

Daventry District Council Housing Allocations Scheme

Adopted July 2017



Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	What is an Allocation of Housing	5
3	Legal Framework	6
4	Statement of Choice	9
5	Aims of the Policy	10
6	The Housing Register	11
7	Equality and Diversity	13
8	Eligibility to join the Housing Register	14
9	Local Connection	15
10	Reasonable Preference	19
11	Other Circumstances	20
12	Making an Application	25
13	Supporting Documentation	26
15	Choice Based Lettings Bandings	29
14	Medical, Welfare and Disability	35
16	Property Letting Criteria	39
17	The Bidding Process	41
18	Review and cancellation	44
19	Low Demand Properties	45
20	Local Lettings Arrangements	46
21	Application Reviews and Appeals	47
22	Review of the Allocation Scheme	48
23	Appendices	49

1 Introduction

Daventry District Council as local housing authority maintains a single Housing Register for Daventry District. This provides a single point of entry to all applicants for social housing outside of the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA) where a different approach is in place (see below). However, the register also provides a fall-back position for NRDA properties should there be no qualifying tenants from the NRDA register. Anyone 16 or over is able to apply for social housing subject to fulfilling the eligibility and qualification criteria. The Council does not own social housing stock of its own; the Register is used to allocate people to housing provided by the Council's partner 'Registered Providers' of social housing.

Demand for social housing is greater than the number of homes available. This Allocation Scheme describes how the Council prioritises housing applicants to ensure that those in greatest housing need are given the greatest priority. It sets out who can apply for social housing in Daventry District and how the priorities are set and assessments made. By law, local housing authorities generally cannot allocate or nominate housing accommodation except in accordance with their allocation scheme.

This Allocation Scheme applies to:

- New and current applications
- Applications from existing tenants of Registered Providers

This Allocations Scheme is a revision of the Scheme adopted in February 2017. The revisions set out the approach to the Northampton Related Development Area.

Northampton-related development

The Council has developed an approach with neighbouring authorities – Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Council – to nominations for housing in the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA). Within this area, which includes part of Daventry District, the housing which is being developed is to meet the currently identified housing needs of Northampton. The policies setting this out can be found in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy – a plan identifying the NRDA boundary is included at appendix G.

Sites that adjoin the NRDA boundary, and that are granted a planning permission that explicitly relates to the housing meeting Northampton's needs (i.e. secured through a section 106), will for the purposes of applying this document be treated as being part of the NRDA.

Within the NRDA nominations to social housing will be made from a register covering the whole of the NRDA.

In cases where no applicants from the NRDA register can be found to nominate to the properties, NPH will revert to the District Council who will then seek to nominate from their own register from tenants currently living in parishes immediately adjoining the NRDA boundary, and then elsewhere within the District. Thus the District Council's register acts as a fall back position for NRDA properties in these cases. In order to simplify the wording of later parts of this scheme this approach should be assumed to apply, and this point has not been continually re-iterated.

Cross references are made throughout this document to the Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme. The 'section' references relate to the current version, adopted in December 2013) but could change during the lifetime of this scheme. Where appropriate DDC will seek to update/amend this document to reflect any changes to the Northampton Borough Council document where it may impact upon the adopted DDC document.

2 What is an Allocation of Housing

An 'allocation' of accommodation under this scheme is the nomination of a person (or persons) to be an Assured or an Assured Shorthold tenant of housing accommodation held by a Registered Provider.

3 Legal Framework

3.1 Introduction

The Allocations scheme has regard to the following (but not exhaustive) legal and regulatory requirements and national guidance.

3.2 Housing Act 1996

The Allocation Scheme is required under section 167 of the Housing Act 1996. It meets the requirements for Daventry District Council to have a scheme for determining priorities and procedures to be followed in allocating accommodation whilst giving reasonable preference to the following groups of people:

- a) People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act); this includes people who are not in priority need.
- b) People who are owed a duty by any housing authority, 193(2) (eligible, in priority need and not intentionally homeless), 193(2) (threatened with homelessness unintentionally) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65 (2) or 68 (2) of the 1985 Housing Act, these sections cover the equivalent duties under the 1985 Act to the unintentionally homeless), or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3) (unintentionally homeless who are not in priority need and offered accommodation under a discretionary power).
- c) People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, or on grounds relating to a disability.
- e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

These ((a) to (e)) are known as descriptions of people with urgent housing needs.

3.3 Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England (June 2012 – Update Dec 2013)

Statutory guidance issued by the government to local housing authorities in England under section 169 of the Housing Act 1996. Housing authorities are expected to have regard to this guidance in exercising their functions under Part 6 of the 1996 Act ('Part 6').

3.4 The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces Personnel) (England) Regulations (2012)

These regulations set out that local housing authorities cannot disqualify certain serving or former members of the armed forces from applying for social housing on residency grounds.

3.5 The Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012

These regulations amended the Housing Act 1996 to give local housing authorities the duty to apply additional preference to applications from certain serving and ex-members of the armed forces (and reserve forces) if they have urgent housing needs.

3.6 Right to Move Statutory Guidance (March 2015)

These regulations prevent local housing authorities applying a local connection test that could disadvantage tenants who need to move across local authority boundaries for work-related reasons, where not moving would cause hardship to the applicant.

3.7 Right to Rent (February 2016)

These rules were introduced by the Government to ensure landlords and those sub-letting properties carry out proper checks on all new adult tenants. Properties should only be let to people with permission or a right to be in the UK and failure to carry out the checks could mean a penalty of up to £3,000 per tenant. Some types of property are excluded from the Scheme including:

- residential tenancy agreements which grant a right of occupation in social housing by virtue of a relevant legislative provision as to housing and the local authority has already been required to consider their immigration status before allocating them the property, or where a tenant has such an existing tenancy and is seeking to exchange their home for an alternative tenancy.
- Residential tenancy agreements which grant a right of occupation in any circumstances where the accommodation is arranged by a local authority which is acting in response to a statutory duty owed to an individual or which is exercising a relevant power with the intention of providing accommodation to a person who is homeless, or who is threatened with homelessness. This includes instances where the occupier is to be placed into private rented property by the local authority. In such circumstances, landlords should ask for written confirmation

from the local authority that the authority is acting in response to a statutory duty and keep this on file.

4 Statement of Choice

Daventry District Council is committed to offering as much choice as possible to those seeking homes within the social sector whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need.

The Allocations Scheme allows applicants accepted onto the Housing Register to apply for any property they are eligible for.

The Council's Housing Options Service can offer advice and assistance to help with applicants' housing need including:

- Private rental – Applicants should contact local lettings agencies, look in local newspapers or look online to find any homes available in the areas where they wish to live.
- Low cost home ownership – this is sometimes known as shared ownership or shared equity. More information on this option can be found at helptobuymidlands.co.uk.
- Starter homes – This is a Government scheme which allows first time buyers under the age of 40 to purchase a home with a minimum 20% discount off the market price. More information can be found at new-homes.co.uk/starter-homes.
- Homeswapper – Social housing tenants can exchange their homes with another secure or assured tenant if the landlord agrees. This is a national scheme and more information can be found at homeswapper.co.uk.
- Possible solutions to allow applicants to stay in their own homes including referrals to the Care and Repair Service, the use of aids and adaptations and rent rescue scheme.
- The allocation and potential occupation of affordable housing provision within the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA) – as discussed in the section above

The Council operates a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system called HomeChoice. HomeChoice advertises social housing properties for which the housing associations have requested a nomination. Eligible applicants can then express an interest in the property by 'bidding'.

The Council's CBL scheme follows an open and transparent process from start to finish. Feedback is published periodically on the Choice Based Lettings website.

5 Aims of the Policy

The Council's aims for the Allocations Scheme are as follows:

- Let social homes to those in the greatest need
- Meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing
- Offer as much choice as possible to applicants.
- Offer applicants information and advice to enable them to make informed choices about their housing options.
- Create an easy to understand, fair and transparent system.
- Help prevent homelessness.
- Make the most effective use of the local housing stock.

6 The Housing Register

6.1 The Register and Applications (Note applicants for housing in the Northampton Related Development Area should refer to Section 2 of the Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme)

Daventry District Council has chosen to operate a common Housing Register on behalf of all Registered Providers working within the District outside of the Northampton Related Development Area. A different approach is in place for the part of the District in the NRDA). This means applicants only need to complete one application, which will be assessed under one set of criteria (as set out in this document) to be considered for housing in the District outside of the Northampton Related Development Area. This ensures that all applications are treated in a fair, even and transparent manner.

