

Draft Housing Allocation Scheme

Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The allocation scheme sets out who can apply for social housing (both Council housing and housing association nominations) in Camden and how we set the priorities for who is housed.

1.2 Basic principles

Camden Council is committed to maintaining its diverse mix of people, providing new ways of tackling inequality and designing services to meet the needs of our communities. Our housing strategy shows how we will support independent living, make the best use of our social housing and encourage balanced and mixed communities.

To help us meet these aims, the allocation scheme will:

- award points to prioritise social housing for those who are eligible for assistance and are in the greatest need.
- be fair and clear.
- help applicants to make realistic decisions about their future housing prospects, by offering information on a range of housing options.
- comply with the law and reflect priorities set out in key documents such as the Camden Plan, Camden's housing and tenancy strategies and the London Housing Strategy.
- encourage strong, mixed and sustainable communities and reward people for their commitment to the borough.
- help the Council effectively manage its housing stock.
- support the Council's wider work around tackling child poverty.
- provide housing in a sustainable way, ensuring as far as possible that households are living in properties they can afford.

1.3 Legal framework

Camden's allocation scheme sits within a legal framework which includes the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011) and the June 2012 and December 2013 Codes of

Guidance. The sections below explain how the main laws set the context for the allocation scheme.

1.3.1 Localism

Under the Localism Act 2011, local authorities can identify groups who will not qualify for an allocation of social housing, by taking into account:

- a household's ability to meet their own housing costs.
- any behaviour that affects a person's ability to be a suitable tenant.
- a local connection between the household and the local authority.

This is dealt with in more detail in the section 2.2 'Who cannot apply for housing'.

1.3.2 Reasonable preference

Camden must give 'reasonable preference' to the following groups when it decides how to allocate housing:

- households living in overcrowded or unsanitary conditions.
- those who need to move due to a medical condition or disability.
- those who need to move for health related or welfare reasons, including care leavers, people with high level support needs.
- those who need to move due to hardship.
- those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

We can also give additional preference to households in one of the reasonable preference groups listed above. By law we must give additional priority to applicants who are current or previous members of the armed forces and who are in housing need.

1.4 Equalities

Camden is one of the most diverse boroughs in the country, containing some of the poorest and wealthiest neighbourhoods. Our allocation scheme reflects our ambition for a diverse borough. We want to reduce inequality and help people, communities, businesses and the Council itself to make the best use of the resources available.

Camden Council is committed to ensuring that all residents have access to services. If you need any form or leaflet translated into another language, or if you are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted and need assistance with any forms or documents, please contact us on 020 7974 6498.

1.5 How the allocation scheme was developed

To develop this scheme, we completed a public consultation exercise from [dates to be inserted after final Cabinet approval]. We have undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) which looked at the overall impact of the scheme and also considered how key policy changes would affect the

protected equalities groups. Cabinet first considered the proposed policy changes in [dates to be inserted after final Cabinet approval] prior to public consultation and approved the final scheme in [dates to be inserted after final Cabinet approval].

2 Applying for housing

2.1 Your options

There is a limited supply of social housing available to be let each year in Camden. You are strongly advised to consider all your options for your future housing and the Council can provide information and advice on the range of alternatives available to you. Some possible alternatives include:

- Private rented housing. You may be able to find good quality private rented accommodation which is available to move into straight away. You can contact local lettings agencies, respond to adverts in local or London papers and look online to find a home for rent.
- Low cost home ownership. The main option currently available in Camden is shared ownership, which means that you buy a share in the property and pay rent on the remaining share. For more details go to the First Steps website at **shareto buy.com** for more details about shared ownership homes available across London. Low cost renting. There are some options available in Camden for renting a property at less than the usual market rent for the area. For more details, visit **camden.gov.uk** and search for low cost renting.
- Moving out of the area. There are a range of options available if you would like to move out of the Camden area. In some parts of the country, there may be a wider range of housing options open to you.
 - If you are an existing Council or housing association tenant looking to move to another part of London, you can find more information on **housingmoves.org**. Camden is part of the London scheme, HousingMoves, and makes up to five per cent of properties for letting available to tenants transferring from other London boroughs. This percentage is kept under review by the Greater London Authority.
 - If you are aged 60 and over and you are interested in moving out of London, you can find more information about the seaside and country homes scheme on **homeconnections.org.uk**
- Mutual exchanges. If you are a social housing tenant (local authority or housing association), you can exchange your home with another secure or assured tenant if your landlord agrees. More information about homes available for exchange can be found at **homeswapper.co.uk**
- Staying where you are but getting help to make your property more suitable for your needs. If you are having problems with your landlord or your property is in a poor state of repair, we may be able to help.

Please call Contact Camden on 020 7974 4444 if you would like to discuss your current housing situation with someone. There is also more information available online – please go to **camden.gov.uk** and search for housing options.

2.2 Who cannot apply for housing:

You will not be eligible to apply for housing if you are not entitled to access to public funds due to your immigration status. This includes households who, by law:

- are subject to immigration control.
- only have a right to reside in the UK because they (or a member of their household) are a jobseeker.
- are not habitually resident in the UK.
- have a right to reside in the UK of less than three months.

If you are eligible for housing but your partner is not eligible because they fall into one of the above groups, you will be able to bid for accommodation, but if you are successful in securing a tenancy, you will not be able to have a joint tenancy with your partner.

