



castlepoint

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Allocations Policy

2023

1. INTRODUCTION

This Housing Allocations Policy outlines how Castle Point Borough Council will assess applications for housing, determine eligibility, qualification and level of housing need, prioritise applications and allocate accommodation.

Social housing is scarce within Castle Point and therefore this policy clarifies who will be accepted onto the Council's Housing Register to make the most effective use of the very scarce resource in the Borough.

In developing this Policy, the Council has taken into consideration statutory requirements including the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and other relevant legislation, regulations and guidance including but not limited to the Council's Tenancy Strategy, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Transfer Policy.

The Council consulted on this policy with staff, Registered Providers of Social Housing, elected members, neighbouring authorities, and the Tenant and Leaseholder Group.

The Council's objectives for the Housing Allocations scheme are to:

- Provide an accessible, fair and transparent service
- Meet local housing needs
- Meet the housing needs of the most vulnerable
- Prioritise those with the greatest / most urgent housing needs
- Make the best use of existing social housing stock
- Ensure equality of treatment for all applicants.

The Council operates a Choice Based Lettings Scheme under which applicants are able to see a choice of housing accommodation and express preference for available properties by bidding for advertised properties.

The Council seeks to give all applicants choice in relation to accommodation but may have to limit choice in certain circumstances, such as where there is limited availability or where the Council is discharging a statutory duty to a homeless household or providing move on accommodation from supported housing.

Whilst the aim of this policy is to assess, accept and prioritise households most in need of housing, unfortunately demand for housing outstrips supply. This means applicants, in the highest priority and or those with significant medical needs, can wait a considerable time before being rehoused. In view of this we encourage households to consider all r options to resolve their housing need.

2. THE HOUSING REGISTER

The Council maintains a Housing Register of households who are applying for Council or Registered Provider properties within Castle Point.

How to apply:

To be considered for inclusion on the housing register all applicants must complete the on-line Choice Based Lettings form: www.castlepointhomechoice.org.uk.

The information included on the application form must be accurate. Applicants will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the information on their application and demonstrate that they have a housing need, for example proof of identity, address, income, savings and custody / access to children.

Applicants who have indicated that they have a medical, mobility, welfare or hardship need may need to be referred to an appropriate agency for an assessment.

The Council may make any further enquiries and request further evidence as it deems necessary in order to confirm the information provided on an application, such as contacting current or previous landlords, the police or support workers.

If an application is incomplete and / or further information is not provided in the appropriate timeframe the application will be cancelled and you will be notified in writing of the cancellation.

Sheltered Housing applicants:

Sheltered Housing applicants are required to complete the choice-based lettings form www.castlepointhomechoice.org.uk and an additional on-line supplementary form.

Sheltered Housing applicants will be required to attend a meeting to assess their suitability and need for support prior to acceptance onto the register.

Acceptance onto Housing Register:

If an applicant is accepted onto the Housing Register, the applicant will be notified of;

- the band their application has been placed in
- their unique application reference number (this is used to bid for homes)
- the properties they are eligible for and how to bid for properties
- how decisions may be reviewed.

If an applicant is refused entry to the Housing Register, the applicant will be notified that their application has been refused and of the reasons for the refusal.

Change of circumstances and annual reviews:

Applicants must notify the Council of any relevant change in their circumstances. Following notification of a change in circumstances, the application will be reassessed and may be moved from one band to another or removed from the register. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of any reassessments.

Applicants will be contacted annually and sent a declaration form to confirm whether they wish to remain on the Housing Register and whether their circumstances have changed. Applicants must complete and return the form within 14 days. Failure to return the form in this timeframe will result in the application being cancelled.

If at any time the Council receives evidence that an applicant who has already been accepted onto the Housing Register no longer qualifies, the applicant will be notified that their application has been cancelled and of the reasons for the cancellation.

BANDING

Completed applications and the supporting evidence provided will be assessed and a decision made on whether the applicant qualifies for the register, which banding is applicable to their circumstances and the type of properties they are eligible for.