Free advice and information about applying for accommodation within Daventry District is available to anyone who is looking to apply for accommodation, through the Housing Options Officers. This includes general information about application procedures, as well as information about qualification and prioritisation criteria.

Staff will also be available to assist any person who may have difficulty in making an application.

6.2 Data Protection and Information Sharing

The information that applicants provide is likely to be personal and sensitive as defined in the Data Protection Act 1998.

Except where otherwise permitted or required by law, data will only be shared with third parties with the applicant's permission, and then only for the purposes of assisting with their re-housing. For example, information will be shared with Registered Providers and other local authorities.

Applicants will be required to sign a consent form on the housing application to enable the authority to share this information. If consent is not given, an application cannot be considered.

In some relevant cases, information will be shared about the individual and their history irrespective of whether their consent has been obtained. This includes:

- In accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 115)
- Where there is a threat to the another party's staff or contractors
- Where information is relevant to the management or support duties of the proposed landlord or support organisation to ensure the health and safety of the applicant, a

member of his or her household, or a member of staff. This would include Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) cases.

6.3 Information on the Housing Register

Under section 166 of the Housing Act 1996 a person on the Housing Register of a local authority is entitled to:

- a) See the entry to him/herself and to receive a copy entry free of charge, and
- b) be given such general information as will enable him/her to assess how long it is likely to be before housing accommodation appropriate to his/her needs becomes available for allocation.

For (a) above all requests must be in writing.

To comply with the (b) above, Daventry District Council makes available information from previous lettings. This includes;

- The street address of the property
- The band of the [first] person nominated to the property
- The date the person was placed in the band
- The number of bids the property received
- Property type

This information can be found on the HomeChoice website at www.homechoice-link.org.uk.

The information on recent lets needs to be used with caution, as there are some circumstances that cannot be reported due to data confidentiality, which may have determined the outcome for the property.

Any requests for further information must be in writing.

7 Equality and Diversity

Daventry District Council and its partner Registered Providers are committed to assessing applications and allocating homes to applicants irrespective of;

- Gender including gender re-assignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Physical appearance
- Nationality
- Other irrelevant considerations

The Council promotes equal opportunities and in doing so has developed a Corporate Equalities Scheme which all strategies and policies must have regard to.

We aim to maintain equality and ensure nominations are made in a non-discriminatory way whilst meeting housing need. The scheme is operated in an open and transparent manner and applicants will not be treated unfairly on the grounds of the above.

Where an application has a 'protected characteristic' under the Equality Act 2011 and that characteristic is relevant to a nomination decision and it is lawful to do so, it will be taken into account. This is particularly relevant in relation to the protected characteristic of age.

8 Eligibility to join the Housing Register (Note: applicants for housing in the Northampton Related Development Area should apply to join the NRDA register and refer to section 3 of Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme)

Anyone aged sixteen years or over can apply to Daventry District Council for accommodation.

Daventry District Council will consider an applicant's eligibility:

- At the time the applicant applies to join the Housing Register.
- At the point the applicant is considered for an allocation of accommodation.
- If the Council is aware or has been notified there has been a change in the applicant's circumstances that may warrant the completion of an update form.

The Localism Act 2011 has given local authorities power to determine who is eligible but some rules to determine who is ineligible to make an application for housing are set nationally. Primarily these are people living abroad and those subject to immigration control.

Legislation covering the exemptions list includes the following;

- Section 160ZA of the 1996 Housing Act "Allocation only to eligible and qualifying persons: England".
- Section 13(2) of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 which defines persons subject to immigration control.
- Regulation 3 & 4 of The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2016 No. 2194).

Further details regarding the above legislation can be found in the 'Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England' which is available on www.gov.uk.

If there is any uncertainty about an applicant's immigration status UK Visas and Immigration will be contacted to confirm the immigration status of an applicant.

9 Local Connection (The approach set out below relates to Daventry District when nominations are being made from the Daventry District Council Housing Register. Nominations for the NRDA properties from the NRDA register will be subject to the approach set out in NBC's Allocations Scheme.)

9.1 Introduction

Anyone wishing to apply to join the Council's Housing Register will have to demonstrate a Local Connection to the District (outside of the NRDA) with the exception of:

- Certain persons connected with the UK Armed Forces (see section below).
- Existing social tenants applying for housing under the Right to Move criteria (see section below).
- Those accepted as homeless because they need to move away from an area due to harm or violence (see '9.4 Local Connection and Homelessness' section below).

Local Connection is defined by Section 199 of the Housing Act 1996, which states that local connection is established through residence, employment, family associations or special circumstances.

9.2 Applicants for Housing in Daventry District outside of the NRDA

Applicants meeting one of the following criteria will be defined as having a Local Connection to Daventry District for the purposes of housing outside of the Northampton Related Development Area, provided that the connection has been made through the applicant's own choice (this means that if an applicant has been placed in Daventry District (outside of the NRDA) and it is not through a choice they have made e.g. being hospitalised or detained in prison will not be considered a Local Connection). For all of the following bullet points, reference to Daventry District means Daventry District outside of the NRDA:

- Applicants who have lived in the District continuously for the 12 months preceding their application.
- Applicants who have lived in the District for at least 3 out of the 5 years preceding their application.
- Applicants who have lived in the District for at least 5 out of the 10 years preceding their application.
- Applicants who have a close relative (see definition below) living within the District for no less than 2 continuous years preceding application.
- Applicants who have a permanent contract of employment within the District.

- Applicants who have a temporary contract of employment within the District for no less than 12 months.
- Care Leavers who were resident in Daventry District prior to being placed in care and have been placed outside of Daventry District and wish to return to the District on leaving care.

For the purposes of this scheme, close relatives of applicants will be defined as the following including the 'step' equivalent:

- Mother/Father
- Sister/Brother
- Daughter/Son
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- Wife/Husband
- Civil Partner

From time to time and in very exceptional cases where it reflects the reality of a particular relationship the Council may accept a person in another relationship than those listed above as a 'close relative'.

9.3 Applicants for Housing in the NRDA

As noted above tenants for housing in the NRDA should refer to Northampton Borough Council's Allocations policy.

In cases where no suitable tenants can be identified on the NRDA housing register for houses within the Daventry district, the nomination will be made from the District Council's housing register, in accordance with the relevant s106 agreement.

9.3 Local Connection and the Armed Forces

The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012, state that local connection criteria cannot be applied to the following persons so as to disqualify them from an allocation of social housing:

- a) Those who are currently serving in the regular forces or who were serving in the regular forces at any time in the five years preceding their application for an allocation of social housing
- b) Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where:
 - i. The bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and
 - ii. The death was wholly or partly attributable to their service

- c) Existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.

The above applies to those applicants who serve in the regular and reserve armed forces and their families ensuring they are not disadvantaged from accessing social housing.

If the applicant is being discharged from the forces applications should be made at least eight weeks in advance of the discharge date if possible.

9.4 Local Connection and the Right to Move

The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 No. 967) and corresponding statutory guidance, allows existing social housing tenants to be allocated social housing across local authority boundaries within England for work-related reasons provided that such a move will alleviate hardship.

Work-related reasons means:

- The tenant currently works or has an apprenticeship in the District; or
- The tenant has been offered work or an apprenticeship in the District.

The regulations will not be applied if:

- Work is short term, that is, intended to last for less than 12 months.
- Work is for less than 16 hours a week (although this will be dependent on the salary level).
- Work is ancillary to the tenant's work in another district.
- Work is voluntary.

Hardship under Right to Move regulations will be assessed by the following (non-exhaustive) criteria:

- The distance/time taken to travel between work and home.
- The availability and affordability of transport, taking into account level of earnings.
- The nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home.
- Other personal factors, such as medical conditions and child care, which would be affected if the tenant could not move.
- The length of the work contract.
- Whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve employment circumstances or prospects, for example, by taking up a better job, a promotion or an apprenticeship.

Applicants applying under the right to move regulations will need to provide verification documentation as listed under the 'Making an Application' section below. In addition to this, an official contract of employment will also be required which will be verified before any offer of accommodation is made.

All applications accepted under the Right to Move criteria will be placed in Band C unless the applicant's housing circumstances dictate a higher banding in accordance with this Allocations Scheme.

The Right to Move Statutory Guidance strongly encourages local authorities to set a quota of properties that it expects to allocate each year to transferring tenants who need to move into the district for work-related reasons.

Daventry District Council has decided against setting a quota of properties for a number of reasons:

- a) Daventry District Council already allows a local connection to be established if an applicant is working or has an offer of employment (as above) within the District regardless of if they are a social tenant or not.
- b) The number of existing social housing applicants applying for housing within the District due to work-related reasons is less than 1% of the current waiting list.
- c) It would remove the applicants' right to choose where they would like to live in accordance with choice based lettings.

