# Sunderland City Council
# Housing Allocations Policy 2026

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**Introduction**

This is Sunderland City Council's Housing Allocation Policy adopted in 2026.

The Policy brings together the Council's policies on the allocation of housing for all those who have applied and are eligible for housing assistance under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 as amended ('the Act'). It is intended that the Housing Allocation Policy will be reviewed regularly, to incorporate policy changes, as well as to reflect any feedback on the content or format of the document.

Housing policy, including the allocation and assessment policies in this document, is made and amended by the Portfolio Holder for Housing. Before making changes to the policy, reflecting major policy changes, the Council will comply with s.166A(13) of the Act, which enables Registered Providers (Social Landlords) to have a reasonable opportunity to comment on proposals.

The Policy shows how the Council determines priorities between housing applicants.

The Council is faced with a substantial demand for and an insufficient supply of housing across the city. Implementation of the Policy has to depend upon the availability of accommodation.

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**Eligibility**

Anyone aged 18 years and over can join the Housing Register unless they are ineligible by reason of their immigration status or are not a "qualifying person" for the purposes of the Housing Act 1996. Applicants aged 16 or 17 may register; however, a tenancy cannot be legally held until the applicant reaches the age of 18.

Eligibility requirements are set out in Section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996.

Those people eligible to apply to join the Housing Register and to be allocated housing under the Council's Allocation Policy include:

- British citizens who are habitually resident in the UK.
- Certain Commonwealth citizens with the right of abode in the UK.
- EEA nationals and their family members who hold status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) – either:
    - Settled Status, or
    - Pre-Settled Status, where the individual has a qualifying right to reside under UK law.
      Applicants may be asked to provide evidence of their EUSS status.
- People who, under the Immigration Act 1971, are not subject to immigration control, including diplomats and their family members based in the UK and some military personnel.

**Ineligibility**

Those ineligible to apply to join the Housing Register, and to whom the Council cannot allocate housing, include:

- People from abroad who are subject to immigration control unless they fall within a class prescribed as eligible by the Secretary of State.
- Other persons from abroad who are prescribed as ineligible by the Secretary of State under the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations.
- Applicants whose household includes any person who would themselves be ineligible under the above criteria.

The main legal provisions relating to eligibility are contained in Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

To confirm eligibility, the Council may carry out verification checks with statutory agencies such as the Home Office.

If an applicant is found to be ineligible, the Council will notify them of the decision in writing within 10 working days, including the reasons and their right to request a review.

Under Section 160ZA(7) of the 1996 Act, local housing authorities may also decide which classes of persons qualify for an allocation of social housing, subject to the law.

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**Reasonable preference**

In accordance with Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act") Sunderland's Allocation Policy aims to ensure that 'reasonable preference' (which means giving more priority) is given to specific types of people.

These people include:

1. those who are homeless within the meaning of the Housing Act 1996;

2. people who are owed a duty by any housing authority because they have a priority need but are intentionally homeless (section 190 (2) of the 1996 Act), because they are not in priority need and not homeless intentionally (section 193(2)) or because they are threatened with homelessness (section 195(2));

3. households occupying insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing conditions;

4. those who need to move on medical grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability) or for health related or welfare reasons; and

5. those who need to move to a particular locality in the area of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others), for example; to give or receive care, to take up employment or training or to access specialised medical treatment.

The Policy will also give preference to:

i. those who are homeless and require urgent re-housing as a result of violence or threats of violence and those escaping serious anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse;
ii. young people leaving care who are the responsibility of Sunderland City Council Together for Children and people with high level support or social care needs; and
iii. carers, people who receive support from carers and approved prospective foster carers or adopters who need a larger home in order to accommodate a looked after child.

**Additional Preference**

In accordance with the further requirements of section 166A(3) of the 1996 Act, additional preference will be given to a person with urgent housing needs and who falls within one of the first five Reasonable Preference categories referred to above who is:

a) serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributed (wholly or partly) to his/her service.

b) has formerly served in the regular forces.

c) has recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.

d) is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.