In addition, you will not qualify to apply for housing if:

- **you or a member of your household has been involved in unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make you an unsuitable tenant of the Council or other housing provider, including:**
 - being violent towards your partner or other family members.
 - causing nuisance or annoyance to your neighbours by you or a member of your household
 - being subject to any injunction or other court order for antisocial behaviour.
 - being subject to any conviction or closure order for the use of your home for illegal purposes (for example prostitution or drug dealing).
 - giving false information to obtain or attempt to obtain a tenancy.
 - making a payment to obtain or attempt to obtain a social housing tenancy.
 - deliberately damaging or allowing someone else to deliberately damage your home.
 - subletting your Council or housing association tenancy.
 - being provided with a home in connection with your employment by Camden Council and losing this due to your behaviour or actions.
 - making a homelessness application to any local housing authority and being assessed as intentionally homeless – this means you deliberately did or didn't do something which led to you losing your accommodation. You can ask us to review your case 12 months after the homelessness decision was made or if your circumstances change significantly.

- **you have a high level of household savings or assets¹**, including if:
 - you own or have recently owned a home in the UK or elsewhere. If you recently owned a home, you will be asked for evidence of the sale and details of any capital gained from the sale to help decide whether you qualify for the housing register, or
 - you have savings above £20,000.
- **you have not lived in the London Borough of Camden² for five of the last seven years.**

This requirement does not apply if:

- you are a young person looked after by the Council and have been placed in care outside the borough.
- you are a foster approved by the Council for caring for children or young people looked after by the Council.
- you are fleeing violence and harassment elsewhere and it would be unsafe for you to remain in the area you currently live.
- you give or receive substantial long-term care from a local resident.
- you are currently serving, or have recently served with the armed forces.
- your partner died in the course of duty and you are about to lose your home provided by the Ministry of Defence.
- you have a serious injury, illness or disability resulting (wholly or in part) from your service in the reserve forces.
- the Council has accepted a duty under part VII of the Housing Act 1996 to your household.
- you are a Council tenant who has been awarded 500 points under group B2 of the scheme, due to regeneration or other redevelopment work. This is also not a requirement if you are the adult son or daughter of the tenant and you have lived with the tenant for at least 12 months before the regeneration or redevelopment work.
- you are a social housing tenant who has been awarded 400 points under group B2 of the scheme, due to under-occupation. This requirement will also not apply if you are the adult son or daughter of the tenant and have lived with the tenant for at least 12 months before they were awarded under-occupation points.
- you are living in temporary accommodation provided by Camden Council but located outside the borough.
- you have moved into private rented accommodation outside the borough through the Council's homelessness prevention scheme within the last three years.
- you will be homeless within 28 days and you would normally be owed the main homelessness duty by the Council.

¹ The savings and assets thresholds will be the subject of regular review and approval by the Director for Housing and Adult Social Care.

² This includes Camden Council tenants living in properties owned by the London Borough of Camden in other local authority areas.

- you are currently homeless and you have a local connection with Camden (meaning you have lived in Camden for six out of the last 12 months, or three out of the last five years), or you do not have a local connection to any other local authority.
- you have **significant rent arrears** which have not been cleared or reduced to a period of six weeks or less at the time of your application. This does not apply:
 - in some particular cases, for example if you are experiencing harassment or violence or your home requires essential repairs.
 - if you are looking to move to a smaller property and your current arrears could be covered by a payment from the Tenant Options Fund.
 - if you cannot reasonably afford your current rent and you are planning to move to a property with a lower rent, for example because you are affected by the social sector size criteria.
- you are not eligible for more than 30 points as you have **no housing need** under the terms of our scheme. We will give you advice and assistance about any other options you may have. This does not apply if:
 - you are the adult son or daughter of a Camden tenant who has been awarded 500 points under group B2 of the scheme, due to regeneration or other redevelopment work. If you have lived with the tenant for at least 12 months before the regeneration or redevelopment work was approved to proceed and you would like to make your own housing application, you will be entitled to a direct offer.
 - you are the adult son or daughter of a Camden tenant who has been awarded 400 points under group B2 of the scheme, due to under-occupation. If you have lived with the tenant for at least 12 months before they were awarded under-occupation points and you would like to make your own housing application, you will be entitled to a direct offer.

If you are aged 16 and over and you are not disqualified from applying for housing, please complete the online self-assessment application form on the Housing Options home page on Camden's website at camden.gov.uk. We will not usually give a tenancy to you if you are aged 16 or 17 unless in very exceptional circumstances, but we will provide you with housing advice and discuss your housing options.

For assistance in completing the form, you can phone Contact Camden on 020 7974 4444.

2.3 Who you can include on your application

You can only include people who normally live with you as a member of your household on your application. You and any members of your household can only be on one housing application.

You can include the following people on your application if they live with you or could reasonably be expected to do so:

- your partner;
- children dependent on you and/or your partner;
- children from current or previous relationships who live with you for 51% or more of the time;
- siblings;
- adult sons and daughters;
- other adult dependents.

Other adults who give or receive substantial long-term care from you or other members of your household can also be included. We will ask you to provide information on the care and support you are giving or receiving.

You cannot include anyone else who lives with you on your application for rehousing, although they can make their own housing applications. We recommend that you carefully consider how many people you include on your application.

Where we have an ongoing duty to accommodate you as a homeless household under section 193 of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, you can include anyone who we accepted as part of your homeless application.

2.4 What you will be able to bid for

The Council is committed to making the best use of the limited supply of social housing to achieve a fair and consistent balance between the needs of households and the size mix of properties available. We will assess your bedroom need using the Camden bedroom standard, following the steps below **in order**:

Camden's bedroom standard:

Step 1: One bedroom for you, and partner/spouse

Step 2: One bedroom for any additional adult couple

Step 3: One bedroom for any two additional people of the same sex

Step 4: One bedroom for any two additional people of the opposite sex aged nine and under

Step 5: One bedroom for any additional person.

In addition, if you are expecting a baby or you have been approved for adoption, this will be taken into account when assessing your bedroom need.

An additional bedroom will be allowed in the following circumstances:

- where grandparents and grandchildren would otherwise be sharing.
- you need a non-resident overnight carer as identified in your housing and health needs assessment (see Appendix A on health and housing related needs for more information).