This situation will be monitored by the Housing Options Service on a quarterly basis.

9.5 Local Connection and Homelessness

Households where the Council has accepted a statutory homelessness duty under section 193(2) or 195(2) of Part VII Housing Act 1996 will be placed onto the Housing Register regardless of Local Connection. The effect of this is that people will not be placed on the Housing Register if they have been referred to another local authority under section 198 of the Housing Act 1996.

10 Reasonable Preference (The approach set out below relates to Daventry District when nominations are being made from the Daventry District register. Nominations for NRDA properties from the NRDA register will be subject to the approach set out in Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme.)

The Allocations Scheme determines the allocation priorities for social housing. Local housing authorities can determine which applicants do or do not qualify for an allocation of social housing. However, local housing authorities must ensure that reasonable preference is given to the following categories of people:

- People who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act (including those who are intentionally homeless and those not in priority need).
- People who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2) 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3).
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds; including grounds relating to a disability.
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

The Choice Based Lettings section of this scheme sets out how reasonable preference and other local circumstances have been taken into account to determine the allocation priorities for social housing within the district.

Applicants will not be awarded reasonable preference in cases where the person with reasonable preference status is a restricted person i.e. a person who is not eligible for assistance as detailed in the Eligibility section above.

11 Other Circumstances (The approach set out below relates to Daventry District when nominations are being made from the Daventry District register. Nominations for NRDA properties from the NRDA register will be subject to the approach set out in Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme.)

11.1 Access to children

Where children are involved in residence and contact cases they will be considered as permanent household members for the partner having the primary residence and control of the child/children. This will be the person who has the legal responsibility for the child/children. Items to evidence this such as proof of child benefit or court order will be required.

Where an application is made to the Council by a parent who does not have primary residence and control of their child/children but has regular contact with them, it will not always be possible, due to the demand on the social housing stock, to consider the child/children as part of the application. In any case the maximum size/type of property a single person with access to children will be considered for will be a two bed flat irrespective of the number of children to whom they have access.

It should also be noted that a single person with access to children living in a two bed flat will not receive welfare benefits for the second bedroom.

11.2 Fostering and Adoption

Families undertaking long term fostering may be able to include foster children as part of their application to ensure that they are eligible for the appropriate sized property. Long term fostering is considered to be in excess of three years (not necessarily involving the same child or children). It is essential that written confirmation of the fostering arrangement is obtained from the social care authority or fostering agency. Consideration will be given to this in assessing the application. Short term fostering is discounted.

It should be noted that that whilst applicants can choose to apply for a property larger than their needs so they can foster, the Welfare Reform Act states that foster children/carers cannot be taken into account for payment for extra bedrooms when considering size of property applicants are eligible for benefits for, unless the foster children or care are actually in residence at the property.

11.3 16 and 17 year olds

Applicants aged 16 and 17 can apply to be housed but must appoint a guarantor that fulfils all the following conditions:

- a) The guarantor must be a responsible person such as:
 - i) A parent
 - ii) Other close family member
 - iii) Support agency
- b) The guarantor must be in a position to pay the rent and otherwise fund the applicant's needs if the applicant is unable to do so.

The application will not be registered without a completed guarantor form and if this is not received within 28 days of receipt of application, the application will be destroyed and any original documents returned to the applicant.

The guarantor will be contacted by the Housing Options Service prior to registration to ensure they understand what their responsibilities are and that they are content to take them on. They will also be asked to provide supporting evidence to prove they are able to take on guarantor responsibility. The Registered Provider will also contact the guarantor prior to any firm offer of accommodation being made.

11.4 Owner-occupiers

Owner-occupiers will not be registered unless they have a 'reasonable preference' and they are unable to find suitable accommodation to purchase or rent privately.

Applicants who have sold a property within the last five years will be asked to provide proof of sale as well as evidence of the proceeds of the sale. An assessment will be made as to whether the applicant can afford to purchase suitable accommodation locally or secure a private rental property. If it is concluded that they could accommodate themselves in one of these ways they will not be registered.

11.5 Tenants wishing to move on from supported accommodation

Applicants will need to apply to join the Council's Housing Register at the time they are ready to leave their current accommodation. Their application must be supported by their social or support worker, who will need to confirm:

- They are ready to move.
- They possess the knowledge and skills to maintain a tenancy successfully.
- Any support arrangements that will remain in place following departure from supported accommodation.

The applicant must also have a local connection in accordance with this Scheme.

11.6 Existing tenants of registered providers

Applicants who are existing tenants of Registered Providers within Daventry District can apply for a transfer providing they are otherwise eligible under this Allocation Scheme.

Transfer applications will be assessed on the same criteria as new applications and banded accordingly.

When considering transfer applications the Council will expect tenants to have complied with their conditions of tenancy and maintained their property in a satisfactory manner. A report may be requested from the landlord Registered Provider for transfer applicants to ascertain whether tenancy conditions have been met.

If tenancy conditions have not been met the transfer applicant may be suspended on the Housing Register and not be offered another tenancy until such time that the Registered Provider is satisfied that the conditions have been met.

The above may be waived where the applicant needs to move because of domestic abuse, fear of violence or where remaining in the property may seriously harm their health.

Transfer applicants will also be encouraged to register for mutual exchange schemes operating nationally.

11.7 Anti-social behaviour

If an applicant's behaviour, or the behaviour of a member of their household wishing to be housed with them, has not been acceptable, there may be reasonable grounds to believe that the applicant will not be a suitable future tenant. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 defines anti-social behaviour as:

- Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person
- Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises or
- Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person

Examples may include but are not limited to:

- Noise nuisance
- Intimidation and harassment
- Aggressive and threatening language and behaviour
- Physical violence

- Vandalism of the property
- Hate crime targeting specific members of the community on the grounds of e.g. race, sexual orientation, disability etc.
- Using the property for unlawful purposes e.g. selling drugs
- Animal or other environmental nuisance e.g. dog fouling, graffiti, fly tipping etc.

Each application will be considered on its own merits, by the Housing Options Manager having regard to advice from the Environmental Health Manager and Community Safety Partnership Manager with support from appropriate organisations and agencies. Regard will be given to the seriousness of the anti-social behaviour as defined in the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (or any reviewed version or successor document). If the applicant is found to be an unsuitable tenant, their application will not be registered until such time that a change in circumstances can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Housing Options Manager, advised as above.

11.8 Income and savings

Applicants with a combined income of £60,000 or more per annum will not qualify to join the housing register as other housing options will be available to them, except where in exceptional circumstances where there is evidence that they cannot meet their housing need despite this level of income (for example, if they have unavoidable high outgoings). This does not apply to those aged 60 and over wishing to move into older person's accommodation.

Applicants who have financial assets (capital/savings) which are clearly large enough to provide access to other forms of tenure to meet their housing need will not qualify to join the housing register but will be offered advice on alternative housing options. This does not apply to those aged 60 and over wishing to move into older person's accommodation.

Any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces as compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service will be disregarded.

11.9 Arrears

If an applicant or any other household member included in an application has housing related debts of £1,000 or more, whether former or current, such as rent, repairs etc. with any registered provider, local authority or private landlord, the application will not be registered. Exceptions may be made in exceptional circumstances where the applicant or other household member (as applicable) was not responsible for the situation – for example, if they had been misinformed about the rent owed.

For applications where the debt is below £1,000 there must be an agreement with the person owed the money to clear any remaining arrears and the arrangement must have been adhered to for at least the last three consecutive months.

The above will also be the case if the applicant or any other household member owes the Council any other housing-related debt such as, but not limited to, Council Tax.

12 Making an Application ([Note: applicants for housing in the Northampton Related Development Area should apply to join the NRDA register and should refer to section 3 of Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme.](#) [However note that in certain circumstances nominations could be made from DDC's register](#))

Any person(s) wishing to apply for housing must complete a HomeChoice application form. Forms can be requested by:

- Telephone on 01327 871100
- Personal visit to the Council Offices at Lodge Road
- By post from Housing Options, Daventry District Council, Lodge Road, Daventry, NN11 4FP
- By email from homechoice@daventrydc.gov.uk
- Online at www.daventrydc.gov.uk/living/housing/homechoice-registration/

Completed forms along with all required supporting documentation should be returned to the Housing Options Service, Daventry District Council, Lodge Road, Daventry, Northants, NN11 4FP.

Further information may be requested by the Housing Options Service from the applicant in order to complete the registration process.

