

Stockport Council Allocation Policy

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STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

www.stockport.gov.uk

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1. Policy statement

Stockport Council's housing Allocation Policy incorporates the following principles:

- Accommodation should be allocated fairly and in an open and transparent way.
- Meeting housing need should be the core consideration when allocating homes, while recognising sustainability of communities.
- The best use should be made of available housing stock.
- Choice and mobility should be promoted as far as possible, recognising limitations on housing supply.
- The allocations process should be supportive and inclusive.
- Allocations should be fully compliant with part 6 of the 1996 Housing Act, the 2012 Allocation of Accommodation: statutory guidance for local authorities, the 2010 Equality Act and other relevant legislation and case law.

1.1 Allocating in a fair and transparent way

Properties will be allocated in line with this policy, and applicants advised of how their priority for rehousing has been assessed. Applicants have a right to review decisions made on their application for rehousing, and there is a separate established complaints process in place to respond to dissatisfaction with the allocations process.

Outcomes of letting information is monitored and published, and the Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all sections of the community in line with the Equality Act 2010. Housing applications are welcome from people of all backgrounds irrespective of ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age or marital/civil partnership status and diversity information is regularly monitored to ensure any barriers to access are addressed.

There is a strong focus on verifying applications and tackling fraud to ensure allocations are made fairly.

1.2 Meeting housing need while ensuring sustainable tenancies.

The policy retains the central objective of allocating properties according to assessed need, reflecting the legal obligation to offer 'reasonable preference' to certain groups of applicants such as the homeless, people with medical, social or welfare needs or those otherwise living in overcrowded, insanitary, or unsatisfactory circumstances. Housing need is primarily reflected through the allocation of rehousing points according to set criteria within the policy.

While meeting housing need is the core objective, this is balanced with ensuring tenancies and communities are sustainable. Allocation of properties is strongly linked to the ongoing provision of support and effective tenancy management.

1.3 Making the best use of available stock

The demand for social housing far outweighs supply and the policy has the objective of ensuring that what housing is available is used to best effect to meet housing need and create sustainable communities. As such it matches households to appropriate property types and sizes and seeks to encourage and facilitate 'rightsizing' where applicants are in properties that are too large for their needs. This includes ensuring best use is made of adapted properties, or those that may be suitable for additional related works.

1.4 The allocations process should be supportive and inclusive.

The policy and related processes aim to allow access to social housing from all sections of the community with related support. As well as ensuring those with protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act are not directly or indirectly discriminated against by its provisions, this extends to minimising the number of households who are otherwise disqualified from the housing register.

Where people are deemed not to qualify due to past anti-social behaviour, rent arrears or poor property condition, support is available from Stockport Homes Group (SHG) to explore alternative rehousing options and look at steps that can be taken to ensure inclusion in the future. This particularly applies to people who have become street homeless or have faced barriers such as being a care leaver or a former member of the armed forces.

Help is available from SHG to those who need assistance in registering for housing. In addition, assistance and support to understand other housing options available can also be made available to customers by contacting SHG.

1.5 Promoting choice and mobility.

The policy operates primarily through Homechoice, the Council's established Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, which advertises vacant properties on a weekly basis. Eligible applicants can apply for advertised homes and offers of accommodation are made to those with the highest level of assessed need. The limited circumstances where properties are allocated directly outside of CBL are outlined within the policy.

It is recognised that the limited supply of housing becoming available to let means that for many households social housing is not a realistic option. The allocations service provides a range of information on other housing options including mutual exchanges (for social housing tenants), accessing the private rented sector, and finding suitable supported accommodation.

1.6 Allocations should be compliant with legislation, guidance and case law.

While there is flexibility in how local authorities decide to allocate accommodation, there remains a clear legal framework which policies must meet. This is primarily outlined in Part 6 of the 1996 Housing Act, with additional statutory guidance in the form of Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England (DCLG 2012).

The policy has also been assessed in line with the Equality Act 2010.

2. Policy Summary

2.1 How can people apply for rehousing?

SHG manage the Council's housing stock, maintain its housing register and allocate vacant properties. To apply for rehousing, people need to make an application to SHG who will initially check whether they are eligible and qualify for an allocation and then assess what level of priority they should be afforded.

Applications can be made online at www.stockporthomes.org and further assistance is available from the Registration Team as required to meet individual needs, such as face-to-face registrations.

2.2 Who is eligible/qualifies for rehousing?

There are some categories of people from abroad that the law says local authorities cannot allocate properties to. This is outlined in Part 6 of the 1996 Housing Act and includes people subject to immigration control (unless in a group specified by the Secretary of State), such as asylum seekers, and others from abroad who are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (UK, Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands). **There is no discretion when looking at this element of eligibility, with definitions set down by central government.**

The law also enables local authorities to define other groups of people it does not consider should qualify for rehousing. In Stockport, this includes:

- Where there is an elevated risk to tenancy sustainment demonstrated by previous housing related debt, for example rent arrears to a social or private landlord of over £1000.
- Applicants exhibiting anti-social or criminal behaviour that would pose a risk to others or prevent the effective management of a neighbourhood, for example:
 - Serious offences where a medium or elevated risk of reoffending exists.
 - Persistent lower-level offences impacting upon the community.

- Drug dealing or cultivation.
 - Actions leading to anti-social behaviour orders or similar sanctions.
 - Harassment
 - Gang related activity.
- Transfer applicants whose homes are in a poor condition.

Full details of persons who do not qualify for rehousing are set out at paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3.

Each application will be dealt with upon its own merits, considering the impact of any factors such as disability or other protected characteristics. The aim is to ensure that any tenancy would be sustainable, with the household not posing a risk to other residents, the wider community, or staff.

Where an applicant is initially considered ineligible due to housing related debt, they may provide additional information on the related circumstances. For example, financial exploitation, bankruptcy, or debt relief orders. The Money Advice Team at SHG will then assess level of risk to future tenancies.

Where an applicant is ineligible or does not qualify for rehousing, they will be advised of this in writing, giving full reasons and outlining their right to have this decision reviewed. They will also be advised of the steps they need to take to be reconsidered for rehousing, such as reducing arrears to a certain level or a period of settled behaviour.

2.3 What type and size of property can people apply for?

To make the best use of the limited social housing available, applicants are advised of the size and type of property considered suitable for their needs which they can apply for. To calculate the size of property, the following are usually considered as needing separate bedrooms in line with relevant statutory standards:

- The applicant and their partner.
- Additional adults (although siblings would be expected to share which is an exception to the 'Bedroom Standard')
- 2 Children of the same sex, irrespective of age.
- 2 Children of different sexes, if both are under 10 years old.
- Any single child not paired as above.

Subject to meeting affordability criteria, an extra bedroom will be allowed where an applicant is pregnant, and a baby of either sex would lead to the above criteria being met. As houses are in exceptionally short supply, they are restricted to applicants who have children aged under 18, reflecting the need to make best use of family type accommodation.

To help facilitate access arrangements, applicants with access or part time care arrangements for a child, can apply for a two-bedroom (flats or maisonette only)

property providing they satisfy affordability tests. However, when allocating any two-bedroom property, applicants who have full time care arrangements (children living with them on a permanent full-time basis) will qualify for the offer ahead of any other applicants regardless of points level. This is to support maximising use of all available properties, working to meet those most in need on the housing register.

Other restrictions on properties include where there is an age restriction in place; they are adapted for people with a disability or specific local lettings policies are in place. These are advertised on a property-by-property basis.

2.4 How are people prioritised for rehousing?

The allocation policy recognises nine categories of housing need, reflecting the reasonable and additional preference categories outlined in the 1996 Housing Act, and awards a level of rehousing points for each:

- Under-occupancy (*where an applicant is in a council or housing association property in Stockport and their property is bigger than their assessed needs*)
- Medical, social and welfare (*where an applicant needs to move for medical reasons, harassment, or a need to move to a particular location to avoid hardship*)
- Homelessness (where a duty has been accepted towards a household by the local authority under part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act)
- Supported accommodation (*where an applicant is ready to leave supported accommodation or is there is a delay in discharge from hospital or a care home*)
- Serious Hazard (*where an applicant has serious disrepair or is lacking basic facilities which cannot be resolved through enforcement or engagement with landlords*)
- Overcrowding (*where an applicant has less bedrooms available than their assessed need*)
- Lodging (*where an applicant is staying in another person's home*)
- Having been in the armed forces, or a recently bereaved partner of someone who has served, and in urgent housing need (*an extra award of points to give additional priority to those in urgent housing need who have been in the armed forces*)
- Aged under 25 and an eligible relevant or former relevant care leaver who has spent a period of, or periods amounting to, at least 13 weeks in care in England or Wales since their 14th birthday, of which at least one day was since becoming 16 years old and in urgent housing need (*an extra award of*

points to give additional priority to those in urgent housing need who have been looked after as a child by a local authority)

Where an applicant meets at least one of these categories, they are classed as being 'in need,' and will be considered for rehousing ahead of those who are not classed as being in need.

Additional 'local priority' points are also awarded for the following factors whether or not someone is in housing need:

- Having a local connection (*where an applicant has a connection to the Borough through residence, close family members as defined in this policy or employment*). Local connection tests do not need to be satisfied to homeless applicants, those fleeing domestic abuse and those who have served in armed forces at any point (including bereaved spouses / partners who have not remarried or have a new partner). Eligible, relevant or former relevant children will also not have to satisfy local connection tests. Such children are care leavers aged 16 to 24 who have spent a period of, or periods amounting to, at least 13 weeks in care in England or Wales since their 14th birthday, of which at least one day was since attaining the age of 16.
- The time an applicant has been registered for rehousing (*points awarded for each year an applicant has continued to be registered up to a maximum of 5 years*)
- Demonstrating a community contribution (*where an applicant is working, on a training course or volunteering, a registered carer or foster carer*)

Points will be awarded per application, and not per applicant, For example, if there are joint applicants who both are in employment and satisfy the Community Contribution criteria, only one award of Community Contribution points will be awarded.

Where there is more than one eligible applicant for a particular property, it will first be offered to the applicant considered 'in need' and with the highest level of points. If refused, it will then be offered to the applicant with the next highest level of points who is 'in need,' until such time as no other applicant is left with a housing need. In the unlikely event that no applicant in housing need accepts a property, then those 'not in need' will be considered and an offer made to the person with the highest level of points in that category.

2.5 The Points Scheme

The points awarded for each criterion are outlined below. All awards of homelessness points are only made following investigation and assessment by the Housing Options service.

	Points award category	Circumstances	Points award
A.	Housing Need points	1. Under-occupancy	• 25 points
		2. Medical, Social and Welfare	10 /25 /50 points depending upon level of need 50 points subject to removal following refusal of a reasonable offer
		3. Leaving supported accommodation <i>(Replaces all other points except: medical, employment, local connection, community contribution, care leaver and armed forces & urgent housing need)</i>	• 50 points: Families with children or care leavers aged under 21. • 30 points: Others.
		4. Threatened with homelessness within 56 days (Homelessness prevention duty accepted) ¹ <i>(Replaces all other points except: medical, employment, local connection, community contribution, care leaver and armed forces & urgent housing need)</i>	25 Points
		5. Homelessness and in priority need (Homelessness relief duty accepted ² and in priority need ³ or main homelessness duty accepted ⁴) <i>(Replaces all other points except: medical, employment, local connection, community contribution, care leaver and armed forces & urgent housing need)</i>	50 points
B.		6. Homelessness relief duty accepted and not in priority need. <i>(Replaces all other points except: medical, employment, local connection, community contribution, care leaver and</i>	30 points

¹ Under s195(2) of the 1996 Housing Act

² Under s.189B of the 1996 Housing Act

³ Priority needs as outlined in s.189 of the 1996 Housing Act – Households with dependent children, a pregnant person, a person deemed vulnerable, care leaver aged under 21 or someone homeless in an emergency.

⁴ Under s.193 of the 1996 Housing Act

		<i>armed forces & urgent housing need)</i>	
		7. Threatened with homelessness or homeless but due to the actions of household⁵ <i>(Replaces all other points except: medical, employment, local connection, community contribution, care leaver and armed forces & urgent housing need)</i>	10 points
		8. Serious Hazard (Serious disrepair/lack of facilities)	30 points
		9. Overcrowding	15 points per bedroom lacking.
		10. Lodging	10 points
		11. Having been in armed forces and in urgent housing need <i>(Additional preference added to applicants who have been in the armed forces/bereaved partner and have 25 housing need points or more)</i>	20 points
		12. Aged under 25 and having been a looked after child by a local authority and in urgent housing need <i>(Additional preference added to applicants aged under 25 who have been looked after and have 25 housing need points or more)</i>	20 points
	Local Priority points	13. Community Contribution	10 points
		14. Time-on-list	5 points per year (max 25)
		15. Local Connection (Not awarded where an applicant has given up a Council tenancy within 12 months, or can meet their housing needs through equity/savings)	100 points

2.6 How are properties let?

⁵ In line with the criteria outlined in s.191 of the 1996 Housing Act

Most properties that become available to let are advertised through Homechoice, the Council's choice-based lettings (CBL) scheme. Homechoice advertises properties on a weekly basis and those on the housing register can express an interest 'bid' for up to three properties in each advert. Applicants can only apply for properties of the size and type that they have been advised they are eligible for.

At the end of each bidding period, applicants are shortlisted according to their rehousing priority and made a provisional offer of accommodation. There is no penalty for refusing offers of accommodation, except for excessive refusals (see section 9.9 below), and for refusal of a final offer made to discharge a homelessness duty.