Some housing associations in Camden may use different bedroom standards when assessing your bedroom need.

Our bedroom standard will not apply if:

- you wish to move to a smaller home and you are at or above state pension credit age.
- you have to move because of redevelopment work, such as Community Investment Programme (CIP) work, and you are currently living in a property larger than your household needs. You will be entitled to bid for a property that is one bedroom larger than your assessed bedroom need as long as you have not been in rent arrears of more than six weeks in the last 12 months.
- you require extra rooms under the Fostering Regulations bedroom standard.

In these cases, an appropriate officer will make a decision about the type and size property you will be able to bid for and will apply any local lettings plans relating to redevelopment work.

2.4.1 Single people applying for housing

If you are a single person, you will be able to bid for a studio. You will also be able to bid for one bedroom properties as well as studios if:

- you are aged 40 or over.
- you are a Camden Council tenant moving to a smaller property from a home with two or more bedrooms.
- you have a medical or housing support reason as assessed by the Council's medical assessment officer (or equivalent). You will be entitled to a one bedroom property if you have:
 - the need for permanent use of medical equipment at home (for example, wheelchairs, possum machines, equipment/stores for kidney dialysis/double incontinence);
 - permanent inability to live in studio accommodation because of clinical phobia, certified by a qualified psychiatrist (a specialist registrar or consultant in psychiatry);
 - the need for night time care for at least four nights per week (for example, HIV, cancers, neurological disorders), and/or where it can be demonstrated that the individual needs permanent/recurrent and

long-term help with personal Activities for Daily Living (ADL), for example, toileting, turning in bed, administration of medications, dressing, washing and/or cooking).

- you live in studio accommodation but are required to move because of development work being carried out by the Council or another body.
- you are the adult son or daughter of a Council tenant who is required to move due to CIP or other development work as approved by the Director for Housing and Adult Social Care.
- you are the adult son or daughter of a Council tenant who is moving to a smaller property from a home with more bedrooms than their family needs.
- you are succeeding to a Council tenancy after the tenant died or you are being granted a tenancy under the Council's succession policy.
- you are a care leaver and you are assessed as needing additional space due to your vulnerability or additional support needs by the Leaving Care Service.

If you are aged 65 or over and you have applied for general needs housing, you may also be able to bid for a studio in some sheltered accommodation schemes subject to the agreement of the existing tenants. Property advertisements will include information about any such studios.

2.5 Sheltered housing

Sheltered housing provides a supportive environment which promotes independent living for vulnerable older people in purpose-built properties with the services of a Sheltered Housing Manager and linked to a 24-hour community alarm service.

If you are interested in applying for sheltered housing, you must meet the following criteria. For couples, both of you must meet the age and housing needs criteria and one of you must have care and support needs.

- **Age** – you must be aged 65 or over to apply, and
- **Housing need** – you must be in one of the groups listed below:
 - homeless.
 - living with relatives where your relationship is breaking down.
 - living in overcrowded housing or housing which is unsuitable due to disrepair.
 - living in housing that is difficult to access or adapt.
 - living in housing that is difficult to heat or make secure.
- **Care and support needs** – you must have at least one of the below:
 - age-related frailty.
 - physical and mental health issues.
 - multiple health problems that mean you need support.
 - sensory impairment.
 - loneliness and isolation that mean you need support.
 - safety and security needs.

- low care or support needs and you are aged 75 or over.

In some circumstances those with medical or age related needs who are aged under-65 may be considered for sheltered housing, for example people with early onset dementia. This will be assessed on a case by case basis by an appropriate officer.

To apply for sheltered housing, please complete Camden's online housing self-assessment form.

2.6 Extra care housing

Extra care housing provides specialist assisted living designed for people aged over-65. Extra care schemes have a dedicated care and support team available 24 hours a day for help with personal care and housing support tasks.

To be eligible you must:

- be aged 65 and over.
- currently live in Camden.
- have substantial or critical community care needs.
- be assessed by adult social care as in need of the extra care services provided by the scheme.

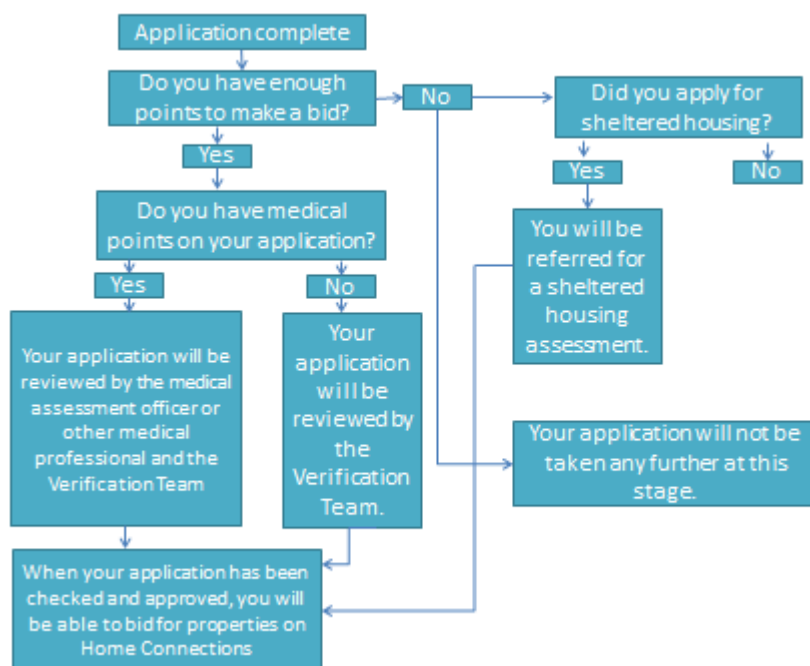
If you are interested in extra care housing, you can go to camdencarechoices.camden.gov.uk for more information.