13 Supporting Documentation ([The approach set out below relates to Daventry District when nominations are being made from the Daventry District register.](#) [Nominations for NRDA properties from the NRDA register will be subject to the approach set out In Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme.](#))

13.1 Introduction

The Council requires original documents as proof which will be copied and the copies will be kept on file. If possible these should be provided in person so that they can be returned immediately. Photocopies will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and only with prior agreement with a Housing Options Officer.

The Council will accept proof from the following list:

13.2 Proof of identification and immigration status

Any one of the following for each applicant and (if different) each person on the housing application form

- Birth certificate (for children)
- Passport
- Proof of Age Identification Card (with photo)
- Employee Identification (with photo)
- HM Forces Identification (with photo)
- EU, EEA or Swiss Identification Card
- Approved Immigration Status Documents
- Photo card driver's licence

For applicants accepted as a refugee or granted indefinite, exceptional, discretionary or limited leave to remain in the UK, Home Office documentation demonstrating status will be required.

13.3 Proof of Residence

Any two of the following for each applicant and any other member of the household aged 18 or over (excluding dependants) on the housing application form (documents provided must be recent):

- Household bill (gas, electricity, water, Council Tax).
- Tenancy / licence agreement.
- Benefit award letter.
- Driving licence.
- Bank statement, credit card statement, catalogue statement or similar document with home address.

- Child or Working Tax Credit award letter.

13.4 Proof of current tenancy

Any one of the following for each applicant on the housing register:

- Tenancy or licence agreement.
- Proof of rent payment.
- Letter from landlord.

13.5 Proof of marriage or civil partnership

- A recognised marriage certificate or civil partnership certificate

13.6 Proof of pregnancy

Any one of the following;

- MAT B1 form.
- Relevant pages of the maternity file.

13.7 Proof of children living with an applicant permanently

All relevant documentation for each child on the housing application, which could include;

- Child Benefit award letter, which confirms names of the children.
- Court or residency order.
- Birth certificates for all children.
- Childs Tax Credit award letter.

13.8 Proof of children an applicant has to stay under an access arrangement

All relevant documentation, which could include

- Court order.
- Child Access Form completed by ex-partner.

13.9 Proof of income and savings

All applicable documents from the list below for each applicant on the housing application and any person aged 18 or over, except dependants, who is expected to be accommodated in any property nominated (documents must be current);

- Wage/salary slips for the six months preceding application
- Bank and building society statements
- Income and expenditure form

13.10 Proof of Local Connection

If a Local Connection to Daventry District is established other than through residency then the following will be required:

- **For Local Connection established through a Close Relative**
 - Evidence of applicant's relationship with close relative
 - Evidence through bills, bank statements etc. that the close relative has lived in the District for at least the past two years

- **For Local Connection established through employment**
 - Contract of employment
 - Wage/salary slips

13.11 Proof of current or previous home ownership

If the property is for sale confirmation will be required from the estate agent.

If the property has been sold a completion certificate will be required

14 Choice Based Lettings Bandings

14.1 Introduction

Once the application to join the DDC housing register is assessed it is placed in either the Emergency band or one of four bands according to the severity of 'reasonable preference' and the applicants housing needs.

Applications for housing in the NRDA will need to be made to Northamptonshire Partnership Homes. Such applications will be banded according to the approach set out in the Allocations Scheme produced by Northampton Borough Council.

14.2 Emergency Band – time limited

Emergency Band applicants include:

- Applicants whom the Council have accepted as being eligible as homeless and in priority need (except those found intentionally homeless).
- Applicants with a local connection who are unable to be discharged from hospital until suitable housing is found.
- Applicants who have been subject to Multi-Agency review (this includes Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) clients) and where immediate re-housing is required and an agreed support package is in place.

Discharge of homelessness duty into affordable housing

Applicants will be placed in the Emergency Band for a period of six weeks (allowing for six bidding periods).

During this time the Emergency Band applicant will be expected to bid on all suitable properties. Due to the lack of properties bidding should include all areas irrespective of where the applicant would desire to live, unless due to the particular circumstances of the case this would be impracticable and this is agreed otherwise with the Housing Options Service.

At the end of the six-week period the Housing Options Manager will review all outstanding applications in the Emergency Band and will either:

- Make a direct offer of any suitable property, if an applicant has not bid during the six-week period when suitable properties have been available. If the applicant believes that a property nominated in this way is not suitable then they may appeal to the Community Manager for a determination on this point. If the Community Manager concludes that the property is suitable then this will be the definitive decision.

- Extend the six-week period, if no suitable properties have been available for an applicant during the six-week period, the applicant has been unsuccessful in bidding, or any other extenuating circumstances as deemed appropriate by the Housing Options Officer. An extension can be applied to the bidding period on a weekly basis.

If the applicant refuses to take up the offer of suitable housing nominated in accordance with the above, they will be removed from the Emergency Band and placed on the Band that their other circumstances would dictate.

Discharge of homelessness duty into private sector housing

Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, has given local housing authorities the power to end the main homelessness duty with an offer of private rented accommodation without requiring the applicant's consent.

The Council will make use of this power and discharge its homelessness duty by making offers of suitable accommodation within the private rented sector. If the applicant believes a proposed private sector property is not suitable they may appeal to the Community Manager for a determination on this point. If the Community Manager concludes that the property is suitable then this will be the definitive decision.

This process will run concurrently with the process of making social housing available outlined above. The duty will be discharged when an offer of the first available suitable property is made, regardless of tenure.

14.3 Other Bands

Band A – Urgent Need
Applicants who have a Critical Medical Award or Critical Welfare Award
Applicants who are lacking one or all of these essential facilities – hot water, heating, a kitchen, internal toilet and bathroom.
*Applicants who are currently living in a house which is statutorily overcrowded as defined in the Housing Act 1985.
Applicants living within Daventry District who are under-occupying homes belonging to registered providers and who wish to move to smaller suitable accommodation
Applicants living within Daventry District in registered provider properties which have been adapted for specific accommodation needs (e.g. for people with mobility difficulties) but the adaptations are no longer required.
Applicants living within Daventry District who are freeing up a place in a specialist hostel (e.g. the Mayday Trust) which they no longer require. Applications will only be actively considered once a Move On Support Letter stating the applicant is able to live independently has been issued. Until that date the application will remain suspended.
Applicants living within Daventry District in registered provider properties who have to vacate their homes due to a compulsory purchase order (including cases of agreed sale where the property would otherwise have been subject to compulsory purchase) or whose homes require major works.
Private sector tenants who are required to vacate their home as a result of enforcement action by the local authority.
Applicants living within Daventry District who are in priority need and have been issued with an effective notice of possession which has less than eight weeks to run.
Applicants who are the subject of arrangements for their rehousing as part of a Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA).
Applicants living within Daventry District who have been accepted as threatened with homelessness.
Applicants who are serving or have served for the previous five years prior to application in the armed forces and live within Daventry District and are threatened with homelessness.

Band B – Moderate Need

Applicants who have an Urgent Medical Award and/or an Urgent Welfare Award.

Applicants living in Daventry District who the Council is obliged to seek to rehouse under Section 28 of the Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976.

*Applicants who are sharing facilities (bathroom, kitchen etc.) with a household not included on their application and who are not close relatives.

*Applicants who require two or more additional bedrooms as set out in the bedroom allocation section of this Scheme.

Applicants who are serving or have served for the previous five years prior to application in the armed forces and have a Local Connection to Daventry District but are not threatened with homelessness.

Applicants who are being discharged from prison within six weeks and have a Local Connection to Daventry District.

Applicants who are not in priority need and who are currently resident in Daventry District and have received a notice requiring possession.

Applicants whose private sector home has been assessed as having serious disrepair by the Council's Environmental Health Service.

Applicants requiring an extra bedroom due to a child over the age of 10 sharing a bedroom with a sibling of the opposite sex on a permanent basis.

Band C – General Need

Applicants who have a Moderate Medical Award or Moderate Welfare Award.

Applicants who require one additional bedroom as set out in the bedroom allocation section of this Scheme.

Applicants who are serving or have served for the previous five years prior to application in the armed forces but do not have a Local Connection to Daventry District.

Applicants accepted under Right to Move who do not fall into any of the above categories.

Registered provider tenants living outside of the District, but with a local connection to the District, who wish to downsize and do not fall into any of the above categories.

Applicants over the age of 21 living with family.

Band D – No Reasonable Preference

Applicants with a Local Connection and no reasonable preference who do not fall into any of the above categories.