There are circumstances where direct offers of accommodation may be made, this includes to end a homelessness duty, specific protocols with social care for vulnerable groups, 'decants' where repair or refurbishments are required, or cases such as child protection issues or where other factors exist but are not reflected within the main priority scheme. These are minimised, but numbers will depend on the level of demand and the Council's legal obligations to these cohorts.

2.7 How can people ask for a review of allocation decisions?

Applicants can ask for any decision relating to their application to be reviewed, including eligibility for the housing register, the priority afforded, or property type allowed. These reviews are undertaken by a council officer uninvolved in the original decision and are based upon written information provided.

If an applicant is unhappy with the allocations service, they can follow SHG's complaints process. This will not address the level of priority afforded to an application as review decisions are final.

2.8 Housing fraud

SHG have a strong focus on verifying applications and ensuring allocations are made correctly. It is an offence for anyone to give false information or withhold information in connection with their housing application or affordability assessment. Where fraud, including benefit fraud, misinformation or unwillingness to provide information is discovered, housing need points will be removed from applicants for 12 months and existing offers may be withdrawn. Where a tenancy has been fraudulently obtained, or there is unlawful subletting, possession or other legal proceedings will be commenced.

3. The Housing Register

The Housing Register includes applicants wishing to move into council accommodation, seeking a transfer and/or, to be nominated for housing association accommodation. Applications are assessed for priority using a dual banding and points scheme, and properties are advertised through the 'Homechoice' service.

Special/non-standard cases are those applications where the individual's circumstances do not fall within the priority scheme. The way in which such applications are dealt with is described in Section 8 of this document.

3.1 Organisation of the Housing Register

3.1.1. *Registration*

The Registration team deals with registration of housing applications. Upon receipt of an application, checks are made on an applicant's eligibility and that they qualify for an allocation.

3.1.2. *Joint applicants*

Applicants who apply jointly and are co-habiting as a couple are not required to demonstrate settled co-residence. In these instances, the expectation will be that any tenancy created will be jointly in both names. Applicants can not apply for a joint tenancy if they are currently living apart.

3.1.2.1. Couples who are currently living apart are eligible to apply if the intention is to co-habit. This would be accepted as a joint application (unless one of the applicants is currently a SHG tenant in which case it would continue as a sole tenancy) with a requirement to share 1-bedroom. Any children under 18 within the household of the Sole applicant would be assessed according to the Bedroom Need matrix in **section 7.11.9**.

3.1.2.2. Bedroom eligibility will not be awarded to adult household members included in applications where they are *not* currently living in the same property as the Primary/Joint applicant(s) and where there is a requirement for an additional bedroom(s) (e.g. adult family members/friends/lodgers etc) Joint applicants who are not cohabiting as a couple will be required to demonstrate settled co-residence for a minimum period of 6 months. This includes adult family members/ friends. In these instances, the expectation will be that any future tenancy will be in joint names.

3.1.3. *Employees, board members, councillors, and their close relatives*

Employees of Stockport Homes Group, the Council, Board Members, Councillors, and their close relatives will be eligible to join the housing register. However, to ensure the propriety of such lettings, a form containing the details of the applicant, including their priority, will be completed, and checked by a Property Management Manager providing there is no irregularity. Once registered the applicant will bid in the same way as other applicants. For more information see Appendix 1.

3.1.4. *Applicants' prospects for rehousing*

Applications received will be processed and applicants will be advised of their assessed priority. At this time, prospects of rehousing with alternative options or advice will be made available.

3.1.5. **Annual renewal**

On the 12-month anniversary of a housing application, all applicants will be asked to confirm they wish to remain on the housing register. Where applicants do not respond within specified timescales, applications will be cancelled. Applicants are eligible to re-apply at any point in the future.

3.1.6. **Change of circumstances**

Where the circumstances of an applicant change, the application will be re-assessed and their points amended, according to their new housing circumstances. The onus is on the applicant to ensure their application details are correct at all times.

3.1.7. **Confidentiality, data protection and access to files**

Information held about applications is completely confidential and is only available to those involved in their rehousing. Applicant information is also held on computer systems. These systems are protected against unauthorised disclosure in accordance with the provisions of data protection legislation. Applicants are entitled to have access to their information.

Where an applicant has applied for property with another social housing provider, this is taken as implied consent to share non-sensitive data such as name, address and family make up.

3.1.8. **False information**

It is an offence for anyone to give false information or withhold information in connection with their housing application. This constitutes housing fraud, and along with issues such as subletting of council tenancies is a matter taken very seriously by the local authority as it hinders the best use being made of available housing stock.

If it is suspected that false information has been provided, including evidence of benefits fraud, or relevant details withheld, there will be an investigation by a Property Management Manager and contact may be made with other relevant statutory bodies, including Housing Benefits & Council Tax Benefits office, DWP, HMRC. If confirmed, the following action may be taken:-

- For current applications, all housing need points will be removed for a period of 12 months, following approval by the Head of Property Management
- If an offer of a tenancy has been received this may be withdrawn. In cases of suspected benefits fraud, the application will be suspended and any offer

withdrawn. The applicant will need to correct any benefit claim before the application will be made active but the offer will not be reinstated.

- If a tenancy has been obtained based on false information, the Council may take possession proceedings.
- Initiating other available legal proceedings

3.2 Who can join the housing register – eligible applicants?

All applicants can join the housing register, except those who are ineligible or are deemed not to qualify for rehousing.

3.3 Who cannot join the housing register – ineligible applicants or those not qualifying for an allocation?

Applicants may be found to be ineligible either because of their immigration status, or because they fall within a class of people that the Council have decided to do not qualify for an allocation. Further information on both these reasons is detailed below:

3.3.1. Immigration status

Applicants may be found to be ineligible due to their immigration status, or because they are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area. This is defined in depth within subsections 1-6 of section 160Z of the 1996 Housing Act and the associated code of guidance. Existing tenants of the Council are not affected by these provisions and will still be able to request a transfer regardless of their immigration status.

3.3.2. Classes of people Stockport Council have decided they will not allocate a property to

Sub sections 7 and 8 of section 160Z of the Housing Act 1996 enable local authorities to outline classes of people they consider do not qualify to join the housing register. Stockport Council has decided the following classes will be ineligible:

3.3.2.1 Applicants with unaddressed rent arrears or housing-related debt

Applicants who have outstanding debt related to housing, including current or former rent arrears, possession-related court costs and recharges, must declare this.

If this debt exceeds £1000 this may disqualify an applicant from being considered for housing allocation. However, each case is evaluated individually, taking into consideration factors such as circumstances of the debt,

amount of the debt, current circumstances of the household (including their income and ability to pay and reduce the debt), more recent history of maintaining rent payments and payments made towards the debt.

Any debt included in an undischarged Debt Relief Order or bankruptcy must be declared. Applicants must be deemed to be financially stable and able to afford tenancy related charges and associated costs before any rehousing can be progressed.

Existing SHG tenants will be expected to have clear rent and associated accounts before any offer of accommodation will be progressed however exceptional circumstances will be considered, for example, fleeing domestic abuse, unexpected foster care / guardianship arrangements and downsizing due to financial hardship.

3.3.2.2 Applicants who have exhibited criminal or antisocial behaviour making them unsuitable to be a tenant.

Applicants will not qualify to join the housing register if:

- They have committed criminal or antisocial acts making them unsuitable to be a tenant, and
- they have not demonstrated a consistent or meaningful period of addressing such behaviour.

Such acts are not limited to criminal convictions and may include behaviour leading to anti-social behaviour orders, actions resulting in an injunction being served, or other demonstrable evidence of activity considered by the local authority as likely to lead to difficulty in the effective management of its housing stock and/or risks to other residents or staff. Behaviour that may lead to disqualification includes (but is not limited to):

- Serious offences where a medium or elevated risk of reoffending exists.
- Persistent lower-level offences impacting upon the community.
- Drug dealing or cultivation.
- Actions leading to anti-social behaviour orders or similar sanctions.
- Harassment
- Gang related activity.

Factors considered when assessing qualification in this respect will include:

- Risk assessments and information from Probation, the Police, Youth Offending Team, or other involved agency.
- The nature and frequency of criminal or anti-social acts.
- The time that has elapsed since the most recent incident and level of engagement with support or other agencies.

- Willingness to engage with support or acceptable behaviour contracts.
- The existence of a legal duty to accommodate applicant or exceptional levels of housing need.

See also the Offenders and Eligibility procedure at [Appendix 3](#)

3.3.2.3 **Council tenants failing a ‘pre-transfer property check.’** Transfer applicants whose property conditions fail the standard required within the ‘pre-transfer property check’ will not qualify for rehousing until identified remedial actions have been undertaken.

3.3.2.4 **Applicants who exceed the household income threshold.** See 3.4 for details.

3.3.3. **Process for making an applicant ineligible.**

The decision as to whether an applicant qualifies to join the housing register or is ineligible to do so rests with a Property Management Manager after taking all individual circumstances into account and making enquiries with the probation service, police, landlords and other agencies as appropriate. This includes the consideration of disability or any other protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act and the support available to enable an applicant to effectively manage a tenancy.

Where an applicant is under-occupying a social housing tenancy but would usually not qualify for a transfer due to rent arrears or property condition, then each case will be assessed on its own merits. This will look at the sustainability of the tenancy, ability of the tenant to address outstanding issues and seek a solution to balance tenant responsibility, tenancy sustainability as well as maximising the use of available housing stock.

Applicants will be notified of any eligibility or qualification decision and the reasons for it, including the information considered. A right to review of the decision exists in line with the review policy.

3.4 **Income, savings, or equity**

Applicants must provide proof of all income, savings, investments, shares, bonds, cryptocurrency, property and land in this country and abroad when applying to join the housing register. This information will be re-checked at the point of any offer of accommodation being made. Any offer will be withdrawn if an applicant’s income, savings or any financial income or savings stream meets the criteria outlined in this Policy and they are judged to be able to meet their own housing needs through sourcing private rented accommodation or other alternative housing. Local connection points will be removed if an applicant can meet their own housing needs as per this Policy.

Income

- A threshold for household income is established, beyond which applicants **will no longer be eligible for social housing**. The threshold is based on the average rental cost for an appropriately sized property in Stockport. This figure is reviewed annually and will be sourced from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) using a figure obtained at the start of January for that coming full year⁶. The gross household income of each applicant will be assessed, excluding any county court judgments (CCJs) and maintenance payments managed by the Child Maintenance Service.
- Where an applicant's household income indicates that 30% or more of their income equals or exceeds the average rental price for a property that meets their assessed needs, **they will not be eligible for social housing under Stockport Council's Allocations Policy**. Exceptions will be made for applicants requiring specially adapted properties that cannot be met through the private rental market. Applicants exceeding the 30% income threshold will be supported to help access alternative housing options outside of social housing.
- This approach aims to ensure that available social housing is allocated to households that cannot afford market housing options. Applicants who are seeking a move to 'Extra Care' housing will have the home ownership, income and financial resources qualifications rescinded if the applicant is over 55 and their current home cannot meet their needs in the long term and the household does not have the financial means to pay for suitable alternative accommodation.

Example

Average rent for 2 bed properties in Stockport in the private rented market is £997. To be eligible for social housing the household gross income must be less than £3,323 per month.

Exceptional circumstances, such as needing a fully adapted property, can be considered in adjusting these levels on an individual basis.

Savings and Equity

- All eligible owner-occupiers will be accepted on to the housing register. If an applicant can meet their own housing requirements through equity or savings, no local priority points will be awarded.
- Applicants are judged to be able to meet their own housing needs where the level of their savings or any equity in a property they own, is in excess of the equity/savings threshold (see below). It is considered this would be sufficient for a significant deposit towards purchasing a property, or to privately rent a suitable property at the Local Housing Allowance rate for a period of five years or more.
- The equity/savings threshold is calculated annually on 1 April, using the local housing allowance rate (LHA) for a three-bedroom property as an indicative guideline of affordability.

⁶ The average rent by No. of bedrooms is produced monthly by the ONS. See link below – go to section 7 and select Stockport in the drop-down menu:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/privaterentandhousepricesuk/march2025>

- The calculation is as follows: Either LHA (at 1 April) x 52 weeks x 5 years, OR £50,000 whichever is the greater. For example, if the LHA for a 3-bedroomed property was £150 per week, the equity/savings threshold will be £150 x 52 weeks (per year) x 5 years = £39,000. This is less than £50,000 so the savings/equity threshold is £50,000
- Applicants who exceed the equity/savings threshold but have medical needs or a disability requiring the need for specifically designed or adapted property that would be unaffordable at the set equity/savings level will be awarded housing need points.

3.4.1. **Property Equity Valuation**

To demonstrate the value of the equity in their property, all homeowners applying to join the register should provide a formal valuation (available free of charge from most estate agents) and a redemption statement (or details of any outstanding mortgage payments).

3.4.2. **Income / Affordability**

All applicants on being offered a property will need to provide proof of all income as part of affordability assessments. Failure to provide all required information within the timescale given will result in any property offer being withdrawn.

3.4.3. **Savings**

To demonstrate their savings level, applicants will be asked to declare, on the application form, the amount of any savings they have. Evidence may be required as part of affordability assessments.

3.4.4. **Re-assessment of equity value**

Any homeowner who wants a re-assessment of their equity value will need to supply a new property valuation and redemption statement dated after the re-calculation of the new figure in April.

3.4.5. **Medical needs or disability requiring specifically designed or adapted property.**

Any homeowner who declares a medical need or the need for specifically designed or adapted property will be assessed to determine what requirements exist.