Band	Criteria	Examples
Band A	Urgent Need	Homeless applicants with a full duty in short term temporary accommodation provided by Castle Point Council; Homeless applicants granted a 'relief duty' where a priority need and unintentionality has been identified; Lacking 3 or more bedrooms and acute overcrowding; Under-occupation; Decant of existing accommodation; High medical assessment; High welfare or hardship assessment; Young people leaving care; people moving on from supported housing projects.
Band B	High need	Homeless applicants in suitable long term temporary accommodation provided by Castle Point Borough Council; Homeless applicants with granted a 'Prevention Duty' where priority need, and unintentionality has been identified by the case officer; Lacking 2 bedrooms; Medium medical assessment; Work related reasons.
Band C	Moderate	Homeless applicants pending enquiries; Homeless applicants (non-priority); Low medical assessment; Low welfare or hardship assessment; sharing facilities with non-family members; Lacking 1 bedroom. Existing tenants in general needs housing, accepted for sheltered housing.
Band D	Purely exist for Sheltered Housing applicants	Sheltered housing applicants, adequately housed, sufficient income, savings over £16,000
Band E	Emergency status	Urgent move required to ensure immediate safety and welfare and/or where remaining in their current accommodation may cause risk of death or serious injury.

3. ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION

Applicants who are eligible and who qualify for an allocation of accommodation will be able to join the Housing Register.

You usually qualify if you are:

- a British or Irish citizen living in the UK
- an EU citizen working in the UK or with permanent residence
- from outside the EU but allowed to claim benefits

The following applicants are not eligible for an allocation of accommodation:

- Applicants who are below the age of 16 years*
- Persons from abroad who are subject to immigration control (excluding classes prescribed as eligible for an allocation of accommodation in regulations made by the Secretary of State)
- Persons who are not subject to immigration control, but who are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (excluding classes prescribed as eligible for an allocation of accommodation in regulations made by the Secretary of State)

* People aged 16 and 17 will usually only be considered for housing after they are 18. Exceptions are young people accepted under homeless legislation and care leavers (with recommendation from their 'parent' Local Authority). NB They only qualify for a licence or a tenancy in trust. Their application date will be used as their effective date when banding is determined.

Reciprocal arrangements exist with other Local Authorities and Registered Providers. The aim of the reciprocal arrangement is to increase the options for tenants in social housing who have a secure/assured or fixed term / flexible tenancy, to move to another Borough to avoid homelessness and increase safe options for households at risk due to a confirmed risk to the personal safety of themselves or a member of their household.

The eligibility criteria do not apply to transfer applicants who already hold an introductory, secure, starter or full assured tenancy with a Council or Registered Provider.

Sheltered Housing applicants:

The minimum age for sheltered housing applicants is:

- Non-Council tenants: 60 years or older
- Existing Council property tenant: 55 years or older.

In both cases all members of the applicant's household must be 50 years or older.

Sheltered housing does not accommodate families or adult children, only single people and couples can apply.

Sheltered housing does not provide care or support facilities such as 24/7 on site staff or personal carers.

Local Connection criteria for sheltered housing applicants

Applicants who do not meet at least one of the following criteria will not qualify for the sheltered house

- Applicants who have been resident in Castle Point continuously for the last 6 months, or three out of the last five years from date of application.

- Applicants who have *close adult relatives who have been resident in Borough for at least the 12 months.

Close adult relatives include siblings, children, grandchildren over the age of 18 (including the step equivalents) immediate great nieces and nephews.

Sheltered Housing Banding preference

Sheltered Housing applicants will be assessed and awarded the applicable priority banding preference between A-C. However, due to a higher turnover of properties within our sheltered housing stock, sheltered housing applicants will be awarded a Sheltered Housing Band D if they have one or more of the following of more applies:

- are adequately housed,
- have sufficient income/funds to resolve their own suitable housing,
- have capital savings/assets of/worth £16,000 and above,

Sheltered Housing Band D will be considered after Band C in order of preference.

Eligibility review:

Applicants can remain on the Housing Register for varying periods of time. Castle Point Borough Council assess eligibility at the point of application and again when considering making an allocation. It is possible for an applicant's eligibility status to change. Applicants must be eligible at the time a property is available to them.

4. INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Where a housing applicant and associated household member(s) in a current a home have savings/capital of £16,000 or above, they are deemed to be financially able to secure alternative accommodation for themselves an applicant will be ineligible to join the housing register. Savings/capital of all household members will be considered jointly when calculating this threshold.

Assessments will be made considering local market rents and relevant market trends and data.

Owner occupiers or applicants who own other residential properties will be ineligible to apply.

The income, savings/capital and/or interest held by a housing applicant and associated household member(s) in a current home, other property or other assets will be considered along with their ability to secure a mortgage and the size and type of property needed. Assessments will be made considering local market rents and relevant market trends and data and by undertaking affordability assessment.

Housing applicants who are adequately housed will be ineligible to apply.

People that hold a tenancy with another Local Authority or Registered Provider (except in exceptional circumstances or where their landlord does not have the stock within Borough to meet their housing need).

5. REASONABLE PREFERENCE:

In accordance with the Housing Act this policy sets out how, when deciding who will be offered accommodation, the Council will give reasonable preference to the following applicants:

- Applicants who are homeless under the meaning in the Housing Act
- Applicants to whom a duty is owed under Homeless legislation.
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- People who need to move on medical or welfare and /or hardship grounds
- Applicants who are serving or former serving members of the regular armed forces or reserve forces (differing circumstances are separately considered within the policy).

6. REDUCED PREFERENCE

Reduced preference will apply where a housing applicant is financially able to secure alternative accommodation for themselves. Assessments will be made considering local market rents and relevant market trends and data.

Reduced preference will apply to those who have been granted a full homeless duty and have previous incidents of unacceptable behaviour or under a prevent or relief duty where they have failed to cooperate.

Reduced preference may apply if an applicant makes a household member(s) homeless to facilitate a priority banding/move.

7. LOCAL CONNECTION

Applicants who do not meet at least one of the following criteria will not qualify for the Housing Register.

- Applicants who have been resident in Castle Point continuously for the last 5 years.
- Applicants who have close adult relatives who are;
 - currently resident in Castle Point; and
 - who are in receipt of carers allowance in relation to the applicant; and
 - have been resident in the Borough for at least the last 5 years; and
 - The cost of travel in relation to caring duties is causing financial hardship (evidence will need to be supplied and a financial assessment undertaken).

Close adult relatives include parents, siblings or children over the age of 18 (including step equivalents).

- Applicants who have paid permanent contracted employment within Castlepoint for 24 hours or more a week (16 hours for single parents with dependent children) and:
 - the employment has been for a continuous period of 12 months prior to the application; and
 - the cost of travel to and from the place of employment is causing financial hardship (evidence will need to be supplied and a financial assessment undertaken).

Local Connection Exemptions:

The following applicants are exempt from the local connection criteria:

- Housing applicants to whom a duty is owed under Homeless legislation.
- Applicants who are serving in or have served in the regular or reserve armed forces within the 5 years immediately prior to the date of their application.
- Applicants who are serving or former serving members of the regular armed forces or reserve forces who suffer from a serious injury, illness or disability sustained as a result of their service.
- Applicants who are a bereaved spouse/civil partner of a former serving member of the regular armed forces and have recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to reside in services accommodation following the death of their spouse/civil partner.
- Care Leavers below the age of 21 years who have been accommodated within Castle Point for a continuous period of at least 2 years (including some time before they were 16 years of age).
- Applicants who are care leavers below the age of 25, who were placed outside the Borough but wish to return.
- Applicants living in temporary accommodation outside the Borough who had a local connection at the time they were placed there by Castle Point Borough Council.
- Applicants from outside the Borough who need to be housed within the Borough to receive care or support for themselves or a member of the household and where it is unreasonable to travel to receive the care or support.
- Applicants who are leaving an institution such as a prison or secure unit or a hospital, rehabilitation centre, refuge, hostel or supported accommodation scheme and did have a qualifying local connection to Castle Point through residence in settled accommodation immediately before they moved into their current accommodation.
- Applicants rehoused outside the Borough of Castle Point under a homelessness duty.
- Other exceptional circumstances (such cases will be referred to the Head of Housing and Communities for consideration).

8. HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS AND BEDROOM ELIGIBILITY

Set criteria will be used to determine the number of bedrooms an applicant is eligible to bid for, considering the number and ages of all “permanent” members of the applicant’s household.

Any adult who resides with the applicant, where the accommodation is their main and principal home, will be classed as a permanent household member.

Any child below the age of 18 who resides with the applicant as their main home will be classed as a permanent household member. In cases of shared parenting the general principle is that a child needs one home of an adequate size and the Council will not accept responsibility for providing a second home for children to stay with a different parent.

Where there is evidence that additional bedrooms are required, the applicant may be permitted to bid for larger properties.

Examples include:

- Where the applicant is a prospective foster carer and requires an additional bedroom in order to foster a child (subject to Social Services have approved the applicant as a foster carer subject to the availability of suitably sized accommodation will be required).
- Where the applicant has a need for an additional bedroom for an overnight waking carer on a permanent basis (proof of the applicant's need for an overnight waking carer will be required).
- Where the applicant has a medical or welfare need for an additional bedroom, following assessment by an independent medical advisor and upon receipt of supporting evidence from a health professional.
- Where a member of the applicant's household is in full-time education or is serving in the armed forces and does not reside with the applicant throughout the year, but their permanent home is with the application.

Due to limited availability, families with 5 or more children may be given preference over smaller eligible households for properties with 4 or more bedrooms.

Eligible property size:

(x indicates eligibility)	Property size				
Applicant type	Bedsit	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Single adult	x	x			
Couples		x			
1 child families – child under 3 years of age		x			
1 child families – child over 3 years of age			x		
2 child families – children same gender			x		
2 child families – children different gender, eldest child under 10 years of age			x		
2 child families – children different gender, one child over 10 years of age and the other over 3 years of age				x	
Families with 3 or 4 children				x	
Families with 5 or more children					x

NB: Qualifying applicants to Housing Associations will be nominated according to the Housing Associations policy.

9. ADVERTS

Vacant properties are advertised on the Council's Choice Based Lettings System. Adverts will contain as much information as possible about the property and the applicable eligibility criteria.

The Choice Based Lettings System will include information about Castle Point Council properties and Housing Association properties.

The Council reserves the right to advertise some properties giving preference to certain applicants including but not limited to transfer tenants, Tenant Incentive Scheme (TIS) applicants, homelessness cases, decants to achieve best use of housing stock.

10. BIDDING FOR PROPERTIES

Properties available to rent are advertised for 4 days from midnight on a Wednesday to midnight on the Sunday every week.

It makes no difference when a bid is placed within that timeframe. Bids made in time are all considered equally and ranked according to priority.

Applicants can express an interest in available properties by placing bids through the Choice Based Lettings System. Applicants can bid for up to 3 properties during the time they are advertised. Applicants are only able to bid for properties that are suitable for their family size. Bids are not accepted after midnight on a Sunday.

The expression of interest in a property by making a bid does not guarantee the offer of a tenancy.

Applicants 'ready for move on', owed a homeless duty, non-statutory successions or Tenant Incentive Scheme applicants with significant rent arrears will be placed on 'auto bid'. The system will then auto match the applicant to a property to meet their housing need.

To ensure the best use of housing stock the Council reserves the right on occasions to give preference to certain types of application.

11. SHORTLISTING

Applicants who place bids for properties will be shortlisted in the following order (subject to the additional criteria below):

- Applicants in Emergency / Exceptional band E
- By need for any specialist components in the property (such as a significant disabled adaptation)
- By housing need band (from band A down to band C) (from oldest to newest).
- By banding effective date (from oldest to newest)

If more than one applicant with the same band and banding effective date bids for the same property, the Council will decide taking into consideration the individual housing circumstances of each case and relevant factors, such as previous offer refusals.

Wheelchair standard properties or properties with similar significant disabled adaptations will be matched to applicants who have a need for the adaptations and who are most suited to the vacancy. A specialist such as an Occupational Therapist may need to be consulted on the suitability of a property for the applicant(s).