14.4 Additional Need

Additional need will be calculated where an applicant has housing need (whether their own or that of a person in their household) arising from two or more reasonable preference of the following categories and will take the form of 'stars'.

For example if an applicant has a Critical Medical Award and is also living in overcrowded accommodation they will be placed into Band A with a star allowing them to be considered before those in the same band with no stars.

Additional need will be awarded for issues relating to:

- Medical Award
- Welfare Award
- Unsatisfactory accommodation (these are marked with a preceding asterisk (*) in the lists above)

A maximum of one star will be awarded for each of the three categories, meaning that no applicant can receive more than two stars in total.

14.5 Registration date

The registration date is the date a fully completed application with all supporting documentation is received by the Council. This date can affect priority within each band e.g. if two people have been placed in the same band with the same level of additional need, the person with the earliest registration date will be considered first.

14.6 Movement between bands

If an application is re-banded due to changes in circumstances, the following criteria will apply:

- When an application is moved down the banding scale the registration date will remain the date that the application was originally registered
- Where an application is moved up a band, the date when the application is placed in the higher band will be treated as the registration date

14.7 Change of circumstances

It is the applicant's responsibility to report any relevant change of circumstance, whether large or small, to the Housing Options Service. This may result in the applicant moving up or down the bands. Failure to do this could lead to applicants being refused properties. Failure to declare a change in circumstances which would result in a lower banding and/or a loss of 'stars' and bidding on properties will result in the applicant's place on the Housing

Register being suspended for six months unless the Housing Options Manager is satisfied there were exceptional circumstances.

A change of circumstances includes but is not limited to:

- A change of address.
- A change of contact telephone number.
- People leaving an applicant's household or moving into the household.
- A change in health.
- A change of employment.

14.8 Deliberately worsening housing circumstances

Where there is clear evidence that an applicant has deliberately worsened housing conditions in order to qualify for higher priority on the housing register, no additional priority will be given. Examples of this include:

- Selling a property that is affordable and suitable for the applicant.
- Moving from a secure tenancy to insecure or overcrowded accommodation.
- Creating a situation of overcrowding including sharing bathroom and kitchen facilities.
- An applicant requesting or colluding with a landlord, relative, friend, etc. to issue them with a Notice to Quit.
- Applicants who move from an adapted property suitable for their needs to an unsuitable property to gain medical priority.

14.9 Misrepresentation

Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence for anyone seeking assistance from a local housing authority to:

- Knowingly or recklessly give false information to the authority; or
- Knowingly withhold information which the authority has reasonably required him/her to give in connection with the exercise of their functions under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.

A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine at the date of this scheme of up to £5,000 and a ban from the housing register for a period of time.

The circumstances in which an offence is committed could include providing false information:

- On an application form for social housing.
- In response to a request for further information in support of the application.
- During review/appeal proceedings.

Ground 5 in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985 enables registered providers to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by the tenant or a person acting at the tenant's instigation.

15 Medical, Welfare and Mobility Access Issues

(The approach set out below relates to Daventry District when nominations are being made from the Daventry District register. Nominations for NRDA properties from the NRDA register will be subject to the approach set out in Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme.)

15.1 Introduction

The Housing Act 1996 states that 'reasonable preference' on the housing register should be given to applicants who have a need to move on medical or welfare grounds. This section deals with the categorisation of medical and welfare needs and also of needs for accessible accommodation as a result of disability. These provide additional explanation to the banding in the previous section.

This category includes an applicant, or member of that applicant's household, whose health is being affected by their current property, and where a move to another more suitable property would alleviate their condition or make it easier to manage.

Medical and welfare priority will be reviewed by the Housing Options Service prior to allocation if the assessment was made in excess of twelve months previously, to ensure that the award is still appropriate.

15.2 Medical need

Due to the specialist knowledge required, medical need will be assessed only by the Council's Medical Liaison Officer or another medical specialist appointed by the Council for the purpose. Where necessary the Medical Liaison Officer or other medical specialist will obtain further information as required. The following assessments will be made:

Critical Medical Award
At the current time the property is so unsuitable that it is likely to result in serious injury, accident, or deterioration in the applicant's/carer's health if alternative accommodation is not secured.
The existing care/support services/equipment will not be sufficient to manage an identified risk and no further adaptation is achievable.
The applicant's ability to remain at home is impractical and severely compromised.
Discharge from hospital/other care environment is prevented.
Admission to hospital is highly likely if alternative accommodation is not secured.

Urgent Medical Award
At the current time the property is likely to result in access difficulties for the applicant/carer in the long term if alternative accommodation is not secured.
The applicant will require major adaptations in the future, which are not feasible at the current property.
The ability of the client to remain independent at home in the long term is not sustainable. For example, an applicant is known to present with a long term degenerative health condition which is currently being managed but not practical in the long term.

Moderate Medical Award
The applicant is able to manage in the current property, but it is likely that over time, difficulties will arise which are likely to impact upon their ability to remain independent.
Further deterioration in health may occur if alternative accommodation is not secured.

Where appropriate, the Medical Liaison Officer or other medical specialist will also recommend the type of property most appropriate to the medical needs.

The medical award made will determine the Band the applicant is placed in and where two or more members of a household would qualify for medical priority, the highest priority applying to any of them will apply.

15.3 Welfare need

Due to the specialist knowledge and experience required, assessments of welfare need will only be made by the Council's Medical Liaison Officer or the Housing Options Manager, or a suitable specialist appointed by the Council for this purpose. Where necessary, the Medical Liaison Officer, Housing Options Manager or other specialist will obtain further information as required. The following assessments will be made:

Critical Welfare Award
Direct threat to well-being and safety.

Urgent Welfare Award
A person who is moving on from a drug or alcohol recovery programme with appropriate care and support
A person who requires accommodation, with appropriate care and support such as young adults with learning disabilities who wish to live independently in the community
A person who needs to provide or receive care or support. This would include registered foster carers and those approved to adopt, who need to move to a larger home in order to accommodate a looked after child or a child who was previously looked after by a local authority. It would also include special guardians, holders of a residence order and family and friend carers who are not foster carers but who have taken on the care of a child because the parents are unable to provide care.
There is an essential need for the applicant or their carer to relocate in closer proximity in order to give or receive care to a close relative.
A child for whom the applicant has parental responsibility has a confirmed need to relocate closer to an approved special needs educational establishment.
To enable an applicant to provide foster care as recommended by the relevant authority.

Moderate Welfare Award
The current property moderately limits access to necessary care/support for a member of the household.
Quality of life is moderately impaired by the current facilities.
Care Leavers who were resident in Daventry District prior to being placed in care and have been placed outside of Daventry District and wish to return to the District on leaving care.

15.4 Mobility access needs

Where an applicant or another person on the application form has a disability or long term illness which limits mobility, they will be categorised as follows:

- Mobility 1 – requires full wheelchair access. Property will need to include ramped or level access in and out of the property and accessible kitchen, bedroom and bathroom facilities.
- Mobility 2 – requires partial wheelchair access. Property will need to include ramped or level access and accessible bedroom and bathroom facilities.

- Mobility 3 – requires assisted access. Property will need to include level access or shallow steps with handrail and accessible bathroom facilities.

Decisions on the level of access required will be made by the Council's Medical Liaison Officer or another medical specialist appointed for this purpose by the Council.

16 Property Letting Criteria (The approach set out below relates to Daventry

District when nominations are being made from the Daventry District register.

Nominations for NRDA properties from the NRDA register will be subject to the approach set out in Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme.)

16.1 Bedroom eligibility

The Eligibility Table attached as Appendix A to this document, shows the type and size (measured by bedrooms) of property that households are eligible for. There may be some exceptions to these under a local lettings arrangement.

Some properties will be advertised on the CBL system as only available to certain groups of people e.g. those over a certain age. Applicants will be notified of their eligibility in writing as part of their registration letter.

16.2 Bedroom allocation

The maximum number of bedrooms for which applicants are eligible to bid is determined by the size of their household but, as there is a shortage of large homes in certain locations, applicants may be able to bid for smaller accommodation than they would prefer. Where this is possible this will be indicated on the advert for the property. If the applicant accepts a smaller property knowing that it will cause overcrowding, if they re-apply the overcrowding will be disregarded (they will be classed as adequately housed) unless their circumstances change or it would have been reasonable for them to have believed at the time they accepted the property that the overcrowding would have ended by the time of the fresh application.

The number of bedrooms required will be calculated according to the bedroom standards as recommended by the Secretary of State. A separate bedroom is allocated as follows:

- Each couple whether married, civil partners or cohabiting.
- Each adult aged 21 years or more.
- Two people aged 10-20 years of the same sex.
- Pair of children aged under 10 years regardless of sex.