All applications will be considered having regard to the assessed need, suitability of their existing property for adaptation and the availability of resources to conduct works, through for example mandatory disabled facilities grants. Where resources exist to complete required works, including savings or equity, then no points will be awarded. Where resources do not exist or

cannot be accessed then the applicant will receive points as if they were not a homeowner.

3.4.6. *Sale of property*

Any homeowner offered a council tenancy will be expected to dispose of any property in their ownership and produce documentary evidence of their intent to this effect prior to sign-up (e.g., correspondence from solicitors, estate agents or other similar body). Failure to provide this information will result in any offer being withdrawn.

3.4.7. *Assessment of equity and savings level*

A Property Management Manager will be responsible for making any judgements relating to the standard of evidence required relating to valuations and property prices.

3.5 Applicants under 18 years of age

Applications from people aged 16 and 17 years will be included on the housing register, however, applicants will not be made live until they have reached the age of 18 years. These applications will accrue time on list points.

However, an applicant under 18 years of age will be considered for rehousing where they have had a full homelessness duty accepted by the local authority, or they are a care leaver offered a tenancy in agreement with social care.

4. Maximising use of available stock

4.1 Bedroom Matching

To make the best use of housing stock and ensure that tenancies are affordable to those in receipt of housing benefit or Universal Credit, the Council will not usually consider applicants for properties that have more bedrooms than their assessed need. Information on the assessment of bedroom need is detailed in the Bedroom Need and Points Entitlement Matrix in section 7. This is based upon the 'Bedroom Standard' outlined in the 2012 DCLG Allocations Code of Guidance, although two siblings of the same sex aged over 16 are expected to share a bedroom.

Applicants will be considered for properties one bedroom smaller than their assessed bedroom need, if these are at least one bedroom (or parlour that could be used as a bedroom) larger than their current property, and this will not lead to statutory overcrowding. For example, a household with a need for a four-bed property but living in a two bed, would be eligible for a three bed (or two bed parlour type), if this would not lead to statutory overcrowding.

Where an applicant is pregnant with their first child, or where a subsequent pregnancy means the household will be overcrowded when it is born, then applicants will be assessed as requiring an additional bedroom. While potential affordability issues will be discussed with applicants, as any housing benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs Element shortfall will be limited in timescale, the additional bedroom allocation will be automatic.

4.1.1. **Medical Need**

Medical assessments will only be completed for household members who are permanently resident with the main applicant on a fulltime basis.

Following a medical assessment an applicant may be deemed eligible for an extra bedroom due to needing overnight care, or for exceptional medical reasons. Often an extra bedroom may be desirable on medical grounds, but due to the shortage of larger properties will only be agreed if assessed as medically essential and without this there would be a demonstrable deterioration on the health of the applicant or applicants household.

Where this is the case any affordability issues will be discussed with the applicant, although would not restrict the additional bedroom eligibility.

4.2 **Age restrictions**

Age restrictions primarily apply to sheltered or category one schemes or those with additional facilities for older people aged over 55+.

Applicants together with anyone to be rehoused with them must meet any advertised age restrictions that are in place. However, there will be some occasions when the age restrictions will be waived depending on the circumstances of household. These are detailed below.

4.2.1. **Age restriction waivers**

Age restrictions will be waived for households under the following circumstances:

- The household contains an applicant with a partner who is aged up to 10 years younger than the age restriction on the property bid for.
- The applicant meets the age restriction but has a live-in carer providing support for either physical or mental health reasons, who does not. The applicant must be in receipt of the middle or high-rate care component of Disability Living Allowance, the daily living component of PIP or Attendance Allowance.
- The applicant does not meet the age restriction but is assessed as being 'vulnerable' (including those with a disability or mental health issues) and their needs cannot otherwise be met. The waiver also applies to bungalows

normally age restricted to 60+. For someone within 10 years of the age restriction this will apply where they would benefit from the accommodation, for younger applicants it will apply where it is essential. The sustainability of sheltered housing schemes and existing tenants will always be considered when permitting any applicant to apply for accommodation where an age restriction is in place.

It is important for new tenants to note that existing age restrictions may be reduced or removed in the future following consultation. For any scheme where an age restriction waiver cannot be applied, this will be stated clearly as part of any advertising process.

4.3 All-adult households

Due to the scarcity of family-type accommodation, families where there are no household members under the age of 18 years old will be entitled to a flat or maisonette only, not a house. Bungalow eligibility will apply dependant on any specified age restrictions in place.

4.4 Foster Carers

The assessment of bedroom need will be done considering any foster children currently placed with the applicant at the time of registration. This acknowledges that although the placement may be short term, if the applicant is a registered foster carer, there is a commitment that further children may be placed there in future.

4.5 Applying for a property smaller than assessed needs.

Applicants will be eligible for properties one bedroom smaller than their assessed need, if this is at least one bedroom (or parlour that could be used as a bedroom) bigger than their current property, *and* this does not lead to statutory overcrowding. For example, a household with a need for a four bed, but living in a two bed would be eligible for a three bed if this would not lead to statutory overcrowding.

4.6 Sheltered housing.

The Council has dedicated several housing schemes identified as sheltered housing. These are groups of self-contained dwellings with linked support and an emergency alarm system. There may also be a communal lounge and laundry. Household members must all be 55+ years, usually with a support need to be considered for these properties. The properties are allocated via CBL (see section 10).

4.7 Category 1 schemes

The Council has several category 1 schemes that have a Carecall warden call system fitted as standard. Household members must all be 55+ to be

considered for these schemes and properties are allocated via CBL (see section 10).

4.8 Local letting policies.

Local letting policies are exceptions to the Council's main allocations policy and work to address tenancy and estate sustainability at locations, or other place-based factors. Whilst most of the main Allocations policy will continue to apply, local lettings policies will include additional criteria that will be considered when letting properties within that area.

Examples of circumstances where local lettings policies might be considered include to promote mixed communities and to manage population density through operating enhanced lettings rules in relation to tackling specific causations of anti-social behaviour including working alongside current tenants to assess the suitability of a prospective new tenant to that specific block or street, including but not limited to tenant panel interviews, and prioritising applicants who are already known to current tenants including friends, colleagues and relatives are all examples of how local lettings policies can be utilised to improve and address sustainability factors with specific locations.

Examples of Local Lettings Policies

Objective	Local Lettings Policy
To promote mixed communities	Prioritising applicants who are current tenants and / or those who demonstrate a community contribution
To promote tenancy satisfaction and estate / block sustainability	Enhanced lettings rules including use of customer panel to interview prospective new tenants. Neighbourhood Housing Officer home visit to prospective new tenants, discussing the features of the offer including any concerns and establishing a positive relationship pre tenancy.

Local lettings policies will be treated as appendices to the main allocations policy.

5. The Priority Scheme

The allocation scheme recognises nine distinct categories of housing need and any application falling into one or more of these is recognised as being 'In Need'

. Applicants not meeting any of these categories are recognised as 'No Housing Need'. Applicants are also given a level of points according to the nature and extent of their needs, plus additional points for factors such as having a local connection or demonstrating a community contribution.

Both transfer and housing register applicants are assessed in the same manner and according to the same priority scheme. The full details of which are outlined below.

6. Priority bands – In Need / No Housing Need

All applicants will be assessed to determine their housing needs and points will be awarded accordingly (see full details of point awards categories below). Applicants will be placed into one of two 'bands' depending on which points they have been awarded.

6.1 In need – Band 1

Applicants awarded points in any one of the following categories will be placed into In Need - Band 1 :

- Under-occupancy.
- Medical, social and welfare.
- Homeless
- Having been in the armed forces and in urgent housing need
- Eligible relevant or former relevant care leaver and in urgent housing need
- Supported accommodation.
- Serious Hazard (disrepair and lack of facilities)
- Overcrowding
- Lodging.

6.2 No housing need (Not in Need) – Band 2.

Applicants not awarded points in any of the above categories, will be placed into No Housing Need – Band 2. These applicants may have been awarded points in other categories including:

- Local connection.
- Demonstrating a community contribution
- Time-on-list

6.3 Prioritising Applicants

When determining priority between applicants who have placed bids for properties (see Choice Based Lettings below), Band 1-Housing Need applicants will always be prioritised above those in Band 2- No Housing Need regardless of the number of points awarded. For example, in the table below an applicant on the Housing Need list with 10 points is prioritised above an applicant on the Not in Housing Need list with 25 points.

Housing Band	Points	Priority
Band 1 Housing Need	40	1 st
Band 1 Housing Need	10	2 nd
Band 2 No Housing Need	25	3 rd
Band 2 No Housing Need	0	4 th

Where two applicants are on the same housing list and have the same points, the one with the earlier date of application will receive greater priority.

7. Points

Applicants will be assessed to determine their circumstances based on the information supplied in the application form, medical assessment form and following additional enquiries where required. Points will be awarded in the categories detailed below. Awards will be cumulative except where otherwise stated.

7.1 Under-occupancy- 25 points

Under-occupancy points are intended to encourage tenants to downsize where they have one or more excess bedrooms (in line with the assessed size of property required under the allocation policy). The points will be awarded to applicants who are tenants of Stockport Homes Limited or housing associations (registered providers of social housing) in Stockport only.

7.2 Homelessness prevention duty accepted – 25 points.

25 points will be awarded to applicants where they are:

- a) being threatened with homelessness within 56 days, and
- b) a duty has been accepted by the local authority under section 195(2) of the 1996 Housing Act i.e., to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness.

The Housing Options Team at Stockport Homes will complete these assessments.

These points do not apply if it is assessed that the applicant is threatened with homelessness because of their own actions, as outlined in section 191 of the 1996 Housing Act.

These points replace all other points except those awarded for local connection, medical reasons, community contribution, care leaver or armed forces urgent rehousing points.

7.3 Homelessness relief duty accepted and in priority need or main duty accepted– 50 points.

50 homelessness points will be awarded to applicants where they are:

- a) assessed as being homeless; and
- b) a duty has been accepted by the local authority that the applicant is eligible for assistance and that reasonable steps must be taken to secure accommodation under 189b of the 1996 Housing Act and the applicant assessed as in a priority need category under section 189 of the 1996 Housing Act: or
- c) a duty has been accepted under s.193 of the 1996 Housing Act that the applicant is unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need.

These points do not apply if it is assessed that the applicant is threatened with homelessness because of their own actions, as outlined in section 191 of the 1996 Housing Act.

These points replace all other points except those awarded for local connection, medical reasons, community contribution, care leaver or armed forces urgent rehousing points.

With the agreement of the applicant and Housing Options Team Leader, a delay in applying points may be agreed to allow further development of independent living skills or clarification of moving group, for example in child residency disputes.

7.4 Homelessness relief duty accepted and not in priority need or final not in priority need homelessness decision made– 30 points.

30 points will be awarded to applicants where they are.

- a) assessed as being homeless; and
- b) a duty has been accepted by the local authority under 189b of the 1996 Housing Act (as above) and the applicant assessed as not in a priority need category under section 189 of the 1996 Housing Act; or
- c) a final homelessness decision has been made that someone is homeless and not in priority need under s.192 of the 1996 Housing Act

These points do not apply if it is assessed that the applicant is threatened with homelessness because of their own actions, as outlined in section 191 of the 1996 Housing Act.

These points replace all other points except those awarded for local connection, medical reasons, community contribution, care leaver or armed forces urgent rehousing points.

7.5 Homelessness relief duty or prevention duty accepted, but because of the applicant's own actions, or final intentionally homeless decision made– 10 points.

10 points will be awarded to applicants where they are assessed as being homeless or threatened with homelessness, but:

- a) they are considered to have made themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness in line with the definition of 'intentionally homeless' under s.191 of the 1996 Housing Act: or
- b) a final homelessness decision has been made that they are intentionally homeless under s.191 of the 1996 Housing Act

Intentionally homeless points replace all other points except those awarded for local connection, medical reasons, community contribution, care leaver or armed forces urgent rehousing points.

7.6 Armed forces urgent rehousing points – 20 points

Where an applicant has been in His Majesty's Regular Armed Forces at some time in the past and completed basic training (as defined in section 374 of the 2006-Armed Forces Act) and is in urgent housing need (assessed as having 25 or more housing need points), then they will receive an extra 20 points. This meets the legal requirement to provide additional preference to those in urgent housing need who have served in the armed forces.

In addition, these points will apply to a partner of someone who has died while serving in the armed forces within the last two years in cases where there is no current or recent spouse or partner.

7.7 Medical, social and welfare points – 10,25 or 50 points

These points are applicable where an applicant has a need to move due to a medical condition, because of harassment or threats of violence, or a requirement to move to a different location to give or receive support.

Households will have their medical, social and welfare needs separately assessed from information supplied on application and medical forms. These will be assessed in accordance with the criteria detailed in the medical, social and welfare points award matrix attached below. All needs identified will be placed into one of three categories as follows:

- Cat 1 – immediate need to move- 50 points.
- Cat 2 – urgent need to move - 25 points.
- Cat 3- need to move - 10 points.

Households will be awarded the points relating to the category in which their needs have been placed, i.e., 10, 25 or 50 points.

However, households with needs identified in more than one category (e.g., medical, and social) will be awarded only those points relating to their highest level of need. For example, if an applicant is assessed with Cat 1 medical needs

plus Cat 3 social needs, they will be awarded 50 points for the Cat 1 medical needs only.

