

Housing Allocation Scheme

Table of Amendments

Section	Current wording	Amended wording	Reason for amendment
9.3	Family - the applicant must have immediate family that qualify as residents based upon the definition in paragraph 9.2. The Council may confirm these details with other data held internally.	Family - the applicant must have immediate family that has been residing within Maidstone Borough for a continuous period of 5 years immediately prior to the application. The Council may confirm these details with other data held internally.	A family connection for a continuous period of at least 5 years will match the residence period published in the DCLG's supplementary Code of Guidance on homelessness.
9.5	Returning Resident – the applicant must have been residing in the borough for 2 of the last 5 years but does not currently live within the Borough. The only exception to this are applicants being released from prison where their sentence exceeds 5 years the Senior Homechoice Officer may accept an applicant as being a returning resident in exceptional circumstances.	Returning Resident – the applicant must have been residing in the borough for a continuous period of at least 2 of the last 5 years but does not currently live within the Borough. The only exception to this are applicants being released from prison where their sentence exceeds 5 years the Senior Homechoice Officer may accept an applicant as being a returning resident in exceptional circumstances.	Clarification that in order to qualify as a returning resident, that the minimum of 2 years should be for a continuous period.

10.7.1	<p>Housing need will apply to those applicants to whom a main housing duty has been accepted under S193 (1) and S195 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7. The date of the application will be set to the date of the original homeless application, unless the applicant had an existing housing application and continues to qualify under the Community Contribution or Health Assistance Band. Those applicants where a duty has been discharged under S190 (2), S193 (5) and S195 (4) will also be considered as having a housing need, will be processed under the housing register and the qualifying criteria for local connection will still apply. The application date will be set to the date the duty discharge decision is made.</p>	<p>Housing need will apply to those applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in 56 days. In order for the applicant to be considered under this category the applicant must be actively engaged with the Homelessness Prevention Team. The date of the application will be set to the date of the original application for advice and assistance confirmed by a member of the Homelessness Prevention Team. Applicants who deliberately and unreasonably refuse to take any step in accordance with the advice given by the Homelessness Prevention Team will no longer be considered to have a housing need under this category.</p>	<p>The Homelessness Reduction Act which is expected to receive Royal Assent in 2018 will require local authorities to engage with applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days.</p> <p>This amendment, for qualification for the housing register through housing need, recognises the change in statutory duty on the Council and provides an option through the Housing Register at an earlier stage than is currently permitted.</p> <p>Applicants will need to be actively engaged with the new Homelessness Prevention Team in order to be verified under this category of housing need.</p>
10.8	n/a	<p>In exceptional circumstances, the Head of Housing and Community Services has the discretion to accept an application that does not meet any of the above Housing Need criteria.</p>	<p>Paragraph added to enable the Head of Housing and Community Services to accept applications that do not meet any other housing need criteria in exceptional circumstances. This enables the Council to avoid a legal challenge based on fettering its discretion.</p>

11.5	The Council considers that a total of £30,000 in capital, investments and savings constitutes sufficient financial means to rent privately or buy a property. The Council will only consider priority payments, such as rent and council tax, when taking debts into account.	The Council considers that a total of £16,000 in capital, investments and savings constitutes sufficient financial means to rent privately or buy a property. This includes equity from a property. The Council will only consider priority payments, such as rent and council tax, when taking debts into account.	A reduction in the figure that an applicant can hold in capital, investments and savings brings this in line with the maximum amount that would usually mean that a claimant would not be entitled to housing benefit. Clarification that this figure would also include equity from a property.
11.6	A household's gross income of £60,000 will also constitute sufficient financial means.	A household's gross income of £40,000 will also constitute sufficient financial means.	A reduction in the figure of a household's gross income to ensure that applicants who are accepted on to the register have the greatest financial need.
12.2.3	The Council in applying the above test will consider whether there is a sufficient degree of permanence or regularity to constitute normal residence as a member of the household.	n/a	Paragraph deleted as already in 12.2.2
14.1	Applicants should be aware that whilst their area preference will be respected, Maidstone has a limited supply of subsidised housing. In order to make best use of this limited resource, and for an applicant to maximise their chances of being housed,	Applicants should be aware that whilst their area preference will be respected, Maidstone has a limited supply of subsidised housing. In order to make best use of this limited resource, and for an applicant to maximise their chances of being housed,	Final sentence deleted as already covered at 22.4

