

### The priority bands

Applicants will be assessed and given a priority band in accordance with the following categories of housing need:

#### **Band 1+: Home loss through regeneration (Decants)**

##### **A People losing their home due to a recognised regeneration scheme within any one of the local authorities within the sub-region.**

- This includes council tenants, registered social landlord tenants, private tenants and owner-occupiers living within the boundary of a defined regeneration area who are required to move home.
- People living-in with the main householder/s who require their own accommodation, provided they have lived there, as their sole or main home, for at least 12 months. Proof of residency will be requested e.g. bank statements, verification of housing benefit or council tax records.

#### **Band 1: Statutory homeless and homelessness prevention**

##### **A People assessed as statutorily homeless and in priority need**

- People who have been accepted as statutorily homeless and in priority housing need and where the main homeless duty is owed (part 7 of the Housing Act 1996). A direct offer may be made where there is an urgent need because of an imminent risk of violence e.g. hate related crime. The risk of violence may be substantiated where appropriate by a professional body that is supporting the applicant e.g. police or victim support.

##### **B People threatened with homelessness within 90 days**

- Applicants who are at risk of homelessness within 90 days, providing an assessment concludes that there would be a statutory homeless duty as defined by law, should a homeless application be taken at a later stage.

##### **C People at risk of domestic abuse**

- Victims of domestic abuse who have lost their accommodation or who are at risk of losing their accommodation as a result of violence or a threat of violence.

##### **D People leaving HM armed forces or prison**

- People leaving HM armed forces who are homeless and assessed as institutionalised and who have a local connection to one of the local authorities in the Tees Valley area.
- People leaving prison who are homeless and assessed as institutionalised and who have a local connection to one of the local authorities in the Tees Valley area. The

partners reserve the right to use discretion in the range of choice permitted to people leaving prison where this is justified by the type of offence committed.

## **E People who need to move on urgent medical grounds**

- Applicants who have been assessed as requiring suitable alternative accommodation because their medical condition and/or disability is having a significantly detrimental affect on their ability to live independently at home.

Examples include:

- People in hospital who cannot be discharged because no suitable accommodation is available.
- People with a serious and debilitating medical condition, which is affected by living in their existing home.
- People with a physical or sensory disability which seriously affects their mobility around the home and who have requested a move as an alternative to home adaptations.
- People with a severe and enduring mental health problem whose Care Plan Approach (CPA) identifies a need to move to a particular locality in order to receive care and support.

## **F People who need to move on welfare grounds**

- Applicants with care or support needs, or other social needs, which may or may not require ongoing care and/or support.

Examples include:

- People assessed as ready for independent living who need to move as part of an agreed plan to re-integrate into the community e.g. people leaving supported and temporary housing projects.
- People with learning disabilities who are assessed as having to move in order to receive care and support or where their current housing is having a detrimental affect on their quality of life and ability to live independently.
- A household with a child in need (as defined in the Children Act 1989), where a formal referral has been made by Social Services with the aim of safeguarding the welfare of the child or children.
- Children leaving the care of the local authority under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.
- Adoptive parents or prospective adoptive parents who need to move due to their current accommodation being unsuitable or who need to move to a different location to safeguard or promote the well-being of the child or children they have adopted or are planning to adopt.
- People leaving local authority care following a referral from social services e.g. people leaving rehabilitative care to return to independent living.

*Note: It may be necessary to defer offers where a suitable care and support package needs to be put in place or until the applicant's support needs have been assessed.*

*The partners reserve the right to use discretion in the range of choice permitted to people in this category, where this is in the interests of sustainable and balanced communities.*

**G People living in unsafe or insanitary housing conditions (as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)) and there is a high risk of harm**

- People who are occupying private rented accommodation and where the local authority's risk assessment has concluded that the property is uninhabitable and it has a duty to take action.

*In such cases all other housing options will be explored whilst the local authority enters into negotiations with the landlord about carrying out repairs to the property. If the applicant has not been successful on the scheme when the repairs are completed, they will normally be expected to return to the property. If the applicant does not return to the property s/he will be placed in the relevant band as if they had returned.*

**Note:** The partnership will consider owner occupiers under this category if they are elderly, disabled or mentally ill and their property is uninhabitable because it has fallen into serious disrepair and they are incapable of repairing it; this is subject to them not having the income or capital to resolve their housing situation. The relevant partner landlord will involve other professional organisations in carrying out a full needs assessment in resolving the applicant's immediate and long term housing needs.

Examples of unsafe or insanitary housing conditions:

- electrical defects that pose a safety risk
- excessive damp which is affecting the applicant's health
- fire risk
- an infestation of pests which affect the applicant's health and/or safety

**H Social housing tenants of the partner organisations that are under-occupying a house by 2 or more bedrooms**

*Applicants can only bid for properties that fit their household's identified housing need.*

**Band 2: High housing need**

**A People assessed as intentionally homeless or non priority homeless or no longer owed the main homelessness duty**

- People who have been assessed as intentionally homeless or non-priority homeless as defined by the Housing Acts.

