases – where strict control is needed on where applicants are placed
- Key workers seeking accommodation who would otherwise not be able to take up their post of employment (See Appendix Four)
- Persons urgently needing to move to adapted accommodation because of injury, a medical condition or disability sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces.

- 10.6 Only one direct offer of suitable accommodation will be made. A request for a subsequent offer should be referred to the relevant Manager in Sandwell Homes
- 10.7 In order to manage expectation, where possible the household will be made aware of the likely availability of properties by both type and location
- 10.8 Households involved in the above process have a right to a Review (See Section F/6)

11 Upgrading and downgrading of Housing Need Priority

On occasions where an applicant's circumstances change resulting in their application moving up or down the priority bandings, the following will apply:

- a) *Moving up a band:* The date the higher priority band was awarded will act as the date used in the short-listing process
- b) *Moving down a band:* In order not to disadvantage applicants the date used in the short-listing process will revert either:
 - 1) to the date that applied when the applicant was previously in the band that they have now moved down to; or,
 - 2) if no previous Housing Need Priority Band movement has taken place, the date that applied in the higher band from which the applicant has moved

12 Type of tenancy issued

- 12.1 New tenants of the Council will normally be granted an Introductory Tenancy that will last for a period of twelve months (in some circumstances this period can be extended to eighteen months).

- 12.2 Tenants who are given an Introductory Tenancy can apply to join the Housing Register in order to transfer to another Council or Housing Association property in the normal way. If a Council tenant is transferring from an Introductory Tenancy, the tenancy conditions will remain the same until the introductory period has expired. Those tenants who have transferred from a previous Sandwell MBC secure tenancy will retain their secure status at the point of transfer.
- 12.4 Households who become tenants of a property owned by a housing association will normally be granted an Assured Tenancy

13 Local lettings plans

- 13.1 Where necessary and where they can be clearly justified, the Council and Sandwell Homes will use Local Lettings Plans (LLPs). All proposals for new LLPs must outline the following:
- a) A clear description of the issue/problem which will be evidenced
 - b) An explanation as to how the existing allocations policy is failing or contributing to the issue/problem identified
 - c) An explanation as to how the proposed LLP will differ from the mainstream allocations policy, and the intended outcome of the LLP
 - d) The effect that the introduction of the LLP will have on neighbouring communities
 - e) The estimated length of time for which the LLP will operate
 - f) The method(s) of community consultation to be used
 - g) Time scales as to when the LLP will be reviewed
- 13.2 A template has been developed for making an application for a Local Lettings Plan and must be used in all instances. Any Local Lettings Plan must be authorised by both Sandwell MBC and Sandwell Homes.

Section E

Non-eligibility and reduction or removal of housing priority

1 Persons excluded from joining the CBL Register

1.1 Persons who fall within the following categories are excluded from joining the CBL Register

- Any person subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, unless that person is within a class prescribed as eligible by the Secretary of State
- Any person who falls within a class of persons from abroad prescribed by the Secretary of State as ineligible
- Persons under 16 years of age

1.2 In consultation with its partner agencies, the Council may determine that an applicant is to be treated as ineligible for an offer of accommodation (and would either be removed or excluded from joining the CBL Register) if satisfied that:

- a) the applicant, or a member of their household has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make him unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority; and
- b) in the circumstances at the time the application is considered, the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority by reason of that behaviour

1.3 The only behaviour which may be regarded by the Council as unacceptable for the purpose of 1.2 above is:

- a) behaviour of the person concerned which would (if they were a Secure Tenant of the Council) entitle the Council to a possession order under Section 84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any ground mentioned in Part 1 of Schedule 2 of that Act (other than Ground 8); or
- b) behaviour of a member of his household which would (if they were a person residing with a secure tenant of the Council) entitle the Council to such a possession order

1.4 Where the Council has reason to believe that an applicants unacceptable behaviour is due to a physical, mental or learning disability, it will not treat that person as ineligible for a housing

allocation or reduce any level of housing priority without first considering whether he/she would be able to maintain a tenancy with appropriate care and support. In considering the applicants case, the Council will consult with relevant agencies

- 1.5 Sandwell MBC reserve the right to remove an applicant from the CBL Register for a period of twelve months if there is evidence that the applicant (or a person acting on the applicants' request), has knowingly or recklessly made a false statement or withheld information in connection with their housing application which has been reasonably requested.