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e) a young person leaving care and who is the responsibility of Sunderland City Council Together for Children.

**Suspensions**

Sunderland City Council will remove priority banding from any household that refusing three reasonable offers of accommodation via the Housing Register.

Households who have received priority banding under criteria 2.5 will have their priority banding removed if they have refused one reasonable offer of accommodation. Should there be a significant change (such as experiencing Domestic Abuse) in circumstances then priority banding may be re-assessed and re-awarded.

Households that are considered adequately housed in a social housing tenancy as a result of a nomination from Sunderland City Council to a Registered Provider via the Housing Register will be refused access to the register for a period of 12 months unless they have a significant change in circumstances means that they are no longer considered adequately housed.

**Bedroom Allocations**

We will make best use of our social housing stock by making sure you are matched to the specific property type to meet your need. This means we will normally tell you a minimum or maximum size of household that the property is suitable for. When deciding the size of property you are suitable for, we will take into account the number of people included in the application that would reasonably be expected to live with you, their gender and relationship to you.

Our policy on bedroom entitlement is based on the Government's bedroom standards. The number of bedrooms you are assessed as needing will be based on the following:

- 1 bedroom for a cohabiting couple.
- 1 bedroom for an adult (over 16 years).
- 1 bedroom for two children under 16 years of the same sex.
- 1 bedroom for two children under 10 regardless of sex.
- 1 bedroom to allow for overnight care provision where a member of the household has a disability and a recognised support need. (Evidence must state an additional bedroom is required from a qualified professional).
- 1 bedroom for a child with a disability where there is medical evidence that they need their own room. (Evidence must state an additional bedroom is required from a qualified professional).
- 1 bedroom for a foster child.

In some circumstances, we may choose to under occupy properties where:

- The property is not in high demand.
- A Local Lettings Plan is in place.
- There are specific management reasons as to why this will happen.
- The property has special features that make it particularly suitable for certain applicants.
- The property is in a neighbourhood which has a shortage of a particular property type.
- You are able to meet the rental costs.

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The following are examples of specific criteria that may be placed on a property:

**Minimum age**

Applies where a property/scheme has been designated for certain age groups - for example an older person's housing scheme, some bungalows and multi-storey blocks. It would normally be expected that all members of the household fit the criteria.

**Minimum or maximum number of persons**

We prefer that properties are not under or over occupied.

**Preference to people requiring care or support due to age or disability**

Supported housing schemes, extra care schemes or other older person's housing schemes.

**Preference to persons with a disability**

To make best use of an adapted or adaptable property. If an adult is responsible for a child's day to day care, the child will be counted as a member of the household. This includes situations where two adults have equal joint care. However, if a child only visits at weekends and holidays, they will not be counted as a member of the household. This affects what size or type of property you will be considered for. In cases when a child visits at weekends and holidays, we will tell you about other housing options that may be available where extra bedrooms could be provided to accommodate children. Supporting evidence may be requested from other agencies or the court depending on the individual circumstances.

**Homelessness**

Homelessness is something that the Council has a statutory (legal) duty to investigate and assess. The Council's Housing Options Team will assess all potentially homeless applications.

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 requires local Housing Allocation Policies to give reasonable preference to specific groups of households on the register which includes homeless households. The Council has a statutory duty to prevent and relieve homelessness in its area under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This means that preference needs to be given to all applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

To qualify for priority banding based on homelessness, an applicant will need to have had their circumstances assessed and have received confirmation in writing from the Council's Housing Options Team.

Results of an applicant's homelessness assessment will be communicated to them within 10 days.