50 medical, social and welfare points can be subjected to specific conditions. Any conditions will be detailed in the points letter to the applicant. For example, 50 social need points they could be awarded to facilitate a move to a different area away from domestic violence. If such conditions were not met e.g., the applicant did not bid for properties outside the area, then the points can be withdrawn.

Only one medical award can be made per household. An assessment will be made for each person if applicable and the highest award will apply. In certain cases, medical points may be conditional and will only apply when bids are placed for a specific type of property, such as ground floor / lift access or adapted (level access shower) properties.

In cases where a customer has multiple medical needs which include mobility problems, a medical award will be made in the appropriate conditional medical award category to ensure any future property will meet their mobility needs.

Medical assessments will only be completed for household members who are permanently resident with the main applicant on a full time basis.

7.7.1 Assessment process

Applicants can complete a self-assessment form to declare how any health, welfare, or social needs issue is impacted by their housing circumstances. This includes personal and family circumstances and environmental factors. Supporting letters from health professionals and other agencies are welcome and will also be considered. A medical assessment will only be completed for household members who are permanently resident with the main applicant on a full time basis.

Information supplied will be assessed and priority awarded by a Property Management Manager. Reassessment can be undertaken at any time should substantively different information be provided, or circumstances change.

7.8 Aged under 25 and is an eligible relevant or former relevant care leaver and in urgent housing need – 20 points.

Where an applicant has been looked after by a local authority and is assessed as having 25 or more housing need points, then they will receive an extra 20 points.

Medical, Social & Welfare Criteria

Medical Need	0 Points	10 Points	25 Points	50 Points
<u>Rationale</u>	No medical condition / medical condition but adequately housed	Where impact of med condition would be reduced by rehousing	Change of accommodation would significantly reduce the impact of the medical condition	Emergency / life threatening / terminal situation. Indicates an urgent need for rehousing into suitable accommodation due to severe medical condition.
<u>Evidence to support award</u>		Supportive evidence / treatment required e.g., prescription / GP print out	Supportive evidence of high level of treatment required e.g., prescription & evidence of other additional agency involvement	Face to face interview or home visit & supportive evidence / treatment required e.g., prescription & additional info from healthcare professional
No medical condition – e.g., pregnancy	-	-	-	-
Depression/ Anxiety	Mild depression / anxiety – no medication, pointed elsewhere for circumstances (e.g., Overcrowding, social need)	Depression / anxiety receiving treatment (e.g., medication or counselling / CBT / Talking Therapies)	Elevated level of treatment e.g., Medication & other agency (e.g., Mental health team) involvement. May consider specific factors such as social isolation or traumatic event, etc.	Elevated level of treatment & evidence from mental health professional (e.g., Consultant or CPN). Urgent / emergency need for rehousing from present accommodation
Enduring mental health	Adequately housed	Mental health would be improved by a change of accommodation even if adequately housed. Taking medication or counselling.	Elevated level of treatment e.g., Medication & other agency (e.g., Mental health team) involvement. May consider specific factors such as social isolation or traumatic event, etc. A change of accommodation would significantly reduce or halt deterioration in their mental health.	Elevated level of treatment & evidence from mental health professional (e.g., Consultant or CPN). Urgent / emergency need for rehousing from present accommodation
Elderly mental health	Adequately housed or pointed for situation.	Mental health would be improved by a change of accommodation even if adequately housed.	Applicant is isolated; relocation would significantly improve quality of life. May need to move closer to family for support.	Severe mental health issues, current accommodation causes them to be vulnerable or unable to return to property. May include social isolation.

Medical Need	0 Points	10 Points	25 Points	50 Points
Autistic spectrum disorders including ADHD, Asperger's, Rett's, Autism	Adequately housed. Person with condition has own bedroom. May allocate extra bedroom on medical grounds but no medical award.	Rehousing would reduce impact of condition e.g., Space or safety issues.	Rehousing will significantly reduce impact of condition. Supporting evidence required e.g., CAHMS involvement.	Very urgent / emergency need for rehousing from present accommodation.
Drug / Alcohol issues	Long term issues, no recent change in situation/ /medical treatment	Change of accommodation would alleviate symptoms due to either disabilities or mental health issues associated with abuse or support change in lifestyle.	Change of accommodation would significantly reduce impact of condition which may be due to either disabilities or mental health issues associated with abuse & support a change in lifestyle.	Very urgent / emergency need for rehousing from present accommodation.
Mobility issues	Mobility problems but adequately housed / temporary mobility problems e.g., fracture	Mobility issues – some problems managing stairs within or outside property, or isolation due to property location (e.g., on steep hill). Will consider if medical condition affected by current situation (e.g., Lodging & no access to a bed).	Mobility issues – Evidence of significant difficulty accessing the property and /or facilities within property (e.g., bathroom) and at risk of falls.	Unable to access property or use facilities within property – adaptations are not an option (e.g., Restricted to one floor within property) or causing applicant to be housebound. Unable to return to property after hospital stay.
Bowel/bladder issues	Adequately housed. No restrictions.	Increased toilet needs impacting on access to facilities.	Increased toilet needs & significant restriction in accessing bathroom facilities.	Unable or severely restricted in accessing bathroom facilities. e.g., Use of commode
Epilepsy	Adequately housed, no impact on condition	Stress caused by current accommodation impacting on epilepsy	Change of accommodation would significantly reduce the impact of epilepsy. Use of bathing facilities restricted due to impact of epilepsy.	Very urgent / emergency need for rehousing or unable to return to property.

Medical Need	0 Points	10 Points	25 Points	50 Points
Terminal / degenerative condition / Multiple medical needs	Adequately housed, no impact on medical condition/s.	Impact of medical condition/s would be reduced by rehousing.	Change of accommodation would significantly reduce the impact of the medical condition/s. Consider prognosis.	Very urgent / emergency need for rehousing into suitable accommodation, or unable to return to property. Adaptations are not an option. Consider prognosis.
Other medical conditions not addressed above. E.g., Asthma, COPD, Diabetes, Raynaud's disease	Adequately housed, no restriction in use of all facilities.	Impact of med condition would be reduced by rehousing.	Change of accommodation would significantly reduce the impact of the medical condition.	Very urgent / emergency need for rehousing into suitable accommodation due to medical condition. Unable to use facilities within property – adaptations are not an option. Or unable to return to property after hospital stay.

Social Need	10 Points	25 Points	50 Points
<p>Awards of 10 / 25 Social need points for transfer applicants to be referred to Housing Management or Safer Neighbourhoods Team for assessment and recommendation forwarded to a Property Management Manager for checking and award.</p> <p>For cases to be awarded 50 social need points, these will be referred to the Head of Property Management by the relevant Officer and will be assessed. The referring Officer will be responsible for updating the applicant on the outcome and any follow-on process.</p> <p>Social housing tenants – information required from landlord and passed to a Property</p>	Low level harassment confirmed with agency support.	<p>Customer is victim of sustained harassment / fear of violence which is having serious adverse effect on their quality of life.</p> <p>Written confirmation and agency support (e.g., Social Services, Victim Support, Solicitors, ASB team)</p>	<p>Severe and escalating harassment / actual violence / threat to life and urgent / emergency rehousing is required from current accommodation.</p> <p>Written confirmation and support from police / Safer Neighbourhoods Team Leader / Head of Property Management confirming severe / escalating harassment / actual violence / threat to life and immediate rehousing required.</p>

Social Need	10 Points	25 Points	50 Points
<p>Management Manager for assessment and award.</p> <p>For private tenants / homeowners' full details to be obtained regarding issues and passed to a Property Management Manager for assessment and award.</p>			

Welfare Need	10 Points	25 Points	50 Points
<p><u>To give or receive support.</u> Welfare need can be considered where an applicant has a need to give or receive support or otherwise would face hardship unless able to move to a different part of the Borough (e.g., cooking, shopping, cleaning, assistance with personal care / hygiene).</p> <p>Ability to travel must be considered. Each case will be assessed on its merits and when travel is not a practical option (e.g., if applicant lives in Blackpool and wants to provide support to relative in Stockport on daily basis).</p> <p><u>For employment related hardship</u> Award of 10 welfare need points can also be considered for applicants from inside or outside the borough, who need to move to Stockport, or a different locality in Stockport, to take-up employment or move closer to,</p>	<p>Some level of support is being received from social services (shopping, cooking, cleaning)</p> <p>Written support from social services detailing support received is necessary.</p> <p>If need is related to isolation evidence from relevant agency (CPN, social worker) with details of isolation and effect on applicant.</p> <p>May also be appropriate for child with special needs who needs to move closer to specialist school or to receive medical treatment. Ability to travel would be considered.</p> <p>Evidence of employment, including length of contract, number of weekly hours and evidence of genuine intention to take-up the post supplied.</p>		<p>Where an applicant needs to move to a different property or location to permanently care for a child currently in care or otherwise deemed to be immediately at risk of being accommodated by the local authority. Only awarded upon the recommendation of a social care service manager with agreement from the Head of Property Management as part of a court approved placement. Agreement may be given where on the balance of probability a Court will agree the placement, rather than an order made.</p>

7.8.1. *Delayed Discharges- 50 points.*

50 points will be awarded to applicants facing delayed discharge from hospital and care. This usually means they are an inpatient within a hospital, have completed their medical treatment, do not need specialist supported accommodation (e.g., residential care) but remain in a hospital bed at the request of medical authorities due to concern they would be discharged without access to suitable accommodation. Equally this applies where an applicant is in a residential care unit, they do not need and are deemed able to live independently in the community. By continuing to occupy a bedspace under such circumstances, applicants prevent allocation of bed space to individuals with clinical or high-level needs. These replace all other points except those awarded for local connection, medical reasons, community contribution, aged under 25 looked after child or armed forces urgent rehousing points.

7.8.2. *Leaving supported accommodation: With dependent children- 50 points/ Without children- 30 points*

Leaving supported accommodation points address a similar issue to delayed discharges by enabling those who have completed a programme of support at a supported housing project), to move-on to independence, also freeing up scarce supported accommodation. Evidence that a support programme had been completed would be required from the relevant provider and agreed by a Property Management Manager

Points will not be awarded for support programmes completed by homeless applicants, i.e., residents in Brindale House, Strathclyde House, Buxton Road, or other temporary accommodation provided by any other Local Authority or Housing Provider as they will have priority according to their homelessness status.

There are two levels of supported accommodation points for applicants leaving supported accommodation, 50 points for those with dependent children or aged under 21 and leaving care and 30 for those without.

Supported Accommodation points replace all other points except those awarded for local connection, medical reasons, community contribution, aged under 25 looked after child or armed forces urgent rehousing points.

7.8.3. *Awarding of supported accommodation points*

Supported accommodation points will be awarded by a Property Management Manager

7.9 Serious Hazard (serious disrepair or lack of facilities) - 30 points

Applicants will receive 30 points if their property is either lacking facilities or is in serious disrepair. Points will be awarded in one category only, even if the property is both lacking facilities and in serious disrepair.

7.9.1. ***Lack of facilities***

30 serious disrepair / lack of facilities points will be awarded if there is no internal toilet, bathing facility or running hot water where the applicant is currently living.

Points will only be awarded where the facility is lacking and not when the facility is temporarily out of use/under repair.

If applicants are currently residing in a caravan, tent or a car on a driveway/garden or caravan site with access to facilities, lack of facility points will not be awarded.

Points will only be awarded when confirmation is received from landlord or Housing Standards

Serious disrepair points

7.9.1.1 *Property Condition represents a Serious Hazard- 30 points.*

Applicants will receive 30 points if the condition of their accommodation is assessed to represent a serious (category 1) hazard, AND that hazard cannot be easily remedied.

7.9.1.2 *Assessment of Serious Hazard*

The property will be assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This system is prescribed by Central Government and was introduced in the Housing Act 2004 to form the cornerstone of all housing standards. The HHSRS considers the potential effect of 29 distinct types of hazard, covering all aspects of the property, with serious hazards being categorised as 'category 1'. Serious hazards could include significant disrepair such that the property is dangerous, or missing amenities, such as no inside toilet.

7.9.1.3 *Assessment as to whether the Serious Hazard can be easily remedied.*

Whilst an assessed hazard may have serious implications for the health or safety of occupants or visitors, in most cases the works required to minimise the risk can be undertaken at relatively low cost and with minimal disruption. Although each case must be judged on its merits, two tests will be applied in all cases, for the points to be awarded, as follows:

- *Test 1*

Can the works to address the Serious Hazard(s) be conducted for less than 10% of the property value, or do the physical limitations of the structure mean that it is not possible to reduce the seriousness of the hazard from category 1 to category 2? Even where the estimated cost of necessary repairs exceeds 10% of the property value, points will not be awarded if financial assistance to substantially offset the cost is available through the Council's approved Private Sector Investment & Assistance Policy, or buildings insurance. The 10% Rule may, however, be set aside where a claim for exceptional hardship waiver is accepted, i.e., the estimated cost of necessary repairs is less than 10% of the property value but the applicant is able to demonstrate that they are unable to meet the cost from resources or borrowing.

- *Test 2*

Can the works be conducted without the need for the occupants to move out for a prolonged period. All building works will involve some level of disruption, but where the risks to the health or safety of the occupants are so great that it is not reasonable to expect the occupants to remain in situ, and that the risk is likely to be for a prolonged period, consideration will be given to awarding the additional points.

The type of works that are likely to meet these criteria will be varied, but may include rampant dry rot, or significant structural instability requiring extensive rebuilding. Examples of cases where it may not be feasible to undertake works may include basement flats with limited headroom or with no natural light.