	<p>applicants should bid on all properties that are suitable regardless of location. If applicants do not bid within a four week period for properties the Council will place a bid on any suitable available property and the standard refusal penalties (Section 29) will apply.</p>	<p>applicants should bid on all properties that are suitable regardless of location.</p>	
20.1	<p>This band is for those applicants who have a housing need due to unsatisfactory housing conditions, such as statutory overcrowding or insanitary or hazardous properties, or those that need to move to prevent or alleviate hardship or on the grounds of welfare. Other applicants who do not meet the requirements of Band A, Band B, or Band D will join this band if they qualify to join the housing register.</p>	<p>This band is for those applicants who have a housing need due to unsatisfactory housing conditions, such as statutory overcrowding or insanitary or hazardous properties, those with a medical need not requiring specific adaptations, or those that need to move to prevent or alleviate hardship or on the grounds of welfare. Other applicants who do not meet the requirements of Band A, Band B, or Band D will join this band if they qualify to join the housing register.</p>	<p>'Medical need not requiring specific adaptations' added to clarify that an applicant who would meet this criteria would be placed in Band C.</p>
22.4	<p>Applicants will be expected to actively seek a property via the Kent Homechoice Scheme and the Council may place bids on behalf of the applicant. If an applicant does not bid on any property in a four week period, the Council will suspend their application. The</p>	<p>Applicants will be expected to actively seek a property via the Kent Homechoice Scheme and the Council may place bids on behalf of the applicant. If an applicant does not bid on any property in a four week period, the Council may suspend their application. The</p>	<p>Wording changed from, 'the Council <i>will</i> suspend their application,' to 'the Council <i>may</i> suspend their application,' to allow more flexibility before implementing a suspension due to not bidding on properties.</p>

	<p>applicant will be contacted within 7 days and asked to explain the reason for not bidding. If the applicant fails to respond within 14 days their application will be removed. If the reason for non-bidding relates to their inability to use the Kent Homechoice system the Council will provide assistance to the applicant and the application can be reinstated by the Senior Homechoice Officer without any penalty. Alternative forms of bidding are available, such as by telephone, text messaging and a dedicated television channel.</p>	<p>applicant will be contacted within 7 days and asked to explain the reason for not bidding. If the applicant fails to respond within 14 days their application will be removed. If the reason for non-bidding relates to their inability to use the Kent Homechoice system the Council will provide assistance to the applicant and the application can be reinstated by the Senior Homechoice Officer without any penalty. Alternative forms of bidding are available, such as by telephone or text messaging.</p>	<p>Deletion of option to bid via a dedicated television channel as this option will no longer be available from Kent Homechoice due to lack of use.</p>
22.5	<p>Applicants are able to see on Kent Homechoice whether they have been successful in bidding on a property, and if not, where on the shortlist they have been placed. Applicants within the same band will be prioritised strictly in the order of the date of their application so the longer someone has been in housing need, the more likely they are to be successful.</p>	<p>Applicants are able to see on Kent Homechoice whether they have been successful in bidding on a property, and if not, where on the shortlist they have been placed. Applicants within the same band will be prioritised strictly in the order of the date when a valid application was received, i.e. the date that the completed application and all required supporting information was received by the Council. The longer someone has been in housing need, the more likely they are to be successful.</p>	<p>Clarification that an applicant's priority date is set when a completed application and all supporting documentation has been received.</p>

27.2	Previous or current rent arrears equivalent to a minimum of 8 weeks rent or where the applicant is unable to demonstrate a repayment agreement is in place and being maintained. These include arrears gained from either private or social tenancies, or where the applicant owes the Council a debt.	Previous or current rent arrears equivalent to a minimum of 8 weeks rent and where the applicant is unable to demonstrate a repayment agreement is in place and has been maintained for a reasonable period; the period to be determined on a case by case basis by the Homechoice and Strategy Manager. These include arrears gained from either private or social tenancies, or where the applicant owes the Council a debt.	A change of wording so that an applicant may be ineligible for an offer if they have rent arrears of a minimum of 8 weeks rent <i>and</i> is unable to demonstrate a repayment programme is in place. The previous wording was <i>or</i> .
27.4	Applicants found ineligible under section 27.2 and 27.3 will be suspended for 6 months. The application will be reviewed and reassessed after this time, and further suspensions may be applied. An applicant's priority date will be amended to the date on which they become eligible for an offer of accommodation.	Applicants found ineligible under section 27.2 and 27.3 will be suspended for 6 months. The application will be reviewed and reassessed after this time and a further suspension may be applied. If after a further 6 month period an applicant is still found to be ineligible, they will be removed from the register. An applicant's priority date will be amended to the date on which they become eligible for an offer of accommodation.	If an applicant is found to be ineligible and suspended for a period of 2 consecutive 6 month periods, the applicant will then be removed from the register.
Various	Housing and Enabling Team	Homechoice Team	Updated to show change in team name
Various	Housing and Enabling Manager	Homechoice and Strategy Manager	Updated to show change in Managers title