2 Reduction or removal of housing need priority

- 2.1 In addition to Section E/1.2, the Council, under Section 167(2A) of the Housing Act 1996, reserves the right to reduce or remove any Housing Need Priority awarded within this policy using either:
- a) the 'unacceptable behaviour test'; or,
 - b) where an applicant or a member of their household has failed to notify the Council of a change in their circumstance that would have a significant impact on their level of housing need or application in general.
- 2.2 Households involved in the above process have a right to a Review (See Section F/6)

Section F

Miscellaneous

1 Confidentiality

Unless Sandwell Homes receives prior consent, it will at all times ensure that personal information about individual applicants is kept confidential (as per the Data Protection legislation). Explicitly within this undertaking the authority will not disclose to any third party that an application for housing has been made by the applicant.

2. Conflicts of interest

- 2.1 Where an officer of the Council or Sandwell Homes is directly or indirectly involved with an allocation to an applicant who is known to them in a personal or social context (i.e. relative, friendship or other associate), then the officer will be expected to disclose to their line manager that a conflict of interest may exist. The manager will then make appropriate arrangements for the officer to be excluded from any decision making process associated with the allocation covered either by this policy or associated procedures.
- 2.2 Officers who knowingly fail to disclose a conflict of interest may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 2.3 The Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997 (SI 1997 No.483) prevents an elected member from being part of a decision making-body (i.e. the housing authority or any committee) at the time an allocation decision is made.

3 Successions and assignments and non-successors (including joint tenancy terminations)

- 3.1 All applications to succeed or assign a secure tenancy will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions contained within Part IV of the Housing Act 1985 and or the tenancy agreement.
- 3.2 When a tenant dies, serves notice to quit, or abandons the property and where the remaining occupants :-
- i) do not have succession rights to the tenancy,
 - ii) have not engaged in unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be tenants of the authority,
 - iii) **and** have occupied the property as their only or principal residence,

the procedure set out in Section 3.4 below will apply in instances where the household member(s):

- a) had been living with the tenant for the year prior to the tenant's death, notice to quit or property abandonment; **or**
 - b) had been providing care for the tenant
- 3.3 The procedure set out in Section 3.4 will also apply to persons (provided they or their family members have not engaged in unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be tenants of the authority) who have accepted responsibility for the tenant's dependents and who need to live with them in order to do so. In this instance the household concerned does not have to have previously occupied the property as their only or principal residence.
- 3.4 The Council will award the household member(s) identified in Section 3.2 above a new Introductory Tenancy in circumstances where the remaining household wishing to remain in the property is either:
- a) not under-occupying the property by two bedrooms or more; **or**,
 - b) in the case of a two bedroom house, has a need to occupy both bedrooms
- 3.5 Where the property is under-occupied by two bedrooms or more (or is under-occupied in the case of a two bedroom house), then subject to Section 3.6 below, the household left in occupation will be found more suitable alternative accommodation. Households in these circumstances who are required or who wish to move will be placed into Housing Need Priority Band Two.
- 3.6 Where the property is under-occupied by two bedrooms or more (or is under-occupied in the case of a two bedroom house), Sandwell Homes may use discretion to permit the household member(s) to remain in the said property under a new Introductory Tenancy if the following circumstances are applicable:
- a) A member of the household has a terminal illness or very serious illness that would be made worse by moving
 - b) A household member suffers from a mental illness that would be made worse by the person moving. In this instance the test for determining a mental illness will be the definition used in the Disability Discrimination Act. In these circumstances consideration will need to be given as to whether the person has the capacity to enter into a contract and take on a tenancy and abide by the conditions.
 - c) A member of the household has a learning disability (having at some time been assessed as so by a recognised agency) and where a move to another property would involve the loss of

support (e.g. through the loss of local community contacts) and would inhibit an independent lifestyle. In these circumstances consideration will need to be given as to whether the person has the capacity to enter into a contract and take on a tenancy and abide by the conditions.