**The Application Process**

An applicant can register alone, jointly with a partner or with another adult who wishes to live with them, this includes family members. Applications should be made via Sunderland City Council Website. To make an application, applicants need to access the link above, and be aware they must provide the following to ensure applications are complete:

- details about themselves and those they wish to share a home with;
- their housing history, including details of all addresses they have resided at in the last 5 years, plus landlord/s details:

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- their housing needs;
- any support needs;
- their financial circumstances; and
- their areas of choice.

The council will register an application within 10 working days of receipt of the application and all relevant verified information.

**Confidentiality statement**

In order to allocate social housing effectively the Council needs to collect and use confidential and personal data. When doing so we will comply with General Data Protection Regulation and will treat sensitive data fairly and lawfully. In certain circumstances we may share sensitive data with other organisations such as landlords and the police but we will only do this with the appropriate consent of the applicant or in circumstances where the law allows us to do this, such as the prevention and detection of fraud or any other crime.

Details of the Council's privacy policy can be found on our website.

**Applying with other RPs and Landlords**

Applicants may also apply directly to other Registered Providers / landlords who have properties in the City, outside of the Council's nominations process. Each landlord will have their own allocation policy application form and process for doing this and details will be able to be found on landlords' web sites or by contacting them by phone or email.

**Change of Address or Circumstances**

Customers are required to inform the Council of any change of address and / or circumstances by contacting Customer Enabling Services. **CONTACT DETAILS WILL BE ADDED**

**False or Misleading Information**

If applicants have supplied false or misleading information which leads to them being allocated a property, legal action will be taken. Registered Providers can contact the Allocations Officer at Sunderland City Council in the first instance regards cases where they believe properties have been acquired fraudulently.

**Deliberately worsening your circumstances**

Where there is evidence that an applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances in order to qualify for a higher housing priority under the Policy no additional priority will be given. In some circumstances this may be considered by partner landlords as unacceptable behaviour, leading to suspension of an application. Applicants are entitled to request a review of a decision.

**Housing applications from members of staff and their families.**

Applicants for housing who are Sunderland City Council employees or Elected Members or their families must declare their interest when applying.

Such applications will be assessed in the normal way, but offers of accommodation will not be made without the prior approval of the Executive Director of Public Health & Wellbeing.

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**Review of the register**

All applicants are required to inform the Council should they wish to be removed from the register.

The register will be reviewed by the Council on a regular basis to assess the effectiveness of the Policy in allocating properties and to ensure that only those applicants who want to be on the register remain on it.

R**egistering an Application**

Having received an application, it will be checked for eligibility and unless the applicant is deemed ineligible then the application will be registered with the Council. Once an application is registered the applicant will be notified by the Council within 10 working days to advise them of any priority banding decision or if further information is needed.

If an application is not completed or updated with necessary evidence within 28 calendar days from the council's initial request, it will be cancelled and it will be the responsibility of the applicant to re-register should they wish to join the housing register.

**How we Deal with Different Applicants**

Out of City Applicants

Applicants from outside the City of Sunderland are accepted on the Housing Register when proof of 'local connection' to the City is provided.

This means you will have:

been a resident with permanent housing in Sunderland for at least six months out of the last twelve months, or three years out of the last five years (not including time spent living in a hospital or hostels).

Being in employment, training, or education in Sunderland. (Evidence will be required).

Having 'close family' living in Sunderland for at least the previous five years. This includes:

- parents
- grandparents
- children / adult children
- siblings
- stepparents
- stepchildren
- grandchildren
- adoptive parents and children

This may be extended to aunts, uncles and in laws in exceptional circumstances.

There are exceptions in line with Government Guidance (effective August 2025) which confirms that care leavers under 25 and victims of domestic abuse will be exempt from local connection rules that typically restrict access to social housing. Also, serving or former member of the armed forces are exempt.

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**Owner Occupier Applicants**

We welcome owner occupiers within the Policy. However, those who wish to access housing through the policy may be required to sell or dispose of their interest in their current property or demonstrate that they are actively trying to do so to meet criteria set by Registered Providers within the city. The Government does believe that local authorities should avoid allocating social housing to people who already own their own home who have the financial means to obtain suitable alternative accommodation.