If an applicant who has a need for accommodation with disabled adaptations bids for a property that does not meet this need, the Council will consider whether it is reasonable and practical to adapt the property taking into account budget availability and best use of available housing stock.

Where there is a shortage of accessible or adapted properties the Council may, subject to budget availability, identify properties that are suitable for adaptation and consider giving applicants who have disabilities preference for these properties.

The Council reserves the right to overlook bids, for example in the following circumstances:

- Where the applicant is already under offer for a different property.
- Where the applicant has been awarded priority due to overcrowding or a medical or welfare need for an additional bedroom and has bid for a property with the same or fewer bedrooms.
- Where the applicant has been awarded priority due to under-occupancy and has bid for a property with the same or more bedrooms.
- Where the applicant poses a risk to individuals or the community.
- Where the applicant has bid for a property for which they are not eligible due to a system or administrative error.
- Where the applicant has bid for a property for which they are no longer eligible following a change in their circumstances.
- Where the applicant is in rent arrears.

12. ALLOCATIONS AND OFFERS

The Council will review bidding shortlists and allocate properties in accordance with this Policy. Successful applicants will be contacted if they have been matched to a property. Applicants will have 2 working days to respond to an offer of accommodation. Some applicants may be given longer to consider an offer, for example where there are identified vulnerabilities that significantly affect the applicant's ability to respond.

Failure to respond to an offer by the specified deadline may be treated as a refusal. If an applicant fails to respond to an offer, their application will be suspended pending contact and confirmation of their circumstances. The application will be cancelled if there is no contact within 28 days.

Applicants who owe housing related debts will need to provide evidence to confirm that repayment plans have been maintained.

Applicants may be required to complete an affordability assessment to confirm that the accommodation offered will be suitable.

If an applicant accepts an offer of accommodation, arrangements will be made for a viewing of the property and subsequent signing of a tenancy agreement. Failure to attend an arranged viewing or sign-up appointment will be treated as a refusal.

Applicants are limited in the number of offers that they can refuse:

Applicants entitled to one offer only:

- Band A applicants (with exception for TIS)
- Applicants in supported accommodation
- Child in Care nominations
- Applicants accepted as statutorily homeless and qualifying for the Home Choice Scheme
- Non statutory successions

Applicants entitled to two offers only:

- Transfer applicants (with exception for those awarded a Band A)
- General needs applicants

If an applicant refuses offers of suitable accommodation (unless homeless and/or ready for move on), they will not be permitted to bid for further properties or considered for another offer of accommodation for a period of 12 months. The applicant will be suspended until 12 months have passed.

If an applicant who has been placed in band E because they have an emergency level housing need refuses an offer of suitable accommodation, they will lose their priority status.

If the applicant is owed a homeless duty under the Housing Act and /or has move on status refuses an offer of suitable accommodation, they will lose their priority status and if applicable their relevant homeless duty will be discharged.

The Council reserves the right to withdraw any offer of accommodation where there is just cause. The Council will explain to the applicant why an offer has been withdrawn.

The Council may in emergency situations direct let a property that they deem suitable. Such cases will be referred to the Head of Housing and Communities for consideration.

13. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Applicants who are unsuitable to be a tenant because they (or any member of their household) have been responsible for unacceptable behaviour will not qualify for the Housing Register.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Significant housing related debt (equating to the equivalent of 8 weeks rent arrears,) Examples of housing related debt can include arrears of Council Tax, Housing Benefit overpayments, non-payment of rent deposit debt, former tenant rent arrears.
- Violence or threats of violence or intimidation
- Being a perpetrator of domestic violence or a hate crime
- Conviction for illegal or immoral use of their home
- Physical, sexual or financial abuse
- Anti-social behaviour
- Drug use and dealing

- Property damage and /or allowing condition of a property to deteriorate beyond reasonable wear and tear
- Giving false information or withholding information in relation to an application for housing within Castle Point or any other area.