7.9.1.4 *Evidence: Housing Health & Safety Rating System*

- Non-Stockport Council tenants (private, housing association, local authority):* If living in Stockport, such applicants must have first contacted their landlord and Stockport Council's Environmental Health Team. Confirmation of Serious Hazards identified, and whether these can be easily remedied will be sought from Environmental Health by staff responsible for the application. If living outside Stockport, the applicant must have contacted their own local housing authority over the possibility of pursuing enforcement action for the hazards and contact details of the authority must be given so that staff dealing with the application can seek confirmation.
- Stockport Council tenants:* Only in the most extreme circumstances will Serious Hazard points be applicable as the Authority will almost invariably remedy identified hazards regardless of cost. Should a Serious Hazard arise, the matter will be referred to the Head of Housing Management with a request for feedback confirming work in hand.
- Owner-occupiers:* Full information on the state of the property and itemised estimates for the costs of the works would normally be provided from an authoritative professional source such as a chartered surveyor, structural engineer or architect. In addition, in all cases where it is considered likely that a Serious Hazard exists, the property will be further

assessed by the Councils Housing Standards Team for possible enforcement action.

7.9.1.5 *Authority to award*

The decision as to whether to award Serious Hazard points will be made by a Property Management Manager following receipt and consideration of all relevant supporting information as detailed above.

7.10 **Overcrowding- 15 points per bedroom**

Applicants will receive 15 points for each bedroom they lack. An applicant lacks a bedroom if their 'bedroom need' is greater than their 'available bedrooms.'

7.10.1. ***Available bedrooms***

Information on bedrooms currently available to the household is obtained from the application form, information from partner agencies and by home visits where needed.

7.10.2. ***Bedroom Need- 'Standard households'***

'Standard households' are those with immediate family members only, i.e. the applicant and any partner or children they may have living with them permanently.

Bedroom need for standard households is calculated by assessing the circumstances of the applicant, including the age and sex of household members and any medical or support needs. This is done in line with the Bedroom Need and Points Entitlement Matrix outlined below.

This matrix calculates one bedroom need for each of the following:

- The applicant and their partner.
- Two of the applicant's children of the same sex, irrespective of age.
- Two of the applicant's children of different sexes, if both are under-10 years old.
- Any single child of the applicant not paired as above.

7.10.3. ***Bedroom need- 'Non-standard households'***

'Non-standard' households are those with one or more non-immediate family members in addition to the applicant, partner, or their children, i.e., the applicant's mother, father, brother, sister, granddaughter, grandson, carer, other female relative, other male relative, no relation or unknown are non-immediate family.

Non-immediate family members aged 18+ years will be assessed as needing their own bedroom (except for couples). For example, a household with an applicant, their daughter and mother would be assessed as needing three bedrooms: one for the applicant, one for the daughter and one for the mother, because the mother is categorised as non-immediate family, and would not be expected to share with either of the others.

Non-immediate family members can nominate to share if they prefer, reducing their bedroom need and thereby often increasing their housing options.

Non-immediate family children will be treated the same as children from standard households (as detailed above). For example, two nephews of the applicant (u-18 years old) would be expected to share with each other, and a niece of the applicant would be expected to share with the applicant's daughter (both u-18 years old). Stockport Council will automatically group these household members together when assessing household needs.

7.10.4. ***Bedroom need- Medical and support needs***

Some applicants have medical or support needs which exceptionally give rise to a need for an extra bedroom. Examples include an extra bedroom for a carer providing overnight support or to locate medical equipment such as a ventilator or dialysis machine. Such medical or support needs will be identified following a medical assessment by a Property Management Manager, in response to information received on the medical form.

7.10.5. ***Pregnancy***

Pregnant applicants will be assessed as having a need for an additional bedroom only where the new-born child would give rise to a new bedroom need, i.e., where there are no existing children or there are an even number of children in the household (the sex of the child will not be a factor until it is born).

7.10.6. ***Definition of a child***

For the purposes of this procedure a child is defined as anybody below the age of 18 years of age.

Bedroom Need and Points Entitlement Matrix- 'Standard Households' (Families with children)

Adults	Number of Children	Sex of children (In full care & control)	Pregnant	Current Bedrooms	Bids accepted for:	Homechoice bed req	Points
Single	1 child	(1)	Y or N	0 beds lodger	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	30 points
Single	1 child	(1)	Y or N	0 beds studio	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	15 points
Couple	1 child	(1)	Y or N	0 beds lodger	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	30 points
Couple	1 child	(1)	Y or N	0 beds studio	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	1 child	(1)	Y or N	1 bed	1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	1 child	(1)	Y or N	>1 bed	1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(2)	N	0 beds	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(2)	N	1 bed	1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(2)	N	>1 bed	1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(2)	Y	0 beds	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(2)	Y	1 bed	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(2)	Y	2 bed	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(2)	Y	>2 bed	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [both <10 years]	N	0 beds	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [both <10 years]	N	1 bed	1P or 2 bed	2 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [both <10 years]	N	>1 bed	1P or 2 bed	2 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [both <10 years]	Y	0 beds	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [both <10 years]	Y	1 bed	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [both <10 years]	Y	2 bed	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [both <10 years]	Y	>2 bed	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [1 or both >10 years]	Y or N	0 beds	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [1 or both >10 years]	Y or N	1 bed	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [1 or both >10 years]	Y or N	2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	10 points
Single or Couple	2 children	(1&1) [1 or both >10 years]	Y or N	>2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	3 children	(3) or (2&1)	Y or N	0 beds	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	30 points

Adults	Number of Children	Sex of children (In full care & control)	Pregnant	Current Bedrooms	Bids accepted for:	Homechoice bed req	Points
Single or Couple	3 children	(3) or (2&1)	Y or N	1 beds	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	20 points
Single or Couple	3 children	(3) or (2&1)	Y or N	2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	10 points
Single or Couple	3 children	(3) or (2&1)	Y or N	>2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(4) or (2&2)	N	0 beds	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(4) or (2&2)	N	1 bed	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(4) or (2&2)	N	2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(4) or (2&2)	N	>2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(4) or (2&2)	Y	0 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(4) or (2&2)	Y	1 bed	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(4) or (2&2)	Y	2 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(4) or (2&2)	Y	3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(4) or (2&2)	Y	>3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [1 of each <10 years]	N	0 beds	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [1 of each <10 years]	N	1 bed	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [1 of each <10 years]	N	2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [1 of each <10 years]	N	>2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	0 bed	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	1 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	2 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	>3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	0 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	1 bed	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	2 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	4 children	(3&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	4 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	5 children	(5) or (4&1) or (3&2)	Y or N	0 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	5 children	(5) or (4&1) or (3&2)	Y or N	1 bed	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	45 points

Adults	Number of Children	Sex of children (In full care & control)	Pregnant	Current Bedrooms	Bids accepted for:	Homechoice bed req	Points
Single or Couple	5 children	(5) or (4&1) or (3&2)	Y or N	2 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	5 children	(5) or (4&1) or (3&2)	Y or N	3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	5 children	(5) or (4&1) or (3&2)	Y or N	>3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	N	0 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	40 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	N	1 bed	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	N	2 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	20 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	N	3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	10 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	N	>3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	Y	0 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	75 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	Y	1 bed	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	Y	2 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	Y	3 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	Y	4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(6) or (4&2)	Y	>4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	N	0 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	N	1 bed	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	N	2 beds	2P, 3 bed, 3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	N	3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	N	>3 beds	3P, 4 bed or 4P	4 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	0 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	75 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	1 bed	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	2 bed	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	3 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [1 of each <10 years]	Y	>4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	0 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	75 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	1 bed	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	2 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	45 points

Adults	Number of Children	Sex of children (In full care & control)	Pregnant	Current Bedrooms	Bids accepted for:	Homechoice bed req	Points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	3 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	6 children	(3&3) or (5&1) [all >10 years]	Y or N	>4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	7 children	(7) or (6&1) or (5&2) or (4&3)	Y or N	0 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	75 points
Single or Couple	7 children	(7) or (6&1) or (5&2) or (4&3)	Y or N	1 bed	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	7 children	(7) or (6&1) or (5&2) or (4&3)	Y or N	2 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	7 children	(7) or (6&1) or (5&2) or (4&3)	Y or N	3 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	7 children	(7) or (6&1) or (5&2) or (4&3)	Y or N	4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	7 children	(7) or (6&1) or (5&2) or (4&3)	Y or N	>4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	N	0 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	75 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	N	1 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	N	2 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	N	3 beds	3P, 4 bed, 4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	N	4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	N	>4 beds	4P, 5 bed or 5P	5 bed	0 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	Y	0 beds	4P, 5 bed, 5P, 6 bed or 6P	6 bed	90 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	Y	1 beds	4P, 5 bed, 5P, 6 bed or 6P	6 bed	75 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	Y	2 beds	4P, 5 bed, 5P, 6 bed or 6P	6 bed	60 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	Y	3 beds	4P, 5 bed, 5P, 6 bed or 6P	6 bed	45 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	Y	4 beds	4P, 5 bed, 5P, 6 bed or 6P	6 bed	30 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	Y	5 beds	5P, 6 bed or 6P	6 bed	15 points
Single or Couple	8 children	(8) or (4&4) or (6&2)	Y	>5 beds	5P, 6 bed or 6P	6 bed	0 points

P= Parlour type property (or second living room). Families with children (u16) will be entitled to houses, flats, maisonettes, or bungalows.

Other households (no children)

Adults	Children	Pregnant	Current bedrooms	Bids accepted for:	Home choice bed req	Points	Property type entitlement
Single	0 children	N	Studio	Studio or 1 bed	1 bed	0 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single	0 children	N	0 beds (lodger)	Studio or 1 bed	1 bed	15 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Couple	0 children	N	Studio	1 bed	1 bed	15 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Couple	0 children	N	0 beds (lodger)	1 bed	1 bed	15 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple	0 children	N	>0 beds	1 bed	1 bed	0 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single (med. need)	0 children	N	Studio	2 bed	2 bed	15 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Couple (med. need)	0 children	N	Studio	2 bed	2 bed	30 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple (med. need)	0 children	N	0 beds (lodger)	2 bed	2 bed	30 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple (med. need)	0 children	N	1 beds	2 bed	2 bed	15 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple (med. need)	0 children	N	>1 beds	2 bed	2 bed	0 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single (med. need)	0 children	Y	Studio	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	30 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Couple (med. need)	0 children	Y	Studio	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	45 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple (med. need)	0 children	Y	0 beds (lodger)	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	45 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple (med. need)	0 children	Y	1 beds	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	30 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple (med. need)	0 children	Y	2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	15 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple (med. need)	0 children	Y	>2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	0 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single	0 children	Y	Studio	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	15 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple	0 children	Y	0 beds (lodger)	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	30 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple	0 children	Y	> 0 beds	1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	15 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single	0 children	Y	Studio	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	15 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Couple	0 children	Y	Studio	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	30 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow

Single or Couple	0 children	Y	0 beds (lodger)	1 bed, 1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	30 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple	0 children	Y	1 bed	1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	15 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Single or Couple	0 children	Y	>1 bed	1P, 2 bed or 2P	2 bed	0 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Two adults (no rel.)	0 children	N	Studio or lodger	2 beds	2 bed	30 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Two adults (no rel.)	0 children	N	1 bed	2 beds	2 bed	15 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Two adults (no rel.)	0 children	N	>1 bed	2 beds	2 bed	0 points	Flat/maisonette/bungalow
Two adults (no rel.)	0 children	Y	Studio or lodger	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	45 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Two adults (no rel.)	0 children	Y	1 bed	1P, 2 bed, 2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	30 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Two adults (no rel.)	0 children	Y	2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	15 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow
Two adults (no rel.)	0 children	Y	>2 beds	2P, 3 bed or 3P	3 bed	0 points	House/flat/maisonette/bungalow

Families with children or pregnant applicants will be entitled to flats houses maisonettes or bungalows.

7.11 Lodging - 10 points

Applicants will be awarded 10 points for lodging. An applicant is lodging if they are sleeping in somebody else's home. This could be either family (e.g., parents), or non-family members (e.g., friends, extended family, or ex-partners family). They may or may not pay rent.

7.12 Community Contribution - 10 points

Applicants will be awarded 10 points for making a community contribution where working, volunteering, training, fostering, or acting as a registered carer in receipt of the relevant benefits. This applies to any applicant who is:

- employed or self-employed:
 - ✓ An average of 16 hours per week as a guideline- but where ability to work is restricted due to a disability or caring responsibility must just be 'genuine and effective' relative to personal circumstances.
 - ✓ To include people with an employment contract but currently on maternity or similar leave
- volunteering with:
 - ✓ A registered charity, community association or other organisation providing a non-commercial, demonstrable social benefit.
 - ✓ for an average of eight hours per week as a guideline - but where ability to do voluntary work is restricted due to a disability or caring responsibility must just be 'genuine and effective' relative to personal circumstances.
- in a recognised apprenticeship or vocationally related training for 16 hours per week as a guideline but where ability to attend courses is restricted due to a disability or caring responsibility must just be a recognised course requiring regular engagement, considering all personal circumstances.
- a carer in receipt of a carers allowance
- a registered foster carer

Individual circumstances and restrictions on an applicant's ability to meet the above criteria due to disability, caring requirements, childcare or other factors will be considered and varied in agreement with a Property Management Manager.

7.13 Time on list- 5 points per full year on the housing register up to a maximum of 25 points

Applicants (excluding homeless applicants) will be awarded five points per full year they are on the register up to a maximum of 25 points.