3 Assessing your needs

Camden has a points based allocation scheme which gives you points according to your housing needs and additional needs you or other members of your household have.

When you apply for housing, you will need to complete a self-assessment form, either online or via the Council's Customer Service Centre. Filling in this form will give you a points total. Points awarded as part of the self-assessment will need to be checked before you can bid on a property.

Depending on the outcome of your self-assessment, your application will be checked. How it will be checked is explained in the chart below.



3.1 Being truthful on your application

You must provide us with full and accurate information when you apply to join our housing register and keep us up to date if the details of your application change, for example if you wish to include other family members on your application or if your address changes. We may ask for documents such as your passport, birth certificate, proof of your income and proof of where you live and have previously lived when we are checking your application.

It is a criminal offence to:

- obtain, or try to obtain, a tenancy by deception.
- knowingly keep back information that we need to assess your application.
- knowingly or recklessly provide incorrect information about your circumstances.

We will check the information you provide and we will take appropriate action against anyone who gains, or tries to gain, a tenancy through knowingly providing false information. This may mean your application is cancelled, you may lose your home and we may prosecute you.

3.2 The points system

The points system is divided into seven points groups which reflect the reasonable preference groups outlined in housing legislation (see section 1.3.1 on reasonable preference for more detail).

3.3 Points groups

Group A1 – Threat of homelessness and statutory homelessness

Threat of homelessness

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, you will be eligible for 50 points for a period of three months. During this three month period, you will be offered housing advice to help you decide how to best meet your housing needs. You will be eligible for these points if you have no accommodation you can reasonably occupy, for example if:

- you are a tenant and your landlord has obtained a possession order.
- you live with family or friends and you have been asked to leave within 28 days (and you have no legal right to remain).
- you live in a caravan or on a boat (or other moveable structure) and there is nowhere for you to pitch or moor your home.
- you live in a hostel or hotel where your licence to occupy has been withdrawn.

Main homelessness duty

You will be eligible for 100 points if:

- you are owed the main homelessness duty under the homelessness legislation. This means that you are:
 - eligible for housing assistance, and
 - you became homeless through no fault of your own (unintentionally homeless), and
 - you are in one of the priority need groups³, and
 - you have a local connection to Camden or no local connection elsewhere.

A2 points – preventing homelessness

In line with the Council's wider priorities around preventing homelessness, you will be eligible for the following points if you meet the criteria outlined below.

You will be eligible for 100 points if:

- you are threatened with homelessness and you have accepted an offer from the Council to help prevent your homelessness. These points will be awarded if you would normally be owed the main homelessness duty by the Council. You will be eligible for a further 100 points if your homelessness is prevented for at least six months.

³ The priority need groups are families with dependent children or a pregnant woman, 16 and 17-year olds, people who are vulnerable due to old age, mental health problems or disability, households made homeless after an emergency (fire, flood or other disaster), young people aged under 21 who were in care between the ages of 16 and 18, vulnerable care leavers aged 21 and over, people who are vulnerable as a result of leaving prison, people who are vulnerable as a result of leaving the armed forces and people fleeing domestic violence or the threat of violence.

- you applied to the Council before it started to use its localism powers (February 2013)⁴ and you accept a tenancy in the private rented sector that ends the Council's main homelessness duty to your household – this is called a qualifying offer. You will be eligible for a further 100 points after you have lived in the private rented sector for six months.

Group B1 – Insanitary, unsuitable or overcrowded housing conditions

You may be eligible for points if you are living in insanitary overcrowded or unsuitable housing conditions and the Council agrees to award points under this category.

Insanitary or unsuitable housing

You will be eligible for 50 points if:

- If you share facilities (including bath/shower, toilet and food storage/preparation area if you are not provided with meals) with other people who are not part of your family and you have dependent children or a pregnant woman in your household.
- If you live in a privately rented property that has been assessed as insanitary or uninhabitable by the Private Sector Team and/or the Environmental Health Team and we may be able to improve the living conditions in your property so you do not have an urgent need to move but your housing situation could potentially affect your health and wellbeing.

You will be eligible for 300 points if:

- If you live in a privately rented property that has been assessed as insanitary or uninhabitable by the Private Sector Team and/or the Environmental Health Team and you have an urgent need to move because there is an immediate threat to your health and wellbeing and your living conditions cannot be improved.

Overcrowded housing

You are overcrowded if you have fewer rooms available for sleeping in than the number of bedrooms we assess you need (see section 2.4 'What you will be able to bid for'). We consider all living rooms in your property are available for sleeping in if your household has sole use of them.

The Council recognises that some properties have particularly small rooms. Where a room available for sleeping in measures less than 50 square feet, we will award additional overcrowding points – this will be done on a case by case basis

- If you have one room available for sleeping in (including living rooms) less than your assessed bedroom need, you will be eligible for 100 points.

⁴ After February 2013 we will make offers of accommodation in the private rented sector under the provisions of the 2011 Localism Act. This means that you will be made one offer of suitable private rented sector accommodation instead of temporary accommodation. Accepting such an offer will end the Council's main homelessness duty to you and you will no longer be eligible for Group A points.

- If you have two or more rooms available for sleeping in (including living rooms) less than your assessed bedroom need, you will be eligible for 250 points. All families with dependent children living in studios will be eligible for these higher level points.

Group B2 – Under-occupation, essential repairs, regeneration or other improvement work

You may be eligible for points if you are living in a property which is too large for your household (under-occupation) and you are an existing Council or housing association tenant or where the Council needs to make improvements/repairs to your property, building, estate or wider area if you are an existing Council tenant.

You can only be awarded points in **one** of the categories listed below. (If you are eligible for points in more than one of these categories, you will be awarded the highest award of points.)