- d) Where the property is adapted and at least one of the remaining household members has a need for the continued use of the adaptations contained within property
- e) Any other exceptional reason why a household member would need to remain in occupation of the property (e.g. strong local support contacts that will allow the person to lead an independent lifestyle). It should be noted that the length of time spent in residence in the property should not contribute towards any exceptional reasons.

4 Mutual exchanges

- 4.1 Applications from council tenants for permission to exchange tenancies will be considered in accordance with the provisions contained in Section 92 and Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985.
- 4.2 Assured tenants of housing associations do not have a statutory right to exchange with council tenants. However, mutual exchange applications involving an assured tenant of a housing association will be considered with regard to the criteria contained in Section 92 and Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985.
- 4.3 The following conditions (which apply to all properties involved) must be met for a mutual exchange to take place:
 - the property must be in a satisfactory condition
 - the tenant must have a clear current rent account before the exchange takes place
 - there must be no overcrowding at either of the properties on account of the exchange
 - the Property Household Criteria outlined in Appendix One will be used to determine whether a property is suitable for the assignee and their household's need
- 4.4 A tenant who has moved by an exchange can remain on the CBL Register although their housing application details must be amended according to their changed housing circumstances

5 Terminating a tenancy

- 5.1 The conditions placed on a tenant(s) when terminating a tenancy are described in the Tenancy Agreement. See also Section F/3 of this policy (Joint Tenancy Termination).

6 Reviews and appeals

- 6.1 Reviews and appeals are dealt with in the '*Your Right To A Review*' document, available from all Sandwell Homes outlets.
- 6.2 Section's 166 and 167 of the Housing Act 1996 contain provisions relating to the rights of applicants to request reviews of decisions made in respect of their application. The Council and Sandwell Homes will at all times ensure that these obligations are met.
- 6.3 Applicants have a right to request a review of the following decisions made in respect of their request for housing:
- a) to remove preference under the scheme because of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make him/her unsuitable to be a Sandwell MBC tenant
 - b) that a person is ineligible for housing because of his/her immigration status
 - c) any decision about the facts of his/her case which is likely to be, or has been taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing accommodation to him/her.

7 Monitoring and reviewing the policy

- 7.1 Monitoring reports will be produced to assess whether or not:
- a) the policy delivers on its aims (See Section A)
 - b) the policy continues to give preference to those in greatest housing need and that the scheme is not dominated in any way by applicants who fall outside of the categories of need outlined in Section 167(2) of the 1996 Housing Act
- 7.2 Reviews of this policy will be undertaken when required and in response to:
- a) any policy related issues identified in the monitoring reports referred to in Section 7.1 above
 - b) any changes in legislation that affect the policy
 - c) any changes in National guidance