**Note:** *In some cases, where applicants have made themselves homeless as a result of unacceptable behaviour, which makes them unsuitable to be a tenant as defined by legislation, they will be removed from the Register altogether or overlooked for offers of accommodation.*

- People who are no longer owed the main homelessness duty as a result of turning down a reasonable offer of accommodation that was made according to sections 193(7) and 202 of the Housing Act 1996.

**B People who need to move due to a high medical need**

- People who have been assessed as having a medical condition or a disability where a move to suitable alternative accommodation would significantly improve their health e.g. frail elderly people who need single level accommodation, or need the support of a resident or mobile warden service.
- People with a medical condition or disability who are assessed as having to move in order to receive care or support will be allowed to bid for homes with an additional bedroom in order to provide sleep-in for a carer, providing the property is not needed to meet the needs of a larger household.

**C People living in overcrowded conditions and are 3 or more bed spaces short of requirements.**

- Overcrowding is assessed on the number of people within the household and according to the best use of bedrooms and sleeping spaces available.

*A home visit will be carried out by the relevant partner organisation to verify the overcrowded conditions, prior to the applicant being placed in this band.*

**D Social housing tenants of the partner organisations that are under-occupying a house by 1 or more bedrooms**

*Applicants can only bid for properties that fit their household's identified housing need.*

**E People with a child or children under the age of 10 or women who are 28+ weeks pregnant, occupying accommodation above ground floor level**

- Households with a child or children under the age of 10 occupying flats above ground floor level, provided that the flat is the child's sole or principal home and the living accommodation is on floors 1 to 3. Households with women who are at least 28 weeks pregnant are included.
- Households with a child or children under the age of 14 living in multi-storey flats, provided that the flat is the child's sole or principal home and where the living accommodation is on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor or above.

*Reasonable preference will not be given when the property occupied is designated as suitable for families at a local level e.g. maisonettes*

**F People who need to move on hardship grounds**

- People who need to move to a particular locality within the sub region in order to take up an offer of employment, education or training, or to be nearer to family or friends in order to give or receive support, providing it is unreasonable to expect them to commute to their place of work from their existing home.

*Applicants will need to provide evidence of their housing need e.g. a letter from their employer or a health professional. Applicants in this category will not need to have a local connection with a local authority in the Tees Valley area.*

## **G Young people at risk**

- Young people under the age of 25 who are assessed as involved with or at risk of sexual exploitation, substance misuse or offending. The risks must be substantiated by a professional organisation that is supporting the applicant.

*The applicant must accept the support package offered and show a willingness to change their behaviour before being placed in Band 2.*

## **H People sharing facilities with persons not of the same household**

- People sharing facilities with other people who are not members of the same household e.g. people living in houses in multiple occupation or bed & breakfast. Shared facilities may include a kitchen, bathroom, living room and w.c.

**Note:** gypsies and travellers will be considered under this category if they are sharing outside communal facilities e.g. w.c. or showers

## **Band 3: Other housing needs & efficient use of the housing stock**

### **A People leaving ‘tied’ accommodation within the sub region**

- People who work for the partner organisations participating in the scheme and have accommodation provided as part of their terms of employment. For example, resident sheltered housing wardens or school caretakers. The letting agreement or employment contract must state that the accommodation will end when the employment ends.

*An exception to this rule will be displaced agricultural workers who fall within Section 27 of the Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976 as defined by the Code of Guidance – Allocations.*

*Eligible applicants will be moved to Band 1 whilst prevention measures are pursued, once the employer has given formal notice in writing that the accommodation tied to the employment is ending due to no fault of the applicant and providing they would appear likely to be owed the full homeless duty.*

*If an employee has died and the tied tenancy has to come to an end, the remaining household will be placed in Band 1, providing the needs assessment concludes that the full homeless duty would be owed.*

### **B People eligible to succeed/assign to a partner organisation’s tenancy and who have a need or expressed wish to move to alternative accommodation**

- People who are eligible to succeed to or be assigned a tenancy but have expressed a wish to move to alternative accommodation as the property is not suitable for their needs because of its size or type.

*Eligible applicants will be moved to Band 1 if they are occupying a house with 2 or more surplus bedrooms.*

### **C Relationship breakdown or divorced partners with shared child care**

- People following a relationship breakdown and others who have shared access to children who are occupying accommodation, which is insufficient for looking after them.

*An applicant with access to children for less than 50% of the time will normally only be considered eligible for a suitably sized flat, unless a house becomes available for which there is no demand.*

### **D People who are 1 or 2 bed spaces short of requirements**

- Applicants who are 1 or 2 bed spaces short of requirements.

### **Band 4: No or low level housing need**

- People assessed as having no identified housing need or only a low level of need. For example, a person whose current home is adequate to meet their basic housing needs in terms of lifestyle, size, design and location.