7.14 Local connection points (100 points)

100 local connection points will be awarded to applicants who have had a main homelessness duty accepted by the local authority (or a relief duty and in priority need), the applicant or the applicants deceased partner (with no current partner applying as part of the moving group) have been discharged from the armed forces at any point, eligible, relevant or former relevant children (care leavers aged 16 to 24 who have spent a period of, or periods amounting to, at least 13 weeks in care in England or Wales since their 14th birthday, of which at least one day was since attaining the age of 16) or the applicant meets all-three of the following conditions.

- They have not terminated a SHG / SMBC tenancy in the past 12 months.
- They have a local connection to Stockport.
- They cannot meet their housing needs through their income, savings, or equity in a property they own.

Full details of each of these conditions are provided below:

7.14.1. *Termination of tenancy - 12-month rule*

Local connection points will not be awarded to applicants that have voluntarily terminated a Stockport Council or SHG tenancy in the past 12 months.

This will not apply if an applicant has left the tenancy due to domestic abuse or for any other exceptional reasons.

This will not apply to existing tenants who transfer to another Stockport Council / SHG tenancy and reapply for rehousing within 12mths.

7.14.2. *A local connection to Stockport*

The applicant must have a local connection to Stockport. This is defined as follows.

- The applicant is currently living in Borough, and either:
 - Has done so for at least six of the last 12 months, or for at least three of the last five years, OR:
 - Has close relatives (mother, father, sister, brother, or adult children) who have been living in the Borough for at least five years, OR:
- The applicant is currently living inside or outside of the Borough, but either:
 - Has lived within the Borough for at least three of the last five years OR:

- Has close relatives within the Borough who have been resident for at least five years OR:
- Has employment (or a formal offer of employment) in the Borough. Employment is defined as a contract, not voluntary but including apprenticeships, of greater than 12 months and greater than 16 hours per week, which is not ancillary to work in another local authority's district. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate they have a genuine intention to take-up the employment; .

8. Applicants considered outside of the priority scheme.

In some pre-defined circumstances, properties will be withheld from the Homechoice system and let directly to applicants. These are minimised but will depend upon prevailing demand.

These situations include:

8.1 Priority homeless applicants

At the time that a relief duty under the 1996 Housing Act is accepted towards someone who is priority need and unintentionally homeless, their Housing Options Officer will submit a request to withhold a property from advertising for direct letting to the applicant (a withheld property). This is to help free up the temporary / interim accommodation and to minimise the time spent there by applicants.

Applicants can continue to bid for properties after a withheld request has been made, however refusal of any reasonable offer after this time, whether bid for or withheld, will result in discharge of the relevant duty and the homelessness points being removed. After removal, applicants can continue to bid for properties if they are eligible, however, they will be assessed in accordance with their current living arrangements.

An offer could be of any location and property type considered suitable for the applicant and their family, dealt with in date order. The aim is to prevent / address homelessness and applicants will be informed by their Housing Options Officer that area and property specific requests will not be considered due to demand and supply.

All relevant paperwork will be referred to the Property Management Team, who will retain a local list of referred applicants in order of date received (earliest first). When properties become available, these will be allocated to the applicant who is top of the local list however balancing having properties to advertise and making direct offers to homeless or other exceptional cases will be managed by the Property Management Managers.

Homelessness points are only applicable while a homelessness duty exists and will be removed should that duty end at any point (for example becoming intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation provided).

8.2 Special needs applicants- Direct letting quotas

Each year a small number of properties will be withheld for direct letting to applicants with exceptional special needs who may not qualify for medical rehousing priority status but have an identified urgent medical or social need. These cases will be identified under joint working agreements by one of three 'Special Needs Groups detailed below:

8.2.1 *Young People Leaving Care*

Properties are made available for direct letting to young people leaving or having recently left care and in need. The number will vary from year-to-year depending on the number of young people leaving care that year. A multi-agency working group will meet to select those young people for whom a request will be made. Rehousing requests will be made in accordance with the 'Partnership agreement between SHG and Children and Young People Service to Respond to Young People with Accommodation Needs.'

8.2.2 *Mental Health Group*

Up to six tenancies will be available per year for direct letting to applicants with severe and enduring mental health issues whose needs cannot be met through the existing Homechoice system. A multi-agency working group (in accordance with the Mental Health Rehousing Protocol), will meet to identify suitable applicants in accordance with a written agreement.

8.2.3 *Applicants with learning difficulties, sensory impairments or needs arising from neurodiversity.*

Up to six tenancies will be available per year for direct letting to applicants with learning difficulties or sensory impairments, whose needs cannot be met through the existing Homechoice system. Requests will be received from Learning Disabilities and Social Care.

8.2.4 *Requests for rehousing*

When one of the above groups identifies a person with special needs for whom they wish a property to be made available, they will make a request to a Property Management Manager who will arrange for a full housing options interview with the applicant to determine their suitability as a future tenant.

Once the applicant has been accepted, the Housing Options Team will then request that the Property Management Team withhold a property from Homechoice for direct letting as detailed in section 9.9.7 below.

8.3 Urgent Social Medical or Welfare Need Cases

Properties can be withheld from Homechoice advertising for direct letting to urgent social, medical and welfare cases. This applies to cases where applicants have been awarded a maximum 50 points, but this has not accelerated re-housing into more suitable accommodation. In some cases, applicants may not be awarded 50 points but it is agreed a direct offer is required to resolve an emergency or urgent housing situation.

In cases of social need an offer would just be on a 'like for like' basis (meaning if the applicant is living in a 2 bed multi the offer would be a 2 bed multi), with applicants otherwise able to apply through Homechoice if requiring a larger home for overcrowding reasons. Urgent cases look to address the reason for the urgent move and not any additional rehousing circumstances. One offer only will be made in these circumstances and refusal by the applicant will see any award of 50 social need points removed plus no further direct offer made.

8.4 Applicants requiring wheelchair-accessible adapted properties.

A wheelchair-accessible property is one that contains two or more 'major' adaptations making suitable for applicants needing a home of that nature. A major adaptation is one that cost £500 or more to install (for example, a level access shower, a stair lift, or a through floor lift).

Wheelchair accessible properties will mainly be withheld for direct letting outside the Homechoice system by a joint panel of officers from SHG and Social Care, known as the Adapted Homes Panel

8.4.1 Offer and refusal of a wheelchair-accessible property.

The Occupational Therapist will email a list of the applicants selected by the Adapted Homes Panel to the Property Management Team, who will offer any property to the first applicant on the list. If that applicant refuses the offer, the property must be offered to the next applicant until the list is exhausted.

If the list of applicants has been exhausted, the Property Management Team must check with the Occupational Therapist to ensure that there are no further applicants. If there are no further applicants, the wheelchair-accessible property will then be advertised through the Homechoice scheme and prioritised for applicants with a need for an adapted property.

The Property Management Team will advise any incoming applicant that the adaptation is fixed and cannot be removed.

8.5 Extra care schemes / Supported Housing Schemes

'Extra Care' and 'Supported housing' schemes such as Birch Court in Marple will be withheld from advertising for direct letting to applicants who have an assessed need for a property of that nature.

8.6 Compulsory purchase

The Council is under a statutory duty to re-house people displaced by Compulsory Purchase Orders. It will seek to satisfy these needs as a priority.

In providing alternative accommodation the needs of the tenant or owner-occupier will be considered. In general, occupiers will be offered a property on a "like for like" basis as regards the size and type of accommodation.

8.7 Under-occupancy

To maximise use of stock, direct offers may be made to social housing tenants moving to a smaller home which can reasonably be used to rehouse a family in need.

8.8 Hard to let properties.

If a property has been advertised once through Homechoice and has not been let due to lack of demand a Property Management Manager can withhold the property from any further Homechoice advertising and let directly to an applicant who is not from a Homechoice bidding shortlist.

8.9 Sheltered scheme transfer to ground floor flats.

In a sheltered scheme where a current resident lives on the first floor and has a significant (25 point) medical need for ground floor, then a ground floor flat can be withheld for them within that scheme. Only one in three ground floor flats in each scheme becoming vacant may be allocated on this basis. If two residents both qualify, suitable flats will be allocated to the one with the highest points/earliest date of application.

8.10 Circumstances not covered by the Priority Scheme

The priority scheme reflects all the reasonable preference groups outlined in Part 6 of the 1996 Act, but unfortunately due to lack of supply many people will never be allocated a property even if in very high levels of housing need.

In very limited situations, some applications may exhibit unique circumstances that are not reflected in the Policy. This may be recognised at initial assessment stage or can be brought to the attention of the Registration Team by a service manager at Social Care or team leader at SHG. This does not include reviewing cases where the applicant is simply unsuccessful in bidding due to a lack of supply and high demand.

In these circumstances, such cases are referred to Special Housing Panel consisting of senior Stockport Homes, Stockport Council and Stockport Council Social Care Officers. The Panel decision is final. Cases can only be referred to Panel by Stockport Homes staff (namely Neighbourhood Housing team and Safer Neighbourhood team) or by Stockport Adult or Children's

Social Care. Applicants cannot self-refer to Panel. Cases being referred by Social Care involving current SHG tenants must involve the Neighbourhood Housing Officer. All cases being referred by Social Care not involving a current SHG tenant will be vetted by a Property Management Manager to ensure they meet the threshold for Panel and that all other housing options have been considered. Examples of the limited scenarios heard by Panel:

Existing SHG/Council tenants being directly offered a ‘like for like move’.

A direct transfer offer agreed to a similar property type/size where a tenancy is deemed unsustainable due to significant risk to the tenant or others. This would have no net impact on available property numbers or types to let through the housing register and may be conditional upon clearing rent arrears or improving property condition.

For example: A vulnerable tenant has been repeatedly exploited at an address and has become a target for organised crime. Safer Neighbourhoods and Greater Manchester Police will support a move.

Safeguarding or other issues

Where an applicant of any tenure presents with a situation that cannot be reflected through the priority scheme and presents a degree of housing need significantly exceeding that of other applicants likely to apply for properties. In which cases a direct offer may be agreed.

For example: Child protection action is being initiated that has the probability of leading to a child being taken into the care of the local authority unless moving to a different address and other housing options have been exhausted.

Offers will be final in nature, solely seeking to resolve the unique presenting issue and not address all housing needs. Details of all accepted cases will be monitored by Stockport Council and will be used to inform any future policy changes.

If the Panel disagrees that exceptional circumstances exist, then an applicant still has the option to ask for a review of their application priority, with all decisions by the Council considering whether all factors have been considered.

This approach ensures the potential to exercise discretion in exceptional cases is not excluded, while not affecting the overall balance of the Policy and fair and equitable treatment of all applications. All cases considered will be documented and monitored. All cases will only receive one offer of accommodation to resolve their unique circumstances.

9 Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

SHG operates a choice-based lettings scheme, known as 'Homechoice,' for allocating most of its properties. Properties being let at 'social' or 'affordable' rent levels are treated the same way under the allocation policy and through CBL. The Homechoice process is detailed below.

9.1 Advertising of vacancies

Each week details of properties that are available to let (including adapted properties that are not to wheelchair standard) will be advertised from midnight on a Thursday to midnight the following Tuesday on the Stockport Homes Group website and at other locations in Stockport, including libraries and information centres.

9.2 Placing bids

Applicants can notify SHG of their interest in an advertised property by placing a 'bid.' To do this, applicants must be registered on Homechoice (see above). Bids can either be placed by the applicant or their nominated representative. They can be placed in the following ways:

- On the Homechoice website.
- By telephone to SHG on 0161 217 6016.
- By email
- In person at SHG's Cornerstone office at 2 Edward Street
- By 'supported bidding' through Homechoice staff.

Applicants can bid for a maximum of **three** properties per bidding period.

At the end of each bidding period, bids will be automatically system checked to confirm they match the letting criteria for the property. Ineligible bids will not be considered and will not be shortlisted.

9.3 Prioritisation of bids

Bidding closes at midnight on Tuesday and shortlisting will take place the following day. Bidders for each property will be compared against each other, and bidding shortlists will be produced. Applicants on the 'Housing Need' List will be prioritised above applicants on the 'Not in Housing Need' list, regardless of points awarded. Priority within each housing list will then be determined by points and date of application.

9.4 Prioritisation of bids for non-wheelchair-adapted properties

For non-wheelchair adapted properties (and wheelchair adapted properties) advertised, bidders awarded adapted medical points will be prioritised above applicants without these points. These applicants will be compared against each other in the same way as other applicants. Applicants without adapted

medical points will be able to bid for these properties and will be prioritised as normal. For applicants assessed as needing an adapted property, the property they bid for must meet their physical assessed needs. If needs are not met, for example stairlift required but the property has no stairlift, the property will not be offered to the applicant.

9.5 Provisional offers

By 5pm on Wednesday, provisional telephone offers will be made to those applicants at the top of each property shortlist. Confirmation e-mails will be sent the same day. These timescales do not apply for housing association properties as they have their own individual processes.

If the applicant has not accepted the offer within 48 hours, or has refused it, the property will be offered to the next highest bidder until the shortlist is exhausted. Prior to making a provisional offer, the application will be checked and if point levels have changed reducing the applicants priority, the offer will not be made and will be made to the applicant with the next highest level of points, for example, an applicant awarded homeless points at the points of bidding but points then removed due to discharge of duty prior to an offer being made.

Applicants who have bid three times and come top of three shortlists will receive three provisional offers. The applicant must decide which to accept and which to refuse within 24 hours of the offers being made. If any of the properties are ready to let, the applicant must make a decision on the ready to let property at the point of the offer being made.