16.3 Expectant women

First child

Households which include a pregnant woman who is expecting her first child, will be eligible to bid on two bedroom houses once the pregnancy has reached 24 weeks.

Second and subsequent children

Households which include a pregnant woman who is expecting her second or subsequent child will only be allowed to bid on a larger property once the baby has been born and a birth certificate produced.

16.4 Rural exception schemes

Rural exception schemes are usually developments outside of the village boundary which would not be given planning permission under normal circumstances. These schemes are usually only built for local people who cannot afford market housing. The homes are intended to remain affordable in perpetuity.

The scheme usually has a legal document (an agreement or unilateral undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) attached to it and/or planning conditions applying to it. These contain restrictions on who can occupy the homes, giving priority to local people. Applicants will be nominated according to the qualifying persons cascade set out in the legal document or planning conditions. Where two or more persons have an equally strong locality connection, priority will be given to the applicant in greatest housing need as set out in this Scheme.

16.5 Sites subject to qualifying persons cascades

Sites which contain an element of affordable housing may, similar to exceptions sites referred to above, be subject to arrangements which give priority to local people. In such cases applicants will be nominated according to the qualifying persons cascade set out in the legal document or planning conditions. Where two or more persons have an equally strong locality connection, priority will be given to the applicant in greatest housing need as set out in this Scheme.

16.6 Adapted properties

Where adapted properties become available the Council will liaise with the registered provider to nominate an applicant directly from the housing register who have been identified with a mobility need as per section 14.3. Priority will be given to those whose mobility needs are best met by the adapted property. If there are two or more people with the same mobility needs the applicant with the earliest registration date will be considered first. Where no person with a mobility need is identified the property will be advertised as per the normal allocations procedure.

17 The Bidding Process

The approach set out below relates to Daventry District when nominations are being made from the Daventry District register. Nominations for NRDA properties from the NRDA register will be subject to the approach set out in Northampton Borough Council's Allocations Scheme.

17.1 Property Adverts

Available properties will be advertised on a weekly cycle, details of available properties are advertised on the website at <http://www.homechoice-link.org.uk>.

Each advert will display who can bid for the property.

The advert will also specify details of the property; its location and the rent to be charged.

17.2 The Bidding Cycle

Applicants can place up to 3 bids per cycle on properties advertised for which they are eligible (as set out in the eligibility table).

All bidding cycles will have a closing date and time. Applicants will have to register a bid before this time ends. Bids can be withdrawn and reassigned to another property if desired during the bidding cycle.

Other than in the cases covered in the paragraph below, the highest bidder is awarded priority in descending order between the Emergency Group and Bands A to D and within bands according to Additional Need and then registration date.

In cases where a legal arrangement is in place which limits access to local people or which gives priority to local people through a qualifying persons cascade, access or priority will be given to local people in accordance with that cascade.

The first application nominated by the Housing Options Service to the relevant registered provider will not be eligible to bid in further bidding cycles until they have decided whether to accept the property or not.

17.3 Rejection or withdrawal of a property or bid

There may be reasons why it would be necessary or advisable for the Housing Options Service or registered provider to reject a bid that would otherwise have been successful, for example, where the property would not be suitable

The Council would not reject such a bid, unless there are sound reasons for doing so, in accordance with this Scheme.

Where a bid which would otherwise have been successful is either rejected or not considered the applicant will be provided with the reasons for this decision. This decision will also be visible via their CBL account.

If the applicant has been refused a property by the registered provider, the applicant should contact them directly for the reason for refusal, if one has not already been provided.

17.4 Property Viewing

A property viewing will be arranged by the registered provider at which the applicant being considered for the property will have an opportunity to fully view the interior of the property and discuss any other details of the tenancy.

The registered provider will also have the right to clarify details of the highest bidder's application at this stage. If discrepancies are found or a false declaration was given the applicant may not be offered the property.

On occasions multiple viewings will be arranged by the registered provider and up to five short listed bidders may be invited to view the property. Should the highest bidder decide to refuse the property following viewing the next highest bidder will be considered for the tenancy, and so on.

Applicants who are invited to view a property will be required to bring proof of their identification and any other documentation requested by the registered provider.

If a nominated applicant fails to enter into a tenancy agreement for a property, the offer will be withdrawn and the next highest bidder considered.

If an applicant (excluding applicants in Emergency Band, for which separate arrangements exist) refuses an offer of suitable accommodation twice unreasonably, their place on the Housing Register will be suspended for a period of six months after which their circumstances will be re-assessed.

17.5 Vulnerable people

A key requirement for ensuring the success and fairness of the Allocation Scheme and CBL system is that all applicants can access available homes and that relevant support is provided where appropriate.

The Council will ensure that vulnerable applicants and those who may otherwise struggle to make use of the CBL process will be provided with support and assistance in accordance with the Council's Access Strategy. This is attached at Appendix B.

17.6 Properties with age restrictions

Some properties are designated as being suitable for applicants of a certain age as follows:

- Level Access Bungalows will only be allocated to those where one applicant is over the age of 60 or where one applicant has a medical need requiring level access accommodation.
- Sheltered Accommodation will only be allocated to those where one applicant is aged 60 or over.
- Designated Single Person Accommodation will only be allocated to those between the ages of 18-30 with no dependents.

18 Review and cancellation

18.1 Introduction

The Council retains the right to review an application at any given time. Applicants are required to inform the Council of any changes in their circumstances, which may affect their housing application.

18.2 Bidding history

The Council will monitor the bidding patterns of applicants. The Council will contact applicants who have failed to bid over a period of 12 months. Their place on the Housing Register will be cancelled if:

- The Council is unable to make contact with the applicant.
- The applicant is unable to give a satisfactory reason for their failure to bid.
- The Council has reason to believe that information given on the application for the Housing Register was false.
- The Council has reason to believe that the information given on the application for the Housing Register is no longer correct and the applicant has not corrected this.

18.3 Feedback on Let Properties

All properties let will be listed on the Homechoice website as recent lets. This will show the number of bidders for each property and the band, number of stars and date of registration of the successful bidder. This feedback will also show the number of properties let to applicants applying under Right to Move criteria. All details are anonymous.

19 Low Demand Properties

Properties are classed as low demand if there are no successful bids on the property following first advertisement. This therefore leads to the property remaining empty.

The Low Demand Protocol attached at Appendix E sets out how the Council will work with the registered provider to try to remedy this situation.

In cases where the registered provider demonstrates that they have adhered to the Protocol and still cannot fill the property, the Council will introduce an appropriate Local Letting Arrangement in consultation with the registered provider.

20 Local Lettings Arrangements

Local Lettings Arrangements are tools that can be used to improve lettings or to stabilise an area that has specific and particular issues.

The Council's Business Manager may decide to operate one or more Local Letting Arrangement within areas of the District. The need for such schemes will be clearly defined and relate to specific areas or types of property that will benefit from this type of proactive initiative. A Local Lettings Arrangement may be introduced, as part of a multi-agency approach with existing local communities and in partnership with registered providers.

Local Lettings Arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis and equality impact assessments undertaken. Local Lettings Arrangements will be implemented for a maximum of three years and following review will be renewed, revised or revoked accordingly.

21 Application Reviews and Appeals

The 1996 Housing Act gives applicants the following rights about decisions, which are taken in respect of their application:

- The right to be notified in writing of any decision not to give an application any preference under the scheme because of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make an applicant unsuitable to be a tenant.
- The right on request to be informed of any decision about the facts of the applicant's case which has been, or is likely to be, taken into account in considering whether to make an allocation to the applicant.
- The right to request a review of a decision mentioned above.

A review must be requested in writing within fourteen days of the date of the letter advising of the decision. Depending on the applicant's circumstances, the Council has discretion to extend the time limit if it considers this would be reasonable e.g. if a letter from a professional is required and cannot be obtained within the 14 days.

A request for a review can be made by a representative acting on the applicant's behalf.

In the first instance, the review should be addressed to the Housing Options Manager, Daventry District Council, Lodge Road, Daventry, NN11 4FP.

The review should reach a conclusion within 21 days of the Council receiving the request for one. If this timescale needs to be extended the applicant will be sent a letter giving a new date for a decision and reasons for the delay.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review. This will include the reasons for the decision and any further action which may be taken by the applicant.

Any legal challenge to review decisions, or to any decisions that do not carry the right to request a review, can only be brought by judicial review, on the grounds that Daventry District Council has infringed administrative law.