Section G

Garage allocations policy

1 Garage allocations process

- 1.1 Sandwell Homes will maintain a date order cross tenure waiting list of garage applicants.
- 1.2 The allocation of garages will at all times be sensitive to the needs of local communities. Other than the priority groups listed below, garages will be allocated in date order from the waiting list. When an applicant reaches the top of the list, he or she will be contacted as soon as a garage becomes available in the area(s) of choice identified in their application.
- 1.3 The priorities referred to above that form an exception to the date order system are :-
 - a) elderly/disabled applicants or their carers; or,
 - b) victims of race or hate crimes or people who may need a garage in the same or another area on the recommendation of the Police
- 1.4 Any person aged 18 or over may apply for a garage by completing a garage application form. Sandwell Homes will not allocate a garage to anyone who has current or former tenant or garage arrears, unless they fall within the priority groups above, or anyone who is, or would be subject to Section E.
- 1.5 Waiting list applicants may periodically be required to re-register their interest in obtaining a garage. This will take the form of a letter asking the applicant to re-register.
- 1.6 Applicants should notify Sandwell Homes of any relevant changes in their circumstances that would affect their application
- 1.7 Upon refusal of a third offer of a garage in the applicant's area of choice(s), the application will be suspended from the waiting list for a period of twelve months. The applicant will have to re-apply in the normal way.
- 1.8 In circumstances where the waiting list for a garage is exhausted for whatever reason, Sandwell Homes will market the garage to reach a wider audience.

Appendix One

Property Household Criteria

To make the best use of the available housing stock, each property type has a household criteria that best matches it with a particular household composition(s). This match is referred to as the Property Household Criteria. Each property advertisement will detail the preferred household composition that is best suited to each individual property. The property type/household match guidance below should apply in the majority of cases but may vary according to specific factors attached to a property or household composition.

Property Type/Size	Household Type/Size
Bedsit	Single Persons
One Bedroom Flat	Single Persons/Childless Couples
Two Bedroom Flat	Households with one to four persons (excluding households with children of both sexes)
Two Bedroom Maisonette	Households with one to four persons (excluding households with children of both sexes)
Three Bedroom Flat/Maisonette	Households with one to three dependent children or any combination of two or more persons where the shortlist has been exhausted for the former.
Two Bedroom House – Parlour & Non Parlour Type	Households with one child or two children of the same sex or childless couples where the shortlist has been exhausted for the former
Three Bedroom Parlour House	Households with two to four children
Three Bedroom House (non parlour)	Households with two to three children
Four Bedroom House	Households with four or more children
Bungalows	Persons with a disability whose housing need is such that they require single level ground floor accommodation or are over the age of sixty
Sheltered Housing	Those with an assessed need for supported accommodation

Appendix Two

Definition of adapted property

1.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following definition will apply to the term 'adapted property'

1.2 An adapted property is one that contains one or more of the following key features-

- Stair Lift
- Ceiling track hoists
- Vertical Lift
- Step Lift
- Significant ramping to entrance
- Bathrooms – where significant adaptations have been made, for example walk-in shower, level access
- Kitchen – with significant adaptations, for example, lowering or raising of work surfaces, installation of variable height work surfaces, installation of sinks and other work surfaces with knee space beneath for use from a wheelchair
- Adaptations for people with sensory impairments (eg colour and texture contrasts, flashing door bells)
- Ground floor extensions (or internal alterations) for bathrooms, bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens and circulation spaces that are fully accessible to a wheelchair user with or without assistance.
- Any other substantial modification defined as meeting the needs of a disabled person by an Occupational Therapist of the local authority

1.3 If a property has any of the following features but none of the above it is not defined as an adapted property.

- Grab rails
- Handrails
- Stair rails
- Cubicle or Chiltern Shower
- Minor ramping to entrance
- Raised sockets
- Lowered light switches
- Level access

Appendix Three:

Housing Priority Need Bandings

	Housing Need Circumstances
BAND ONE 3 Months Time Limited Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persons with a Care Plan Approach who need to be discharged from hospital, a rehabilitation unit or residential care who do not have access to suitable accommodation• Persons whose situation is such that admission to hospital or similar would be inevitable if not re-housed quickly• Persons subjected to harassment or abuse or violence (or where a real threat thereof exists) and where the safety and well being of the victim(s) is at serious risk of harm and there is a urgent need for alternative accommodation• Where a person or member of their household is a witness giving evidence and the police have recommended that the person be urgently re-housed• A household unable to occupy the property due to enforcement action (confirmed by a SMBC Officer)• Households living in accommodation which is overcrowded according to Parts X and XI of the Housing Act 1985• Households resident in public or private sector properties directly affected by clearance and CPO clearance programmes who need urgent re-housing, particularly where the said household is vulnerable (for example a household isolated and surrounded by void units). See Section D/8.• Children and their families/carers where the children are the subject of care proceedings and where the local authority has requested the provision of appropriate accommodation in the exercise of their functions under Sec (27) Children Act 1989 and our corporate parenting responsibilities.• Council and Housing Association tenants and owner-occupiers currently under-occupying by at least two or more bedrooms and who wish to transfer to a Council or Housing Association property with fewer bedrooms (See Note 1).• Any household who falls into more than one category of housing need outlined in Band Two

Appendix Three (cont'd):

Housing Priority Need Bandings

	Housing Need Circumstances
<p>BAND TWO</p> <p>6 Months Time Limited Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households resident in public or private sector properties directly affected by clearance and CPO clearance programmes (See Section D/8) • Non-successor households and joint tenancy termination households moving under the guidance outlined in Section F/3 • Council and Housing Association tenants and owner-occupiers who currently occupy an adapted property where the said adaptations are no longer in use by any of the household members (See Note 1 below and Appendix Two) • Council or Housing Association tenants who currently occupy an Intermediate or Advanced Level Sanctuary Scheme property who wish to vacate the property • Children Leaving Care Under Section 23 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 • Persons awarded a Medical Priority (where current housing conditions are having a major adverse affect on the medical condition of either the applicant or a member of their household). This includes people with a physical disability who have been assessed by an Occupational Therapist as needing an adapted property to meet their housing need • Statutory Homeless households where the applicant is owed the full housing duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 (See Note 4) • Persons in supported housing seeking a move-on to settled accommodation under an SMBC Move-On Protocol and as set out in Section D/7. • Any household who falls into more than one category of housing need outlined in Band Three

Appendix Three (cont'd):

Housing Priority Need Bandings

	Housing Need Circumstances
BAND THREE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons needing to move to a <i>particular locality</i> in the SMBC District where hardship would be caused if they do not move (See Note 2 below) • People who need to move on welfare grounds (See Note 3 below) • Homeless persons, other than those who are currently owed the full housing duty under section 193
BAND FOUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households identified by the Housing Options Team that need urgent re-housing to prevent homelessness and where there is a strong likelihood of a full homelessness duty being accepted in the near future • Any household who falls into more than one category of housing need outlined in Band Five
BAND FIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council and Housing Association tenants and owner-occupiers who wish to release a ground floor flat and transfer to a property to which they are eligible with the same number or fewer bedrooms (See Note 1) • Council and Housing Association tenants and owner-occupiers currently under-occupying by one bedroom and who wish to transfer to a property to which they are eligible with fewer bedrooms (see Note 1) • Households who are awarded a priority under SMBC's overcrowding standard • Households who have dependent children (where at least one of the children is aged 15 years or below) and whose main and principal accommodation is above ground floor level

Appendix Three (cont'd):

Housing Priority Need Bandings

	Housing Need Circumstances
BAND SIX (General Needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All other households who do not fall into any of the types of housing need referred to in Priority Need Bands One, Two, Three, Four or Five
BAND SEVEN (General Needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Households who qualify for Band Six who own their own residential property

Notes to Appendix Three:

1. Housing Association properties vacated in this instance will be advertised for let through the Council's CBL Scheme.

Owner-occupiers vacating their property will be required to have their property leased by Sandwell Homes. Owner-occupiers who are requesting to be re-housed in this instance will only be offered a tenancy subsequent to reaching agreement with Sandwell Homes that their current home may be leased to another applicant in housing need, on terms and conditions agreed with Sandwell Homes at that time.