Under-occupation

You will be eligible for 400 points if:

- you are currently living in accommodation which is too large for your household's needs (under occupying). For housing association tenants, your landlord will need to agree to allow your current property to be let by the Council if you move into a Council property. If you are a Council tenant, you may also receive a payment from our Tenant Options Fund if you are moving to a smaller property to help with the costs of moving. The Council may assist your adult children to move into a property of their own through a direct offer if they have lived with you for at least 12 months before you were awarded under-occupation points. Housing associations may have similar schemes to help with moving costs and your landlord will be able to give you further information. More information on moving to a smaller property can be found in Appendix B.

Essential repairs

You will be eligible for 500 points if:

- you are a Council tenant and your property has been assessed by the Council as needing essential repairs. The Council will award these points where we assess that repairs will be disruptive or where there are technical or safety reasons to move you and where the works will take two months or longer. Where repairs will take less than two months to complete, you will be eligible for temporary accommodation and the right to return to your current property. Where repairs will take longer than two months, you will be offered a choice between a temporary and a permanent move. You will also be eligible for a disturbance payment to help you with the costs of moving – more information on disturbance payments can be found in Appendix C.

Regeneration or redevelopment

- you are a Council tenant and are required to leave your property because it has been identified for regeneration under the Council's CIP or another major redevelopment project agreed by the Director for Housing and Adult Social

Care. Where possible, you will be given the option to return to one of the newly built units which meets your household's assessed bedroom need where available. The Council may assist your adult children to move into a property of their own through a direct offer if they have lived with you for at least 12 months before the CIP or other redevelopment work is approved to proceed. In some cases, a local lettings plan may apply – see section 4.2.3 for more information.

Group C – Housing and health related needs

There are two levels of priority for housing and health related needs within this group. Your application will be assessed by the Council's medical assessment officer (or other authorised medical professional) to determine if you are eligible for health and housing related points.

To be assessed as eligible for housing and health related needs points, you must demonstrate that:

- your medical condition is being caused or made worse by your housing conditions, **and**
- your current property cannot be improved or adapted to meet your needs at a reasonable cost, **and**
- rehousing is likely to significantly improve your condition.

You may be awarded housing and health related points for each person in your household who meets the thresholds in their medical assessment.

Category 1

You will be eligible for 500 points if your medical condition and housing circumstances are having a serious impact on your health and wellbeing and you are in urgent need of rehousing.

Category 2

You will be eligible for 150 points if your medical condition and housing circumstances are having a serious impact on your health and wellbeing and rehousing would be desirable.

We aim to assess your application within 21 working days. This may be extended if there are delays in getting information from your doctor or other medical professionals involved with your case. During this assessment period, your application will be temporarily put on hold and you will not be able to bid for properties.

Further formal medical assessments will only be carried out where there has been a significant change in your medical condition.

Once we have assessed your application, we will use the information on accessibility given in section 4.1 to determine what types of property you can bid

for. We will give you priority for a ground floor property if your health and housing needs assessment shows that you have a medical need for a ground floor property.

More information on medical points and assessment can be found in Appendix A.

Group D: Harassment and violence

The Council places a high priority on community safety and the personal safety of all its residents and we will take action against perpetrators of harassment and violence. If you are currently experiencing domestic violence or harassment on the grounds of your race, gender, disability, sexuality or other reason and you need to move, you will be eligible for the following points (where they are agreed by an appropriate officer):

- If you are fleeing severe harassment or violence from inside or outside the home and you are in urgent need of rehousing, you will be eligible for 300 points.
- If you are fleeing harassment or violence from inside or outside the home and rehousing would be desirable, you will be eligible for 75 points.

Initially these points will be awarded for a six month period. If you have not been able to move after six months, your Group E points will be reviewed by an appropriate officer.

If you are a Camden Council tenant and you are awarded harassment and violence points, you may receive a payment into your rent account to help you with the costs of moving.

Group E: Additional support needs

In line with the Council's priority to promote independence and social inclusion, you may be eligible for Group F points if you fall into one of the groups below and you are assessed as able to sustain an independent tenancy.

- If you are a young person aged up to 25, you were previously looked after by Camden Council and your current living arrangements are not sustainable, you will be eligible for 200 points.
- If you are a vulnerable person with support needs who is ready to move on to independent housing following a stay in hospital or a period of living in supported accommodation, you will be eligible for 50 points. Where you are ready to move on and also fall into one of the groups below, you will be eligible for 200 points:
 - you are **aged 65 or over** and you are **vulnerable** because, for example, you have been accepted for sheltered housing, you have a lower level medical priority or you have spent 10 or more years in prison, a hostel or hospital.
 - you have **complex and enduring mental health problems** and

- you have a Care Programme Approach to plan, assess and review your particular needs, **or**
 - you have a funded support package which goes beyond your housing related support needs.
- **your mobility needs cannot be met in the private rented sector** where you have an assessment from the Council's medical assessment officer (or equivalent) showing you need ground floor, level access or wheelchair accessible accommodation, or the Council has tried and been unable to find suitable accommodation for you and your household over the last six months.

In cases where your assessment shows you are not yet ready to sustain an independent tenancy, you may be referred to supported housing for a period of time dependent your individual needs. Your application will not be made active for bidding on Home Connections until the medical assessment officer (or equivalent) has assessed you as ready to move on to independent living.

Group F: Social needs

If you need to move in order to access local services, such as specialist medical facilities, or to provide a service, such as fostering children, you will be eligible for the following points:

- If you provide foster care and you need larger or alternative accommodation to continue your role as a foster parent, you will be eligible for 150 points.
- If you give or receive long-term substantial care, you will be eligible for 100 points.
- If you are accessing specialist medical or support facilities, for example medical facilities, you will be eligible for 50 points.
- If you are a current or former member of the armed forces, you will be eligible for 50 points.