If an applicant accepts a provisional offer, prior to full acceptance and sign-up, checks (which can include office interview or home visit) will be conducted to ensure the following:

- The applicant's declared circumstances have not changed, and information supplied is correct.
- In the case of transfer visits, a recent and satisfactory home visit has been conducted and recorded.
- If the applicant has a current or previous local authority or housing association tenancy, that up-to-date proof regarding the conduct of their rent account has been obtained plus confirmation of no ongoing ASB action which could deem them ineligible for rehousing.
- The care and residency arrangements of any children to be re-housed as part of the application has been confirmed through evidence of child benefit award / payments etc.

A home visit may be conducted on housing register applicants if further information is required to confirm an applicant's current housing circumstances.

9.6 The withdrawal of provisional offers

Properties are advertised as soon as any indication that a tenancy may be ending is received. For example, in the case of a Notice to Quit being served or a tenant completing a termination form due to moving to an alternative housing provider. In some cases, properties may no longer become available if a customer rescinds their termination form or if a NTQ is withdrawn. A provisional offer may be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- The property is no longer available for letting.
- The applicant is found to be ineligible for the property due a change in their circumstances or having supplied incorrect information on their application. The applicant will be required to complete a new application to update their circumstances, or the application will be cancelled as appropriate.
- The applicant is found to be ineligible for the Housing Register (e.g., because of immigration status or failure to comply with Council Policies). The applicant will be notified in writing and Homechoice will re-consider the eligibility of the application under the eligibility policy.

9.7 Nominations to Housing Associations

Stockport Council has a partnership arrangement with a number Housing Associations owning property in Stockport. These will offer a minimum of 50% of their properties available to let (new and existing), to applicants from the Council's register. Nominations will be made based on every second property that becomes available.

SHG will be notified of vacant properties by email and then nominate an applicant (plus reserves as agreed with the provider) from their waiting list. This will usually be by advertising and shortlisting properties through the Homechoice process, or alternatively one of the exceptions outlined for direct offers within this policy. There is an obligation for a Housing Association to allocate to applicants in the order sent through.

Each member of the partnership will collate information on the outcome of nominations made by SHG and will supply this quarterly on request.

9.8 Bypassing of shortlisted cases

There are three circumstances where applicants who have come top of property shortlists may be bypassed. These are:

- a. If rehoused into the property, there is, or may be a danger of the applicant or a member of their household causing or being subject to harm in the locality where the property is situated.

- b. Rehousing the applicant into the property may prevent the effective management of the locality where it is situated for issues such as past anti-social behaviour.
- c. The applicant is assessed (by the Customer Finance Team or Housing Association) to be unable to afford the rent at the property i.e., after payment of any priority debts (e.g., court fines etc), residual income will not meet basic income support benefit levels.

In situations a & b above, an assessment will be made by the Property Management Team or in situation c by the Customer Finance Team or Housing Association, based on all available evidence.

If it is considered that the case meets one of these definitions, the assessor will consult with the Head of Property Management to ensure consistency of approach with previous cases. In cases of affordability, the current housing circumstances of the applicant will be considered and any final decision to proceed with an offer is with the Head of Property Management.

If it is agreed that the applicant should be bypassed, the Officer responsible (the assessor in examples a. and b. above and a Property Management Manager in affordability cases) will contact and write to the applicant to advise them of the reason and that they have a right of appeal. Any such appeal must be lodged within 24 hours of notification of a bypass, and during this period, the property will be held open for that applicant.

A Council Officer, not involved in the original decision-making process, will conduct the review. The review will take place within 7 days of the request being received.

9.9 Multiple refusals

Applicants who repeatedly refuse offers cause unnecessary administration and increase the cost of empty properties (preventing earlier let to alternative applicants). As a result, applicants making five unreasonable refusals in a six-month period, on the point of the 5th refusal, their application will be closed and a letter will be triggered to the applicant.

Offers made must have been reasonable for the applicant to accept, particularly considering disability related issues and there is a right to a review of the decision to close the application.

Applicants can reapply after a 12-month period or following a significant change in housing need.

10 Allocation reviews and appeals.

Certain decisions made by local authority housing departments are subject to a review process as outlined in the 1996 Housing Act and 2002 Homelessness Act.

This procedure will outline the decisions that are subject to the right to a review and procedures that need to be followed. These include the following.

- Housing Register- eligibility
- Decisions affecting the allocation of a property
- Bypassing of shortlisted applicants

Decisions affecting eligibility to join the Housing Register

The Council's Allocation policy contains details of how an applicant can be treated as ineligible. The Allocation of Accommodation Code of Guidance (November 2003), which supplements the Homelessness Act 2002 stipulates that an applicant has the right to review of decisions which affect their likelihood of being rehoused.

Procedure

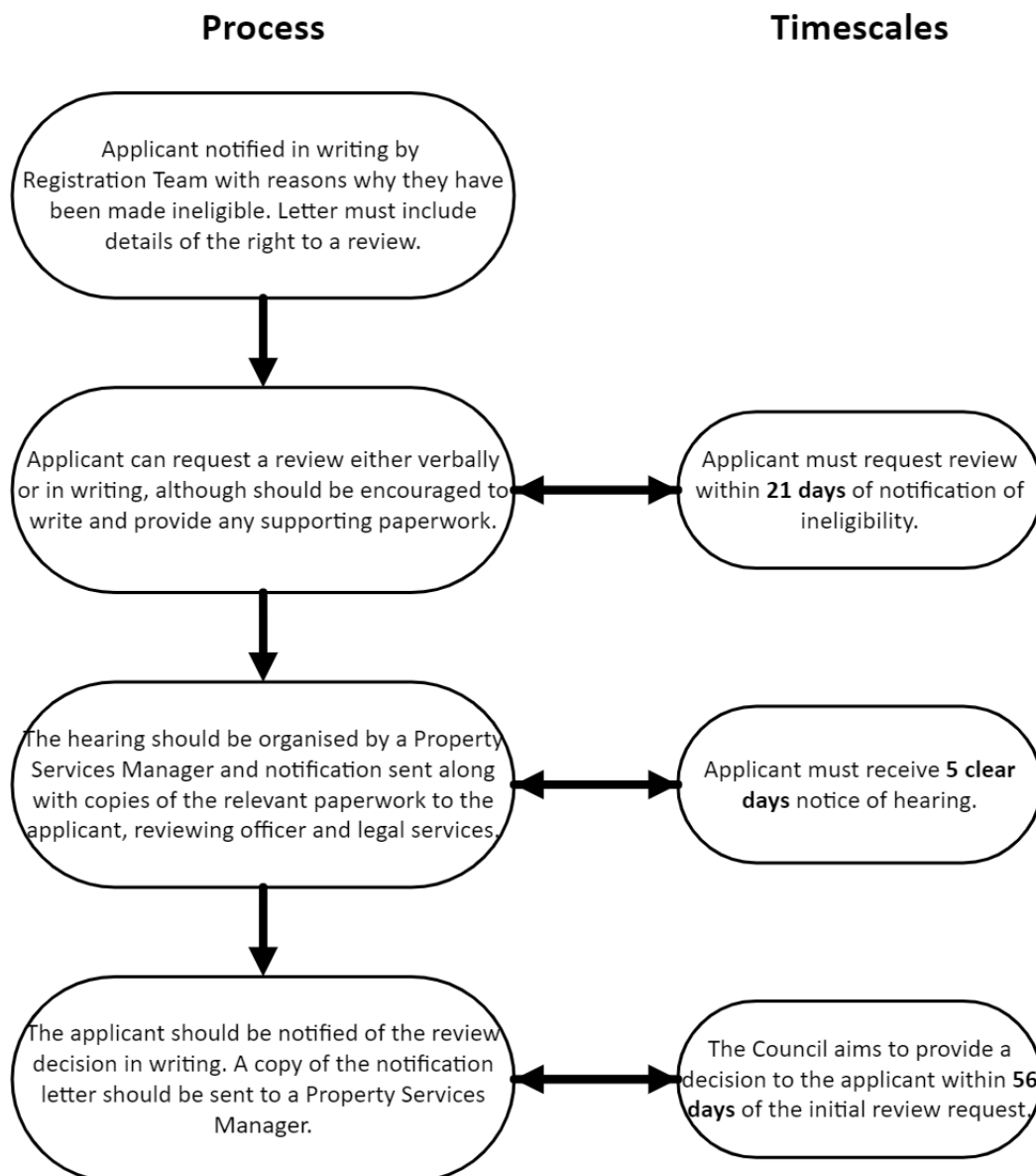
This procedure applies to all decisions affecting the eligibility of an applicant to join the housing register.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application for re-housing. All letters will include the right to request a review of the decision and the arrangements for such a review.

A request for a Review must be made within 21 days of the date of the letter notifying the applicant of the outcome of their application. The applicant will be strongly encouraged to put the request in writing with their reasoning and any supporting information, although a verbal request can be accepted. A written request will prevent disputes at a later stage. The administration arrangements for the review process are detailed in the Review and Appeals procedure.

The hearing will be carried out by a council officer with advice from the council's legal services.

The applicant will be informed of the Council Officer's decision by letter within 56 days of the review request being received.



10.1 Decisions affecting the allocation of a property including removal of priority for repeat refusals.

The Homelessness Act 2002 extends the existing right to review to include the right for any applicant, on request, to be informed of any decision about the facts of their case which have been, or are likely to be, considered when making an allocation to them. This includes where priority has been withdrawn due to repeat refusals or confirmed fraud.

10.1.1 Procedure

This procedure applies to all decisions affecting the allocation of a property, except the decision to by-pass an applicant, which is dealt with in a separate procedure below.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application for re-housing. All letters will include the right to request a review of the decision and the arrangements for such a review.

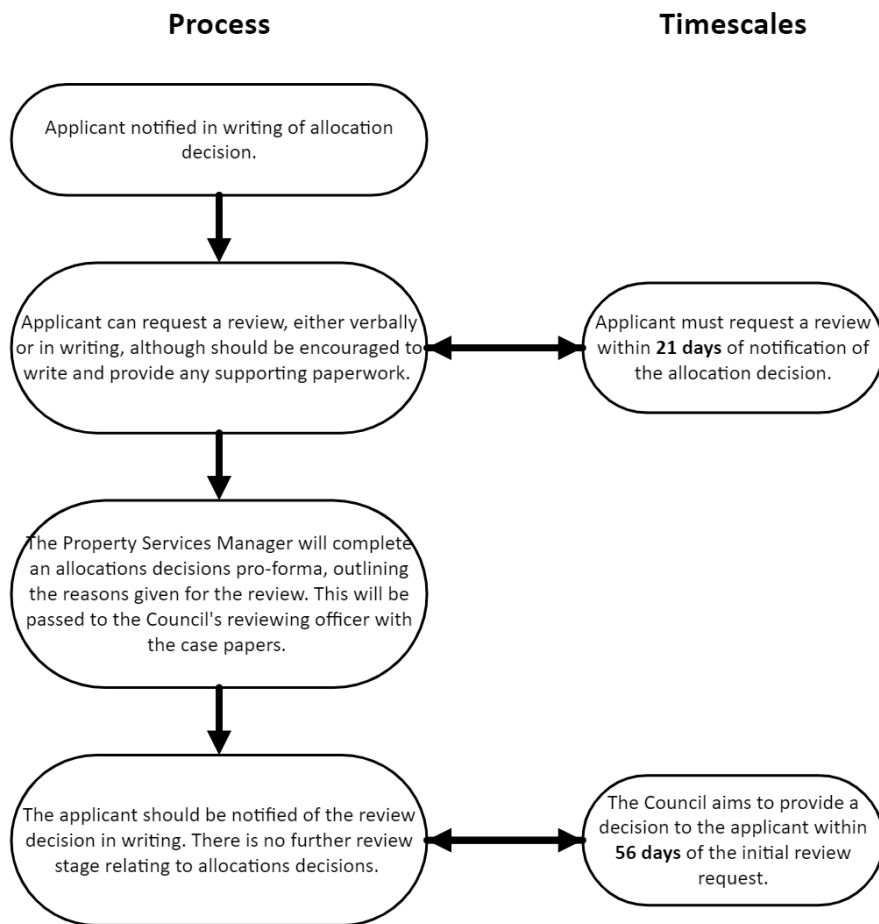
A request for a Review must be made within 21 days of the date of the letter notifying the applicant of the assessment outcome. The applicant will be strongly encouraged to put the request in writing with their reasoning and any supporting information, although a verbal request can be accepted. A written request will prevent disputes at a later stage. The administration arrangements for the review process are detailed in the Review and Appeals procedure.

The review will take the form of a review on the papers and will be conducted by a Council Officer not involved in the original decision and senior in rank to the officer conducting the original assessment.

Further enquiries may be necessary, for example additional advice on a medical issue and these will be conducted by the Registration team before the application is reviewed. When all enquiries have been completed the application file and any supporting information, including rationale, will be passed for a decision by the Council's Reviewing Officer.

The applicant will be informed of the Council Officer's decision by letter within 56 days of the review request being received.

10.1.2 Decisions affecting the allocation of a property- flowchart.



10.2 Bypassing of shortlisted applicants

The Allocations policy provides that under pre-defined circumstances, applicants on property shortlists can be bypassed (i.e., the Neighbourhoods Team can decline to offer the property to the applicant and offer it to the next person on that shortlist). The pre-defined circumstances when this can occur are:

- If rehoused into the property, there is, or may be a danger of the applicant or a member of their household causing harm in the locality where the property is situated.
- Rehousing the applicant into the property may prevent the effective management of the locality where it is situated.
- The applicant is assessed (by the Customer Finance Team or Housing Association) to be unable to afford the rent at the property i.e., after payment of any priority debts (e.g., court fines etc), residual income does not meet basic income support benefit levels.