22 Review of the Allocation Scheme

The Allocations Scheme will be monitored to make sure that allocations made reflect the local housing need, and meet with the requirements of legislation, regulations and guidance. When necessary, the Scheme will be reviewed and revised versions prepared.

23 Appendices

Appendix A

Eligibility Table

Household Makeup	Bedsit	Flat			House				General Access Bungalow		Level Access Bungalow		Sheltered
	N/A	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	2	1	2	N/A
Single person (under 60)	✓	✓			✓				✓				
Single person (60 or over)	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Couple (under 60)		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			
Couple (one is 60 or over)		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Single person with access to children		✓	✓		✓				✓				
Single person who requires ground floor accommodation as assessed by a medical		✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	
Couple or 1 or 2 child family who require ground floor accommodation as assessed by a medical		✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	
1 child family			✓			✓				✓			
2 child family			✓	✓		✓	✓			✓			
3 child family				✓			✓	✓					
4 child family							✓	✓					
5+ child family								✓					

Appendix B

Access Strategy

Introduction

This is the Access Strategy for the Daventry District Council Housing Allocations Scheme which is used to allocate properties to eligible applicants via the Choice Based Lettings System – Homechoice.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Daventry District Council Allocations Scheme.

Choice Based Lettings (CBL) schemes require customers to be active in searching for vacancies and expressing an interest in available homes. The Council will advertise available homes on the website at homechoice-link.org.uk and customers will be asked to express an interest or “bid” for them. The homes will then be let in accordance with the Allocation Scheme.

A key requirement for ensuring the success and fairness of the Scheme is that all customers can access available homes and that relevant support is provided where appropriate.

Purpose of the Access Strategy

This strategy sets out how we will:

- Ensure that our Allocation Scheme and CBL system are designed to meet the needs of all customers.
- Provide customers with support and advice on the process where it is needed.
- Ensure that appropriate information is readily available.
- Achieve collaboration between the wide range of agencies involved in providing services for vulnerable people.

The Daventry District Council CBL Scheme

Customers will be placed in either the Emergency Band or one of four bands of housing need, depending on their circumstances.

Available homes will be advertised every week on the HomeChoice website at homechoice-link.org.uk.

The homes will be clearly advertised as to who is eligible for them. To be considered for the property, customers must express an interest in it (known as 'bidding').

The offer of accommodation is made to the applicant in the highest band (within the bands priority is given to those firstly with the greatest need and then with the earliest registration date). Feedback is available to customers via the HomeChoice website.

There is a significant shortage of social housing within the District and CBL does not change that fact. We will work to manage customer expectations and look to promote alternatives to social housing to help customers find accommodation as soon as possible.

People who may need assistance with CBL

The CBL scheme places demands on customers. In particular, it makes people active participants in the lettings process, encouraging them to bid for available homes. Customers will need:

- To receive information on the housing options available.
- To be able to access and have the ability to use the technology to make bids.
- Where necessary, have support to bid for available homes.

People from a variety of groups or backgrounds may find it difficult to participate in the CBL scheme without additional support and assistance. This may include:

- Care leavers
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Homeless households
- Hospital leavers
- Hostel residents
- Older people
- People fleeing domestic violence
- People who do not speak English as their first language
- People with drug or alcohol addictions
- People with HIV/Aids and their carers
- People with learning difficulties
- People with some other medical needs
- People with mental health problems
- People with mobility problems
- People leaving rehabilitation
- Police witnesses

- Pregnant teenagers
- Prison leavers
- Refugees /asylum seekers
- Under 18s

It should not be assumed that all people from these groups need support. Wherever possible we would like customers to be active participants in CBL without support, but we recognise that in limited circumstances it may be necessary to provide additional support to help customers bid for homes.

Supporting Vulnerable People Participating in CBL

When considering support needs, the following issues will be considered:

- Defining levels and different types of support that may be required.
- Identification of those who are in need of support.
- Identification of those who would provide support.
- Ensuring support providers have sufficient training and capacity to provide support.
- Time scales for support to be offered to those needing assistance to bid for homes may vary.
- Vulnerable people as identified by the Allocation Scheme should have access to appropriate support to ensure that they are able to access the scheme.

Defining Support

Support for people using CBL can cover a multitude of possibilities, with different resource implications. The type of support provided is likely to vary, but could include:

- Translation of documents.
- Posting advertising flyers to housebound customers.
- Enabling customers to appoint an advocate.
- Enabling family and friends to bid on behalf of a customer.
- Partner organisations and other stakeholders assisting customers to bid for available homes.
- Auto bid facility.
- Advising individual disabled applicants when suitable accessible property is about to or has been advertised.
- Making arrangements to enable applicants with disabilities to visit properties
- Using symbols rather than words in adverts.
- Providing documents in large or clear print, Moon or Braille on request.

- Making information available on audiotape on request
- Ensuring that advice and information is available over the telephone – for those who cannot use a website or cannot get to a property or the One Stop Shop easily.
- Mailing out literature to the housebound and physically disabled.
- Ensuring that people with learning disabilities who do not have support from any other source (e.g. friend, relative or social worker) are assigned a suitably trained member of staff to support them.

The amount of help and support is based on the customer's requirements.

The Role of Advocacy

Support is likely to be provided to many people from informal sources, for example, friends and family.

When there is a formal advocacy role – whether from a Council Officer, or otherwise – a signed consent form will be required from the applicant to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act. When acting as an advocate, it is important the advocate acts in the customer's best interests.

How We Will Ensure the Scheme is Accessible for All

We have ensured that customers are registered with the scheme and placed in the correct housing band through:

- Providing support and assistance to customers completing an application form.
- Assessing each case on application and place the customer in an appropriate band.
- Establishing at the application stage if customers need support.
- Using medical assessment and sometimes occupational therapists to ensure that sufficient priority is given to people with medical needs.
- Writing to all customers following their application, informing them of their application number, housing needs band and other appropriate information.
- Offering a review process for customers who disagree with a decision made about their application.

We will ensure information on available homes is widely available, through:

- Explaining the CBL process clearly to customers when they apply for housing.
- Inform customers of their housing needs assessment.

- Staff are able to explain information to people who may be visually impaired, who have literacy issues, or who may need guidance to bid or make decisions.
- Contacting people with specific or complex medical need about suitable available homes.

We will provide information, which is clear and accessible through:

- Ensuring information is provided in the appropriate font size so that it is easy to read.
- Translating information leaflets into community languages, large print, Moon and Braille.
- Use clear symbols and designs in the advertising flyer and on the Internet where possible.
- Use translation services.
- Advertising properties clearly where they have been adapted for people with disabilities.

We will assist people to bid for available homes through:

- Providing a variety of ways for customers to bid for available homes.
- Allow friends, relatives and support agencies to bid on a customer's behalf.
- Targeting support to vulnerable and excluded households who are not bidding for available homes.
- Involving a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations to provide advice and support and act as advocates.
- Providing feedback to customers on the outcomes of properties for which they have bid for.
- Providing a range of housing options as alternatives to social housing.
- Continuing to provide training and support to agencies acting on behalf of vulnerable groups.

We will monitor the Scheme to ensure:

- Allocations are made to customers with the greatest housing need.
- Vulnerable customers are bidding for homes.
- Customers are bidding for homes appropriate for their needs.
- Specific groups of people are not being inadvertently disadvantaged.

We will regularly review the Scheme to ensure it meets the needs of our customers and stakeholders. This strategy will be updated as a result of any review.

Who Else Can Provide Support?

There is an expectation that other stakeholders will provide appropriate advice and assistance to their clients on the CBL scheme.

The level of support provided depends on the requirements of the customer and the role of the agency, but could include the following:

- Demonstrating how to bid for available homes.
- Supporting their clients to bid for available homes.
- Reviewing their client's choices to ensure that they are bidding for appropriate homes.
- Bid on their client's behalf.
- Advocate on their client's behalf.

The agencies will outline to their clients what support they can provide.

Training will be made available to organisations who are acting on behalf of their clients.

Confidentiality

All those engaged in the provision of support and advice will respect the confidentiality of personal information.

This means that:

- We will keep personal information secure and all our staff have a duty to keep this information confidential.
- We require the person's permission to share information when they apply to join the register.

All those engaged in the provision of support and advice must adhere to the requirements on issues of confidentiality.

Diversity and Inclusion

Those providing support will ensure that the principles of equal opportunity are adhered to, in that equal access to support will be provided according to the individual's needs. We recognise that different people have different needs and we will consider this appropriately when providing support to ensure that the person is able to fully participate within the process.

The Allocation Scheme and CBL system do not disadvantage customers from any particular group.