Group G: Transfers

If you are a current Camden Council tenant applying for a transfer and you qualify for inclusion on the register, you will be awarded an additional 30 points.

3.4 Recognising waiting time

The Council wants to recognise the time households spend on the housing register. To do this, every year we will give you five per cent of the points award you have on the anniversary of your application.

The 30 points awarded in Group G to Camden Council tenants applying for transfer will not be included in the calculation of waiting time points. Waiting time points awarded on previous anniversaries will also be excluded from the calculation.

3.5 Long-term residence

To recognise commitment to the borough and long-term residence, if you have lived in Camden for 10 out of the last 15 years, we will give you 10 per cent of the points award you have on the anniversary of your application (instead of the five percent award given to those without a long-term connection to the borough).

The 30 points awarded in Group G to Camden Council tenants applying for transfer will not be included in the calculation of waiting time points. Waiting time points awarded on previous anniversaries will also be excluded from the calculation.

3.6 How points are awarded

You will be awarded points in the groups above according to the information you give on your application form. The table below shows you can be awarded points under the scheme.

You can only be awarded points under one criteria in each points group, apart from group B1 and group F when you can be awarded points under more than one of the criteria if you are eligible for points.

| Group | Criteria | Points | Who is eligible? | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----|----|----|----|
| | | | CT | HT | PT | HA | OA |
| A1 Threat of homelessness and statutory homelessness | Threat of homelessness | 50 time limited points for three months | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Household accepted as statutorily homeless | 100 points | | | | ✓ | |
| A2 Preventing homelessness | Homelessness prevention or qualifying offer in the private rented sector | 100 points plus a further 100 points after six months | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| B1 Insanitary, unsuitable or overcrowded housing | Private rented accommodation – insanitary conditions or in disrepair | 50 points | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Private rented accommodation - uninhabitable | 300 points | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Sharing facilities where there are dependent children in household (or pregnancy) | 50 points | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Overcrowding | 250 points (severe) 100 points | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| B2 Under-occupation, essential repairs, regeneration or other improvement work | Decants | 500 points | ✓ | | | | |
| | Community Investment Programme or other major development work | 500 points | ✓ | | | | |
| | Under-occupation | 400 points | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| | Essential repairs | 300 points | ✓ | | | | |
| C Housing and health related needs | | 500 points (category 1) 150 points (category 2) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| D Harassment and violence | | 300 points (urgent) 75 points | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| E Additional support needs | Care leavers | 200 points | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Move on from supported accommodation | 200 points (particular vulnerable) 50 points | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| F Social needs | Foster carers | 150 points | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Accessing specialist medical or support services | 50 points | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Giving or receiving substantial long-term care | 100 points | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Current or former members of the armed forces and already receiving other points from Groups A to F excluding these points. | 50 points | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| G Transfers | Current Camden Council tenants applying for a transfer who qualify to register | 30 points | ✓ | | | | |

CT = Council tenant; HT = Housing association tenant; PT = Private tenant; HA = Homeless applicant; OA = Other applicant

4. How to bid for properties

Camden's housing stock will be let through Home Connections, a choice-based lettings scheme. Properties available for letting will be advertised weekly and you will have to bid for properties that you wish to view.

You will not usually be able to bid for properties larger than you need (see section 2.4 for details of the exceptions to this). However you will be able to bid for a property with one bedroom less than your assessed need where this will improve your current housing situation.

For larger households who are waiting for properties with five or more bedrooms, you may be able to bid on properties with two bedrooms less than your assessed need. This will only be possible where a suitable property is available and you will not be made statutorily overcrowded by living in a property smaller than your assessed bedroom need.

The Council will shortlist the applicants with the highest points who have bid on a property. If you are successful in your bid, you will be invited to view the property. After the viewings are complete, the property will be offered to you if you are the highest pointed applicant who wants to accept it. For example, if the applicant with the highest points refuses the property it will be offered to the second highest bidder. If you are tied with another applicant in terms of the number of points you have, we will allocate the property according to the date of your application. Where you are still tied with another applicant, we will then use your highest points group award to allocate the property, for example if your highest points group award is for urgent housing and health related needs (500 points) you would receive the allocation over someone with a highest points group award for living in unsuitable private sector housing (300 points).

Where a property has been advertised with a restriction, only applicants who meet the criteria will be short listed for the property. For example, if you have young children, you will not be considered for properties advertised as suitable for people over-65.

If you do not actively bid on properties for a year, your application will be reviewed and you may be contacted to discuss your housing options further.

4.1 Types of property and accessibility

Property advertisements on the Home Connections website will identify properties according to the categories set out below. Once we have assessed your application, we will use the information on accessibility given in this section to determine what types of property you can bid for.

- A) Wheelchair accessible throughout:** These properties have been designed to meet the wheelchair accessible housing design standards, offering extra space and full access to all rooms and facilities.

- B) Wheelchair accessible essential rooms:** These properties have been designed or adapted to provide access for wheelchair users to essential facilities (that is, a bedroom, bathroom, toilet, living room and kitchen). Other rooms in the property such as additional bedrooms or bathrooms may not be wheelchair accessible.
- C) Lifetime homes:** The properties have been designed to meet the space standards of *Lifetime Homes*. The main features include a level approach/entrance and wider doorways.
- D) Easy access:** The main features of these properties include a level approach to the entrance, wider doorways and more space than in general needs housing. These properties may also have an internal flight of stairs and there is enough space to accommodate future provision of a stair lift subject to technical feasibility.
- E) Step free:** These are properties that are considered general needs housing but have a level approach/entrance into the property. The main access feature is level access to the property and throughout. Properties in this category that have an internal flight of stairs will be likely to accommodate future provision of a stair lift subject to technical feasibility.
- E+) Minimal steps:** These properties do not meet any accessible housing design guidance and will have no more than four steps to access the front door. They are likely to be ground floor properties or properties in a block with a lift and a small number of communal or property front door steps.
- F) General needs:** These properties will have more than four steps or a ramp access that is steeper than 1:10 to access the property front door. Properties in this category will be advertised with the number of steps to access the property to help you choose what to bid for.