10.2.1 Procedure

All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision to bypass them. Notification letters will include the reasons for the decision, the right to request a review and the arrangements for such a review.

Any property for which an applicant has been by-passed, must be held open for them during the period of any appeal. Review timescales will take account of the void-loss that may be incurred by the holding the property open.

A request for a Review must be made within 24 hours of the date of the applicant being notified of the Council's decision. The applicant will be strongly encouraged to put the request in writing with their reasoning and any supporting information, although a verbal request can be accepted. A written request will prevent disputes at a later stage. The administration arrangements for the review process are detailed in the Review and Appeals procedure.

The Review takes the form of an oral hearing at which the applicant may be accompanied or represented by another person, in line with the procedure outlined in the Review and Appeals procedure.

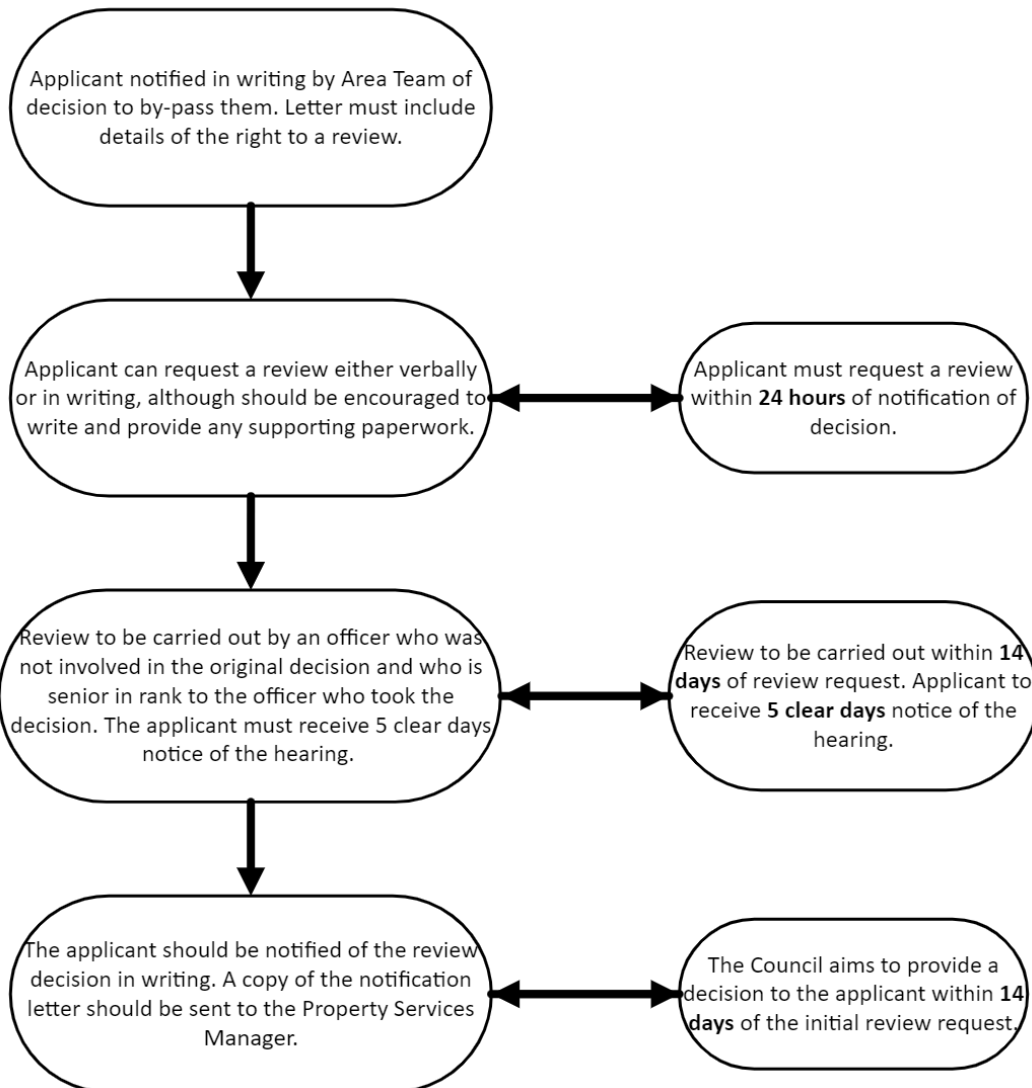
The review will be conducted by an officer from Stockport Council who was not involved in the original decision and is senior to the officer making that decision, with a representative of the Council's Legal Service in an advisory capacity to the Reviewing Officer.

A Property Management Manager will co-ordinate the review. Details of the reasons for the decision together with any supporting evidence and any written submission from the applicant will be forwarded to the Reviewing Officer at least five clear days before the review. The review will take place within 14 days of the review request being received.

If the Reviewing Officer finds in favour of the applicant, the Neighbourhood Team will be notified within one working day and the offer will go ahead within the offer-timescales laid down. If the Reviewing Officer finds against the applicant, they will be informed of the decision by letter within 14 days of the review request being received.

Process

Timescales



END

Rehousing Staff Members, Board Members Councillors, and their relatives

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Registration and Void Teams at Stockport Homes Group (SHG) have processes in place to ensure applications for rehousing are accurately assessed and inconsistencies or fraud detected at the point of application and offer.
- 1.2. However, to ensure confidence in the allocations process, it is important to have additional checks in place to minimise any potential for unfair or fraudulent behaviour by those with potential influence within the organisation. This applies to:
 - 1.2.1. SHG staff members and their relatives
 - 1.2.2. Stockport Council staff members and their relatives
 - 1.2.3. Stockport Councillors and their relatives
 - 1.2.4. SHG board members and their relatives
- 1.3. This procedure outlines the additional checks on applications required in these circumstances.

2. Application Stage

- 2.1. The application form for rehousing asks applicants whether they fall within any of the above categories. When processing an application, the Registration Team will then place a note on the IT system flagging up where this is the case ensuring additional checks are made before any final property offer is subsequently made.
- 2.2. Before an applicant that falls in to any of the identified groups above is sent a points letter, the application details are e-mailed to a Property Management Manager either manually by a Registrations Officer who is processing the application or auto emailed as part of electronic auto-processing where the applicant has responded positively to the question on the Homechoice application form which asks about connections to Stockport Homes or Stockport Council. The Property Management Manager will check the application assessment has been completed in line with the Allocations policy and there are no issues that need further investigation.
- 2.3. Once checked, the Manager will make a note to that effect on the IT system confirming the total points awarded. Any further change of circumstances will also be treated in a comparable manner.

3. Offer stage.

- 3.1. Where a relevant applicant is successful in securing an offer of a property, the usual checks in line with the Empty Homes Management and Sign-Up processes will be completed by the Property Management voids team. However, an additional review of the offer process and application will also then be made by the Head of Property Management as a final check, with a note added to the IT system confirming that the offer can proceed.
- 3.2. The IT system provides a full audit trail of who has added notes and at what time, accessed through a password protected log-in so physical signatures are not required.

4. Nominations

- 4.1. If an applicant with links to SHG detailed in points 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 (above) is successful in bidding for a housing association property, prior to their nomination, a Property Management Manager will require them to supply proof of address, ID, and confirmation their circumstances are unchanged. The housing association will be informed of the applicant's links to SHG in the nomination details, so further checks can be made if desired.
- 4.2. A note to this effect will again be made on the IT system by the Head of Property Management when satisfied there are no issues with the application and relevant proofs seen.

Offenders and Eligibility Procedure

1 Introduction

This procedure details the process for determining how criminal offences/antisocial behaviour committed by applicants affect their suitability to be a tenant. The process also determines what risk an applicant may pose to the wider community or to staff. For further information on eligibility, see the Allocations Policy. See also offences flowchart at the end of this appendix.

2 Initial Assessment

- 2.1. All applications received by the Registration Team will be assessed to determine whether any unspent convictions have been declared for a household member. Where a conviction has been declared the applicant must complete the relevant section of the online application form.
- 2.2. Applicants will also be asked to declare any criminal charges that are currently pending. However, these will be used solely to consider measures needed to manage risk to others, rather than being used when considering whether an applicant should be ineligible.
- 2.3. Where no unspent convictions have been declared the application will be processed and registered following the usual registration procedure.
- 2.4. Where a declaration has been made, the application will be placed on hold and assessed at the next eligibility panel, except for non-custodial driving offences which will effectively be disregarded.
- 2.5. Where an applicant declares a conviction that is spent, the application will be registered as normal.

3 Eligibility Panel

3.1. Frequency of meetings

The Eligibility Panel will be convened by a Property Management Manager every two weeks to assess applications where any household member has completed an unspent convictions declaration or declared any pending criminal charges. In addition, applications will be reviewed where no offences are known, but information has become known from Neighbourhoods or Safer Neighbourhoods teams or other source relating to anti-social behaviour or other behaviour that might pose a risk to staff.

3.2. Membership of the Eligibility Panel

- 3.2.a Allocations Team Leader
- 3.2.b Representative from Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

- 3.2.c Representative from Neighbourhoods Team.
- 3.2.d Representative from Probation when required.

3.3. **Investigation**

3.4. Where the applicant is currently under Probation supervision the panel will request further information from the Offender Manager regarding the conviction, the applicant's risk and whether they fit the RMX criteria.

3.5. The disclosure of risk information by Probation is limited to persons applying for housing and under statutory supervision of the Probation Service, for example those serving community sentences, those due for release from prison, and those on probation license. The following information will be requested: -

- 3.5.a Nature of offence(s) committed.
- 3.5.b Level of harm and likelihood of harm presented by applicant.
- 3.5.c Action to address offending behaviour/participation in risk reduction program.
- 3.5.d If case falls within the GMPS / Housing Information Sharing Protocol and meets RMX criteria

3.6. The Probation Service will conduct a risk assessment on all those applicants who meet their disclosure criteria. They will return details of the level of risk posed by each applicant, to a Property Management Manager on an RMX form. Other information may be sought from the Youth Offending Team or other partner agencies involved with an applicant to try and build a holistic picture of the risks they pose, support needs and triggers for criminal or anti-social behaviour.

3.7. Having gathered and considered the relevant information, the Panel will then make one of the following decisions:

- 3.7.a The applicant is suitable to be a tenant in line with the allocation policy and be registered according to the usual policy.
- 3.7.b The applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant in line with the allocation policy for some locations, property types, or unless meeting other specified criteria (e.g., agreement to engage with specified support services). They may however be registered but with a note outlining any restrictions.
- 3.7.c The applicant is ineligible in line with the allocation policy as their behaviour makes them unsuitable to be a tenant.

3.8. Where a panel member is unable to attend a meeting, the panel will proceed but with decisions made on a provisional basis. Before finalisation, the minutes with recommendations will be sent in password protected e-mail for comment by a representative of the absent team. Minutes of the meeting will also be distributed to all panel members.

3.9. The Registration team will then notify the applicant in writing of the outcome of the meeting. If a customer is deemed ineligible to join the housing register a

Property Management Manager will advise the customer in writing, outlining the right to review of any ineligibility decision.

- 3.10. Where an applicant is eligible for rehousing, with or without additional restrictions, a decision will then be made if any risk issues exist that need to be shared with staff who may meet the applicant. Details below.

4 Information-sharing with Housing Management teams

- 4.1. Information on criminal offences is classed as being 'sensitive' by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), and care needs to be taken around how it is processed. The key, relevant principles outlined in the 1998 Data Protection Act are that:
- 4.1.a Data should be obtained for one or more specified and lawful purposes; &
 - 4.1.b Data held should be adequate, relevant, and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which it is processed.
- 4.2. The ICO further states that security of sensitive data is a key issue, and that staff in organisations should only access information they need to do their job.
- 4.3. As the purpose of asking for details on criminal convictions is to determine eligibility for rehousing and assess risks to staff, data of this nature will usually only be accessible by the eligibility panel. However, minutes of panel meetings will be sent to Neighbourhood Managers and whilst the data on convictions itself will not be cascaded to other officers, information about any risks posed by an applicant will be.

5 Risk to employees.

- 5.1. In addition to determining applicant eligibility, the panel will also use any information submitted to determine the level of risk each applicant poses to staff, other residents or to themselves. The outcome of each risk assessment will be recorded as part of the minutes of the meeting whether any risk is identified. As the eligibility panel includes representatives from the Neighbourhoods and Safer Neighbourhoods teams, they will have contributed to the decision-making on risk and will ensure information about risk posed by any applicant is cascaded to those staff engaging with applicants on a day-to-day basis. In most cases, this will be information about the risk only, not the information itself.
- 5.2. Where a risk is identified, this will result in flag being placed on the IT system advising of precautions that should be taken, in line with data protection requirements, details of offences themselves will not usually be placed on the IT system. For example, where there is a historic crime of a violent nature, an alert to visit in pairs or hold meetings at an area office may be placed. In some exceptional circumstances details of specific offences may need to be shared, for example where an applicant is rehoused through a multi-agency, public protection arrangement, and levels and nature of disclosure will be agreed with

probation or other relevant bodies to ensure that staff and residents are not placed at risk.

5.3. Where an alert is placed on the IT system, or there is the intention to share additional information, applicants will be advised in writing. In line with other system alerts, they will also be reviewed after 12 months.