Conclusion

The measures outlined in this strategy are designed to assist vulnerable people to access social housing. There are a number of challenges in meeting the needs of potentially vulnerable people in accessing housing. We are determined to ensure all customers through the measures outlined in this document can access the scheme.

Appendix C

The following is a full list of all Registered Providers in the district with affordable housing stock as at May 2016

Bedfordshire Pilgrim Housing Association
Pilgrims House
Horne Lane
Bedford
MK40 1NY
Tel: 01234 328828
Website: www.bpha.org.uk

Bromford Housing Group
Friars Gate
1st Floor
1011 Stratford Road
Solihull
B90 4BN
Tel: 0845 6050603
Website: www.bromfordgroup.co.uk

Derwent Living
Derwent Living,
No. 1 Centro Place,
Pride Park,
Derby,
DE24 8RF
Tel: 01327 346477
Website: derwentliving.com

East Midlands Housing Association
Memorial House
Stenson Road
Coalville
Leicestershire
LE67 4J
Tel: 0844 892 0112
Website: www.emha.org

Futures Housing Group
Nene House
Drayton Fields Industrial Estate
Daventry
NN11 8PB
Tel: 01327 707500
Website: www.futureshg.org.uk

Genesis Housing (including Springboard Housing Association)
The Malthouse Project
97 Risbygate Street
Bury St Edmunds
IP33 3AA
Tel: 01284 732550
Website: www.genesisha.org.uk

Hyde Minister Housing Association
Jubilee House
92 Lincoln Road
Peterborough
PE1 2SN
Tel: 01733 349800
Website: www.hyde-housing.co.uk

Leicester Housing Association
3 Bede Island Road
Leicester
LE2 7EA
Tel: 0116-2576700
Website: www.lha.org.uk

Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association
Whitwick Business Centre
Stenson Road
Coalville
Leicestershire
LE67 4JP
Tel: 01530 276545
Website: www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk

Orbit Housing Association

10 Greenhill Street
Stratford Upon Avon
Warwickshire
CV37 6LG
Tel: 0845 850 2050
Website: www.orbit.org.uk

Paradigm Housing
1 White Hill
Chesham
Buckinghamshire
HP5 1AB
Tel: 0300 303 1010
Website: www.paradigmhousing.co.uk

Place for People
15 Sassoon Mews
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN8 3LT
Tel: 01933 401316
Website: www.placesforpeople.co.uk

Rockingham Forest Housing Association
St. Peter House
101 Wellingborough Road
Rushden
Northamptonshire
NN10 9YL
Tel: 01933 411400
Website: www.rfha.org.uk

Sanctuary Housing Association
164 Birmingham Road
West Bromwich
B70 6QG
Tel: 0121 5253131
Website: www.sanctuary-group.co.uk

Viridian Housing
Viridian House
St. Katherine's Terrace

Northampton

NN1 2AX

Tel: 01604 745100

Website: www.servite.co.uk

Appendix D – Affordable Housing Stock Profile

Sheltered Housing

Property Type	Sheltered
Number of Properties	300

Bungalows

Property Type	1 Bed Bungalow	2 Bed Bungalow	3 Bed Bungalow
Number of Properties	133	669	5

Flats

Property Type	1 Bed Flat	2 Bed Flat	3 Bed Flat
Number of Properties	404	276	19

Houses

Property Type	1 Bed House	2 Bed House	3 Bed House	4 Bed House	5 Bed House
Number of Properties	36	971	1831	166	2

Appendix E

Low Demand Property Protocol

INTRODUCTION

This documents sets out the background and provisions for the operation of a Low Demand Property Protocol for affordable housing within Daventry District.

The document forms part of the Council's Allocation Scheme and must be adhered to by all Affordable Housing Providers advertising properties via the Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

The protocol will apply to any low demand units of accommodation as agreed between DDC and the AHP.

CONTEXT

Site

This protocol will apply to all affordable housing lettings requested by Affordable Housing Providers via the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

Objective

The restriction of the Housing Register to those with a local connection to Daventry District coupled with Welfare Reform and changing aspirations has led to a decrease in demand for some types of accommodation across the district, mainly sheltered accommodation.

For the purpose of this protocol, properties will be classed as low demand if there are no successful bids on the property following first advertisement. The properties would therefore otherwise remain empty leaving the Affordable Housing Provider with a void and a loss of rental income

This protocol seeks to address this issue by putting in place a series of actions for Affordable Housing Providers to try and tackle the issue and if this is not successful a Local Lettings Arrangement can be put in place.

Process

The DDC Allocations Scheme remains the overarching policy to deem whether an applicant is eligible to join the housing register. This protocol forms part of the Scheme.

As per the DDC Allocations Scheme, properties will be advertised on DDC's Choice Based Lettings Scheme allowing eligible applicants to bid. Once the bidding cycle is closed, eligible applicants will be shortlisted and a list of nominations sent to the AHP requesting the nominations.

The property will be considered to be 'low demand' for the purposes of this protocol if there are no successful bids on the property following first advertisement. Affordable Housing Providers will then be expected to work with Daventry District Council to identify the reason for this and how best to resolve the situation.

The following steps will then be taken:

DDC Housing Options Service will promptly identify all relevant applicants on the waiting list and seek to ensure they are aware of the property.

DDC Housing Options Service will continue to advertise the property.

The Affordable Housing Provider and DDC's Housing Options Service will agree what additional steps should be taken. The non-exhaustive list below sets out potential actions for the AHP:

- Contact local health care providers including occupational therapists and doctors
- Contact community groups
- Contact local advice services
- Hold open days at the venue
- Advertise in local newspapers
- Advertise in Parish newsletters (both inside and outside the parish)
- Advertise in local estate agents
- Advertise in local businesses
- Advertise on appropriate Internet platforms
- Distribute fliers
- Offer rent free weeks
- Offer decoration allowances
- Management moves

Affordable Housing Providers will need to evidence that the agreed actions have been implemented to the satisfaction of the Council before any deviation from the main provisions of the Allocations Scheme will be considered.

If the property remains void after four weeks from the first advert and the above procedure has been followed, the Business Team will develop a Local Lettings Arrangement promptly in consultation with the AHP.

If a suitable applicant is identified within these four weeks, DDC Housing Options Service will directly nominate this applicant to the property without waiting for the bidding cycle to complete. This will help to reduce the number of days a property remains void.

Monitoring and Review

In line with the main provisions of the Allocations Scheme, DDC will keep a record of all decisions made with regard to these nominations, justifying the decision and maintaining proper audit records.

The Affordable Housing Provider will report any management moves to DDC as and when they occur.

Appendix F

Glossary of Terms

Adaptations

Adaptations are changes to a home usually funded by either the registered provider or council, that make it accessible or suitable for a tenant with physical challenges or disabilities. These may be very specific to the needs of a person currently living there, but the council and its RP partners will always seek to re-use such facilities where possible.

Affordability

A measure that considers the income and expenditure of a household in relation to the accommodation they can reasonable afford in their local area that is suitable of the household needs.

Assured Short Hold Tenancy (AST)

Created under Section 20 of the Housing Act 1988, an Assured Shorthold Tenancy is usually granted for 6 months to 5 years.

Assured Tenancy

An assured tenancy is a form of residential tenancy in England that grants a degree of tenure security to the tenant.

Banding

Banding is the Choice Based Lettings method used to prioritise applicants on the Housing Register according to their housing need.

Bidding

Bidding is the way applicant who have been accepted onto the Housing Register can express a preference in a property.

MAPPA

Multi Agency Public Protection Agreement is an arrangement for responsible authorities tasked with the management of registered sex offenders, violent and other types of sexual offenders, and offenders who pose a serious harm to the public.

MARAC

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference is a local multi agency victim-focused meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic violence and abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies

Multi Agency Review

A review of the applicant's circumstances involving a number of agencies including social services, the housing authority, doctors etc.

Northampton Related Development Area

The NRDA is defined as:

- the whole of Northampton Borough Council's administrative area;
- those neighbouring parts of Daventry District and South Northamptonshire District where development 'related to the growth of Northampton' has already been completed or has planning permission or an approval in principle; and
- those neighbouring parts of Daventry District and South Northamptonshire District that are allocated for Sustainable Urban Extensions. It is recognised that some essential infrastructure, for example parts of the North West Bypass, will take place outside the Northampton Related Development Area

Choice Based Lettings Service Level Agreement

An agreement between the Registered Providers and Daventry District Council to define how they will work together.

Section 106

Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. They are contracts binding on those who own land . They are used to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms, and thereby to allow planning permission to be granted.