4.2 Properties let through other routes

In some cases, properties will not be let through Home Connections and will be let through different routes as set out below.

4.2.1 Direct offers

From time to time the Council (or a housing association) may ask you to move to another property. This could be so that repairs or improvements can be carried out or because you succeeded to the tenancy after the previous tenant died and you have more bedrooms than you need. If we (or your housing association landlord) ask you to move, another property may be identified for you outside the usual rules of this allocation scheme.

The Council may also make direct offers of properties in some limited circumstances where it is in our financial or strategic interests. These cases will be approved by an appropriate officer. You may receive a direct offer if:

- you need to move urgently so that CIP or other redevelopment work can be completed.
- you are a non-dependent adult who normally lives with a tenant (such as an adult son or daughter, or other close relative) in a property where there are works planned under CIP and you have not been able to secure a property after six months of bidding through Home Connections.
- you have a property larger than you need and your current property can be used to house another household in housing need. Where you have adult children living at home who are not moving with you to the smaller property, we may also make them a direct offer of a property to meet their assessed needs at the same time.
- you live in a property due to be returned to the owner (this could include temporary accommodation you occupy where the Council has accepted the main homelessness duty to your household).
- you need accommodation under the National Witness Mobility Scheme, the Safe and Secure Programme or the North London Domestic Violence protocol.
- the Council has agreed that you can be offered the tenancy of the property that you already live in.
- it is in the Council's wider strategic interests to move you or it helps the Council manage the housing stock more effectively.
- you are living in shared housing at 5-7 Belsize Grove and you are applying to transfer to self-contained housing at the same address.

In addition, there are quotas for direct offers for the following groups:

- You use the Council's Learning Disability Service and you have been assessed as ready to live independently. **Six properties will be available each year for this group.** The type of property needed will be assessed on a case by case basis.
- You are a foster carer who would foster older or additional children if you had larger accommodation; or if you are a prospective adoptive parent and your housing situation is a barrier to adopting. **Ten properties (with a mix of two, three and four bedroom properties) will be available each year for this group.**

If you refuse a direct offer, a member of staff will review your application and discuss your housing options with you.

4.2.2 Sensitive lettings

The Council will sometimes use a sensitive lettings policy to decide how to let properties, both general needs and sheltered housing. This means that, from time to time, only certain applicants will be considered for some properties as agreed by an appropriate officer. This could happen if:

- an outgoing tenant has caused a serious nuisance.

- there are social issues in a local area that need to be addressed.
- an area is covered by an action plan to promote sustainable neighbourhoods.

Regular reviews of our sensitive lettings policies ensure that we continue to give priority in our allocations to the groups the law says we must give priority to.

4.2.3 Local lettings

The Council may also decide to apply a local lettings policy to a particular area or development. This is to help the Council deliver on its priorities, tackle social issues and create sustainable neighbourhoods. To do this, it may give priority to different groups of applicants who may not have priority in the wider allocation scheme or vary how the Council assesses bedroom need.

Regular reviews of our local lettings policies ensure that we continue to give priority in our allocations to the groups the law says we must give priority to.

4.2.4 Service tenants

If you are an employee of Camden Council and you are provided with accommodation as part of your job (for example, you are a caretaker on a housing estate or in a school, or a warden in sheltered housing), you may, subject to an savings and assets test as set out in section 2.2, be offered alternative accommodation by the Council when your employment comes to an end. If you are eligible, you will receive a maximum of two direct offers of suitable accommodation, which may include your present property. We may also make you direct offers if you decide to give up your rent-free accommodation but continue to be employed in that role.

This priority may also be awarded to you if you are the spouse, civil partner or partner of a service tenant who died whilst in service.

You will not be eligible for direct offers if:

- you have lived in your service tenancy for less than five years, or
- you are being or have been dismissed under the Council's disciplinary procedures or on the grounds of poor performance, or you resign after a formal investigation prior to disciplinary action being taken.
- you are in the process of resigning or have resigned voluntarily.

However, if you are retired on ill health grounds and you have worked for the Council for less than five years, you will be eligible for direct offers.

If you are not eligible for direct offers we will give you appropriate advice about your housing options.

5. Other allocations

Information for existing Council tenants and people who live with them can be found in Appendix D.

5.1 Buy Back Scheme

If you are a Council leaseholder and you are facing financial or other difficulties, you can apply to sell your property back to the Council under its buy back scheme. Under this scheme we may grant a secure tenancy to the leaseholder. For full details of the buy back scheme, visit camden.gov.uk and search for buy back scheme.

6. Your information and your rights

6.1 Data protection

You have the right to ask for details of any information held by the Council about you, including where the information came from, how it is used and why the Council has the information. For more information, please go to camden.gov.uk and search for data protection.

6.2 Right to request information or a review

You have a right to general information to enable, including:

- how your application will be dealt with under the scheme.
- if and when we may be able to allocate you housing appropriate to your needs.

You have a right to be informed about any decision we make about your case which is likely to be taken into account in deciding whether to allocate you accommodation.

You also have a right to request a review of any such decision we write to you about, including decisions that you are ineligible, do not qualify for our scheme or how many verified points you have been awarded. We operate a two stage review process:

Stage one – local resolution

We ask you to let the officer who made the decision you wish to challenge know your reasons for disagreeing with their decision and we ask you to do this within 21 days of receiving their decision. You can do this by phone or in writing. They will then take into account your reasons for challenging their decision, including any further supporting information you provide, and let you know, within a further 14 days, whether they are able to change their original decision.