The Council will consider all relevant factors such as health, dependents and the individual circumstances of the housing applicant. Decisions will be made based on proportionality and reasonableness.

When assessing whether an applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant the Council will consider:

- The seriousness of the applicant's behaviour
- The duration of the behaviour and/or the number and frequency of incidents
- The length of time that has elapsed since the behaviour took place
- Relevant vulnerabilities and support needs
- Whether there has been meaningful engagement with support agencies
- Whether there has been a significant and sustained change in the applicant's behaviour.

Applicants who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour will not be able to join the Housing Register until they have demonstrated a significant change in their behaviour and the Council is satisfied that the behaviour is unlikely to reoccur, and that the applicant is now suitable to be a tenant.

14. DELIBERATE WORSENING OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Applicants whose housing need arises as a result of deliberately worsening their own housing circumstances will be assessed on the basis of their previous accommodation or circumstance. If assessed as having deliberately worsened your circumstances this may reduce your preference or render you ineligible to join the housing register.

Examples of worsening of circumstances include:

- Applicants who have sold a property or given up a tenancy of a property that was suitable and reasonable to occupy and moved into accommodation that is overcrowded, in a poor state of repair or unaffordable.
- Applicants who reside in a property that is in a poor state of repair due to neglect or damage that they, or a member of their household, caused.
- Applicants who reside in a property that is in a poor state of repair and will not permit their landlord access to carry out repairs or improvement works.
- Applicants who have created overcrowding within their accommodation by moving extended family into the property when there was no need to do so.
- Applicants who have colluded with their landlord in the service of a notice.

Applicants found to have worsened their circumstances have a right to ask for a review of the decision.

15. FALSE STATEMENTS AND WITHHOLDING INFORMATION

It is an offence for housing applicants to give false information or knowingly withhold information that has been asked for in respect of a housing register application.

The Council may act against applicants who withhold or provide false information regarding their housing application.

Where an applicant has been allocated a property as a result of providing false information, the Council or Registered Provider may take court action to obtain possession of the property.

Applicants proven to be providing false information will be excluded from the housing register.

16. REVIEWS AND APPEALS

If an applicant does not agree with a decision made by the Council in respect of their application, they have the right to request a review of the decision. The circumstances in which an applicant may request a review include:

- The Council has decided that an applicant is not eligible or does not qualify for the Housing Register.
- The applicant believes their application has been assessed incorrectly and placed in the wrong Band.
- The applicant believes they should be eligible to bid for a size or type of property that they have not been permitted to bid for.
- The Council has decided to withdraw an offer of accommodation.
- An application has been cancelled and the applicant's request to have the application reinstated has been refused.

Review process:

Applicants who wish to request a review of a decision will need to submit their request in writing to housingadvice@castlepoint.gov.uk within 14 days of the date of the decision. The Council will only be prepared to consider late review requests in exceptional circumstances and where there is good reason for the delay, the Council's decision is final.

A review request should include details of why the applicant feels the decision is incorrect and any points the applicant wants the Council to consider when carrying out the review. If the applicant submits new information or evidence that was not available when the original decision was made, such as information relating to a change in circumstances, the application may be referred for a reassessment rather than a review.

All reviews will be completed by a Senior Officer who was not involved in the original decision. A review will normally be carried out within 56 days. Written notification of the review decision, including grounds for the decision, will be sent to the applicant at the correspondence address provided for their application. If the applicant does not have a correspondence address, a copy of the letter will be made available for collection from the Council Offices for a period of at least 21 days.

If an applicant has been matched for a property but has been refused an offer of accommodation by a Registered Provider, they should make a request to the Registered Provider in the first instance to review its decision. Each Registered Provider operates its own appeals process.

17. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DATA PROTECTION

The Council promotes equal opportunities and aims to implement and maintain services that ensure no applicant is treated unfairly on the grounds of age, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, race, religious belief or disability or disadvantaged by the application of criteria that has a direct or indirect discriminatory effect that cannot be justified by law.

Advice and assistance are available to ensure that the Allocations Policy and Choice Based Lettings scheme are accessible for all applicants. Assistance can be provided to applicants who are unable to search or bid for properties as a result of a disability or assessed vulnerability if required. Information can be translated or made available in different formats, such as large print, upon request if required.