2. Persons entitled to a priority under *Persons needing to move to a particular locality in the SMBC District* (Band Three) will include persons who need to;

- give or receive care,
- access specialised medical treatment needed for the long-term
- take up particular education, employment or training opportunities (in a particular locality)

NOTE: A particular locality should be identified to which this priority applies

3. Persons who need to move on *welfare grounds* (including grounds related to disability) (Band Three) will include persons who need to move because:

- A. A member of the household is vulnerable as assessed via the Sandwell Homes Vulnerable Persons Strategy
- B. There is a need to recover from the effects of violence or threats of violence, emotional or sexual abuse
- C. Young people who are at risk
- D. People with behavioural difficulties
- E. Households containing children who are in need of settled accommodation

The emphasis on placing households into this category of priority need is based on the need for a stable base from which to build a stable life (English Code of Guidance, paragraph 5.14). In factoring in welfare need, if two or more factors apply (identified in A to E above) the household concerned may be moved into a higher priority band, i.e. Band One or Two.

Notes to Appendix Three (continued):

4. For the purposes of this policy 'Statutory Homeless Households' refer to applicants who are entitled to reasonable preference as set out in Section 167(2) of the Housing Act 1996 and who:
- are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7)
 - are owed a duty 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 the authority under section 192(3).

Appendix Four

Glossary of Terms

Applicant	This can refer to single or joint applicants and can be either a household applying to join the CBL Register or bidding for a property
Assignment	Legal right to pass on a tenancy to someone who would have been entitled to succeed to the tenancy if the tenant had died (See Succession)
Assured Tenancy	Tenancy granted to Housing Association tenants giving them the right to remain in the property unless the landlord can prove to the Court that there are grounds for possession.
CBL Register	The list of people seeking to acquire accommodation through the CBL Scheme. By law, some people are excluded from joining the register.
Closing Order	A local authority's legal power to stop anyone living in a property that is unfit for human habitation
Compulsory Purchase Order	A legal power used by local authorities and other public bodies to acquire property for specific purposes
Extra Care Scheme	A group of self contained dwellings designed for older people with sufficient care and support available to allow people to remain at home despite frailty
Homeless	No legal right to occupy any accommodation or accommodation not suitable or available for occupation
Introductory Tenancy	Initial twelve-month tenancy granted to new Council tenants. The Introductory Tenancy is a trial period for the tenant to demonstrate to the Council that they can maintain their Tenancy Agreement (See Tenancy Agreement for more details).
Housing Association	A provider of affordable housing including supported accommodation.
Key Worker	A key worker is someone employed by the public sector in a frontline role delivering an essential public service in the areas of health, education and community safety and where there are serious recruitment and retention problems in the said line of employment.

Local Lettings Plan	A Local Lettings Plan is where a designated set of residential units (which can be defined by a geographical area) are allocated outside of the terms of the mainstream Housing Allocations Policy (i.e. this policy).
Mutual Exchange	Council or housing association tenants who agree to swap properties with another tenant with the approval of both landlords
Notice to Quit	Legal notice served on a secure tenant who no longer occupies the property as his only or principal home or a non-secure tenant to bring the tenancy to an end
Purpose Built Sheltered Schemes	A low rise block of self contained units built with the needs of older people in mind. The blocks contain communal facilities and a Community Alarm system. A Housing support service is provided by a warden, either residential or non - residential.
Possession Order	A court order requiring a household to move out of the property they occupy
Reasonable Preference Categories	Groups of people that through law local authorities must give priority to when allocating accommodation
Secure Tenancy	Long term local authority tenancy
Shared Ownership	A scheme that allows an applicant to buy part of a property and rent the remaining part from a local authority or housing association
Sheltered Housing	A group of self contained dwellings for older people, who can live independently and are able to manage alone, but who prefer the added security of an alarm system and a resident or visiting warden
Succession	Legal right to pass on a tenancy by written agreement (deed) to certain family members on the death of the tenant provided there has not been a previous succession
Supported Housing	Housing provided for vulnerable people who need support to live independently