Stage 2 - review

We ask you to put in writing your reasons for disagreeing with the decision made at stage one. You must do this within 21 days of the date of our local resolution decision. We ask you to send all the information relevant to your case that you would like us to consider as part of the review. A reviewing officer, who was not involved in our original decision, will review our decision and write to you with the outcome within 56 days of your request. We may extend the timescales above in exceptional circumstances.

The review stage decision will be made according to the facts known to the Council at the date of the review. If your circumstances have improved in any relevant respect, the reviewer's decision may be less favourable to you than the original decision.

We may also use other professional organisations to help us review your case.

7. Dealing with exceptional cases

The Council accepts that there may be some exceptional cases where a household's immediate and urgent needs cannot be met through the allocation scheme. The Director of Housing and Adult Social Care or an appropriate officer will make a decision on how to deal with these exceptional situations and will be able to increase points awards or make direct offers of accommodation where appropriate on a case by case basis.

Appendix A– more information on housing and health needs

Role of the medical assessment officer

The Council medical assessment officer is responsible for assessing your housing and health related needs, including your need for suitable accessible housing (see section 4.1 for more details), any vulnerability you may have and reviewing any points you are awarded. In some circumstances the Council may use another medical professional in place of the medical assessment officer to review your application form.

Health and housing points assessment

Where your health condition is being caused or made worse by your current housing circumstances, you will be awarded either higher or lower level housing and health related needs points. Below are some examples of the types of condition that will be considered.

To be eligible for points due to **urgent** housing and health related needs, you will need to show, for example, that you:

- are housebound due to your housing conditions.
- have substantial care needs that meet our criteria and the care is not provided by adult social care, such as dementia.
- require the permanent use of substantial medical equipment at home, such as kidney dialysis equipment, mobile or ceiling track hoists.
- are a full-time wheelchair user requiring wheelchair adapted housing.
- have moderate to severe dementia.
- have had severe strokes with a loss of function on one side of the body.
- have advanced Motor Neurone Disease or Multiple Sclerosis.

To be eligible for points due to housing and health related needs which mean that it would be desirable for you to move, you will need to show, for example, that you:

- have significant back or knee problems and have difficulty carrying children or shopping upstairs.
- have a severe and enduring mental illness where a move would substantially improve your wellbeing.
- have bilateral arthritis of the hips and knees and you use mobility equipment.
- have had moderate strokes with recovery of some function.
- have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease or Emphysema and you use mobility equipment .
- have schizophrenia or Bipolar Affective Disorder.
- have an Autistic Spectrum disorder with behavioural problems, global developmental delay or moderate to severe learning disabilities.
- have Cardiomyopathy or congestive cardiac failure.

Carers and extra bedrooms

If your housing and health needs assessment confirms that you need an overnight carer, you may be eligible for an additional bedroom. This will need to be confirmed by a Community Care Assessment provided by the Council's adult or children's social care divisions that shows you need permanent and substantial overnight care, including assistance with personal activities of daily living (ADL), for example bathing, washing, toileting, dressing, feeding, transfer from bed/chairs/sofas/baths, if you are wheelchair or bed bound.

In any other circumstances, the carer will be expected to use the living room.

You may require an additional bedroom where:

- you need major medical equipment, such as home dialysis, wheelchair use within the home, possum machines, Remstar machines, oxygen cylinders, equipment for percutaneous external gastrostomy feeding, rehabilitative and medical equipment for children, equipment for people who are doubly incontinent, **and/or**
- you need substantial psychological support due to a major psychiatric illness certified by a consultant psychiatrist (for example, progressive dementia, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, severe learning difficulties, severe and longstanding neurosis which is poorly controlled by medical treatments) and you are assessed as being incapable of living independently in the community by a medical professional, **and/or**
- sharing with another family member may have a negative impact on your well-being, for example due to severe behavioural disorders or medical conditions that disturb sleep patterns.

You will be asked to provide medical reports, occupational therapy, nursing and community care reports where applicable to support your request for an additional bedroom.

If you are eligible for an additional bedroom, this may be provided either at your home **or** at the home of your caregiver depending on the arrangements made for your care.

Appendix B – more information if you would like to move to a smaller property (under-occupation)

If you would like to move to a smaller property because you are under-occupying, you will be entitled to points from group B2 of the scheme.

If you are a Council tenant moving to a smaller property in Camden releasing a larger property to be let to a household in need, you will be eligible for a payment from the Tenant Options Fund. This will also apply if you move through a mutual exchange within Camden.

Under-occupying Council tenants will receive priority for some Council properties under our First Choice scheme. These properties will make up no more than half of

one bedroom Council properties and/or 20 per cent of two bedroom Council properties available for letting over the year.

If you are at or above state pension credit age, you will be able to bid for a property which is one bedroom larger than you require under the Camden bedroom standard.

Appendix C – more information on disturbance payments

If you are moving because we are undertaking essential repairs to your property or to redevelop or refurbish your building or estate, you will be entitled to help with the costs of moving. The payment you will receive is called a disturbance payment.

The payment will be £330 if you have to move to a new tenancy. In addition, you will be able to get help from the Housing Allocations Service with the costs of:

- removal contractor's fees.
- disconnecting and reconnecting any appliances, including washing machines, electric key meters.
- reinstalling a telephone.
- redirecting mail for up to three months.
- storage.
- curtains and carpets (a reasonable contribution will be made where receipts or quotes can be provided).

If you are in arrears with your rent or charges, we will use any disturbance payment to clear your arrears and pay you the balance.

You may also be entitled to an additional home loss payment if your property is part of improvement or redevelopment works. The Housing Allocations Service will be able to provide more information on these payments.

Appendix D – tenancy conditions

Please go to camden.gov.uk and search for tenancy conditions for more information on succession and other tenancy matters. The tenancy conditions are currently under review and the scheme will include updated information on discretionary succession and joint tenancies in this section when available.