Personal information that the Council hold in relation to applications will be processed in accordance with Data Protection legislation. Information may need to be disclosed to Registered Providers or other landlords who may be able offer accommodation. More information about how and why the Council may process personal data, data protection rights is available on the Council's website.

18. ASSESSING HOUSING NEED

Applicants who have a confirmed housing need will be placed in 1 of 4 housing need bands:

- Emergency / Exceptional
- Urgent
- High
- Moderate

Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances other applicants who do not fall within any of the categories listed below may be considered to have a housing need and fall within one of the housing bands (such cases will be referred to the Head of Housing and Communities for consideration).

Castle Point will need to be satisfied that the current Landlord does not have the required property when considering exceptional circumstances in relation to other Local Authority tenants or Registered Providers.

Band E – Emergency / Exceptional Housing Need

Applicants who have an emergency need will be placed in band E.

Band E allocations require approval by 2 housing management team members.

Examples of emergency situations include;

- Being at immediate risk of harm / violence

Band A: Urgent Housing need

Applicants will be placed in band A where they meet at least one of the following criteria:

Homeless Duty:

- Housing applicants who have been assessed under the Housing Act and who have been granted a full duty.
- Applicants who have been assessed as having a priority need and unintentionally homeless and been granted a relief duty
- Applicants who have been granted a full duty and are in short term temporary accommodation.

Dangerous or Hazardous Housing Conditions:

- Applicants who are living in accommodation that has been classified as being “statutorily overcrowded” This banding will not apply if the applicant has been placed in the accommodation temporarily
- Applicants who are living in accommodation with conditions that have been classified as being unsafe or posing an imminent risk of significant harm and where the issues cannot be remedied by the landlord within a time period that the Council considers to be reasonable.
- Applicants who are residing in a property that is subject to a demolition order.
- Applicants who are living in a property that has been assessed as having a Health and Housing Rating System Category 1 hazard by the Council's Environmental Health team where the Council is satisfied that the problem cannot be resolved by the landlord within 6 months and where continuing to occupy the accommodation will pose a considerable risk to a household members health.

Emergency Medical or Mobility Need:

- Applicants who have been assessed as having a high medical priority by an independent medical advisor.
- Applicants who have a progressive, chronic or life-threatening medical condition and cannot be discharged from hospital because they do not have any accommodation or their accommodation is unsuitable, for example because they cannot access toilet and/or bathing facilities in the property.
- Applicants who have a progressive, chronic or life-threatening medical condition and urgently need to move to accommodation with significant disabled adaptations, such as wheelchair standard accommodation.

Armed Forces:

- Applicants who are serving or former serving members of the regular armed forces or reserve forces who are assessed by an independent medical advisor as suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability sustained because of their service.
- Applicants who are a bereaved spouse/civil partner of a former serving member of the regular armed forces and have recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to reside in services accommodation following the death of their spouse/civil partner.

Acute overcrowding:

- Housing applicants that lack 3 or more bedrooms when assessed against their eligible property size.
- Housing applicants that lack 2 or more bedrooms when assessed against their eligible property size and have exclusive use of one room but share kitchen or

bathroom facilities with non-family members. (Does not include temporary accommodation).

- Housing applicants who have been assessed as overcrowded in line with the Housing Act.

Under occupation:

- Transfer applicants releasing under occupied 2 or more bedroomed accommodation and moving to smaller accommodation under the Council's transfer incentive scheme.
- Successions, required to move to smaller accommodation
- Housing applicants releasing under occupied 2,3 and 4 bed accommodation and moving to smaller accommodation where a statutory or non-statutory right of succession has been determined.

Decant of existing accommodation

- Housing applicants who are tenants of the Council who are required to vacate their homes as a result of a regeneration or demolition scheme.

Young people leaving care

- Housing applicants who are two weeks prior to their 18th birthday and are due to leave local authority care and are ready to move to independent accommodation.

High welfare or hardship assessment

- Applicants that have been assessed by the Council as having a high welfare or hardship need. Welfare and hardship need cases are referred to a Housing manager for decision.

Ready for "Move-On"

- Applicants in short term supported housing who have been assessed as 'ready to move on' to independent accommodation and who would be considered likely as to be accepted as threatened with homelessness and in priority need.

Reciprocals

- Approved management transfers from outside the Borough under a reciprocal arrangement with the relevant Local Authority or Registered Provider.

Band B: High Housing need

Applicants will be placed in band B where they meet at least one of the following criteria:

Homeless Duty:

- Applicants who have been assessed under the Housing Act and who have been granted a duty who are in suitable long-term temporary accommodation arranged by the Council
- Applicants who have been assessed as having a priority need and unintentionally homeless and been granted a prevention duty.

Medium medical or mobility need:

- Applicants who have been assessed as having a medium medical priority by an independent medical advisor.

Medium overcrowding

- Applicants that lack 2 or more bedrooms when assessed against their eligible property size.

Armed Forces:

- Applicants who are serving or former serving members of the regular armed forces or reserved forces who have no housing need and the application is made within 5 years of discharge.

Work related:

- Applicants who have paid permanent contracted employment within Castle Point for 16 hours a week or more and the employment has been for a continuous period of 12 months prior to the application and the applicant currently lives more than 30 miles away.

Medium welfare or hardship assessment

- Applicants that have been assessed by the Council as having a medium welfare or hardship need. Welfare and hardship need cases are referred to a Housing manager for decision.

Band C: Moderate Housing need

Applicants will be placed in band C where they meet at least one of the following criteria:

Homeless Duty:

- Applicants who have been assessed as having a priority but been assessed as intentionally homeless, where there is a requirement under the Housing Act to afford reasonable preference on the grounds of homelessness.
- Applicants who have been granted a duty who are homeless and have a local connection but unlikely to have a priority need and/or are awaiting their homelessness decision.

Low medical or mobility need:

- Applicants who have been assessed as having a low medical priority by an independent medical advisor.

Low overcrowding

- Applicants that lack 1 bedroom when assessed against their eligible property size.
- Transfer applicants that have resided in a bedsit for more than 12 months (Aged 25 or over).
- Existing tenants occupying a general needs property, wishing to transfer into sheltered accommodation.
- Applicants staying or living with nonfamily members that do not have the exclusive use of a bedroom/one room and share kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Low welfare or hardship assessment

- Applicants that have been assessed by the Council as having a low welfare or hardship need. Welfare and hardship need cases are referred to a Housing manager for decision.

19. Assessing housing medical and disability assessments

Medical and disability assessment Housing applicants who are applying for accommodation due to a medical condition, reduced mobility or a permanent physical disability will need to provide information about their condition and how their condition is affected by their current accommodation. The type of tenure of the accommodation is unlikely to be considered or affect the assessment. Castle Point will need to be satisfied that the current Landlord does not have the required property to meet the applicant(s) housing need.

- Medical assessments will be undertaken for any housing applicants who believe that their condition is being affected by their current accommodation and where a move to alternative accommodation may improve their health, or where a future housing need around the type of suitable property needs to be considered.
- Housing applicants will be required to fill in a self-assessment medical form, detailing the effect that their current accommodation is having on their medical condition or disability and will be required to provide supporting information from a health or social care professional. Assessments will not be considered without supporting documentation.
- Applicants citing mental health issues will need to provide supporting information confirming a diagnosis with an agreed support plan.
- All medical assessments will be undertaken by the Council's independent medical advisor.

The assessment will be based on:

- The housing applicant's (or member of the household included in the application) medical condition
- The effect that their current accommodation has on that condition and how moving to alternative accommodation can assist with the management of the condition.
- Potential future housing need for progressive conditions

Following the medical assessment, the housing applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome and any change to their banding.

Where a housing applicant's (or member of the household included in the application) condition changes substantially, a new self-assessment medical form should be submitted along with any supporting evidence. New assessments will not be considered unless the condition has changed substantially or additional documentation is supplied that shows the condition in a different light.