A financial assessment may be undertaken by Registered Providers which will cover income, outgoings and any equity and savings. If the applicant can financially afford to purchase a home or rent a property suitable for their housing needs, a formal offer for social housing is unlikely to be made other than in exceptional circumstances; for example, if the applicant is applying for Extra Care or needs a fully adapted house which is not available on the private market.

**Parents and Guardians of Children with Joint Access Arrangements.**

Only the parent with primary care of a child should qualify for a family home. Identifying the primary carer is based on individual merits, but takes into account:

• receipt of Child Benefit;

• Court Orders;

• percentage of time spent caring for child(ren);

• regularity and permanence of arrangement.

When an applicant does not have primary care of dependent child, but shares care, either as a result of a Court Order or an informal arrangement, we will consider on a case-by-case basis. For example, this may mean granting an additional bedroom or considering a single applicant for a two-bedroom flat.

**Care Experienced**

To plan for young people leaving care and enable access to independent accommodation when ready they should be assisted by Together for Children to complete a Housing Register application within three months of their 16th birthday (or three months after they become looked after if this occurs after their 16th birthday) to ensure that young people leaving care at the age of 18 years are accepted as a reasonable preference priority group for local social housing or suitable private accommodation in the area in which they wish to live.

The procedure enables young people to move to independent accommodation in a planned way and avoids the use of temporary accommodation. The Council requires sufficient information to properly assess a young person's accommodation needs, including all relevant history, assessments and any relevant risk factors that may affect the decision about the location or the type of suitable accommodation (this will include an up-to-date risk assessment and pathway plan).

Where looked after children are placed outside of the Sunderland area, the process of placing their name on the Sunderland Housing Register should be used to explore the timing and process to return to Sunderland or whether their individual needs are best met whilst remaining in the area they have been residing in. Subject to discussion with Sunderland Together for

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Children care leavers will be a) supported to use choice based lettings, b) offered a direct let, c) supported to use choice based lettings for 12 weeks and then offered a direct let.

**Members of the Regular Forces and Veterans**

The Council has signed up to an Armed Forces Community Covenant. This means we will work closely with partners to support those leaving HM forces to find suitable accommodation.

Veterans may be given additional preference and are allocated housing on a case-by-case basis depending on their assessed needs.

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**Banding Criteria**

**Band 1 – Urgent Housing Need**

Band 1 will be awarded to applicants who have been assessed as having an urgent housing need and where their current accommodation does not put them at risk of immediate or serious harm.

Band 1 will be awarded for 12 weeks unless specified otherwise in the particular award below. After this time the banding award will be reviewed and if the award has not been used appropriately it may be removed. We reserve the right to make any applicant a single offer of suitable accommodation. This could be to assist us in fulfilling any legal duty owed to the applicant but also to secure suitable accommodation for them as quickly as possible given the urgent nature of their housing needs.

Subject to discussion with Sunderland Together for Children care leavers will be a) supported to use choice based lettings, b) offered a direct let, c) supported to use choice based lettings for 12 weeks and then offered a direct let.

**2.1. You need to move as your current housing is having a severe impact on your health and wellbeing**

Your current home is having a severe impact on you or a member of your household's medical condition or is seriously affecting your or their quality of life or ability to manage.

We will consider the impact that your current home and its surrounding environment has on you. This will include, but is not limited to, whether or not you are able to access essential facilities within your home which include your bathroom, toilet, kitchen and access to and from the home.

You will be able to reside in your current home for a reasonable period of time, whilst alternative housing is sought.

You will need to provide information to support your need to allocations@sunderland.gov.uk who are likely to refer you for an Occupational Therapy Assessment.

If awarded, we will identify what type of property will meet your assessed medical needs.

**2.2. You are experiencing domestic abuse including controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour**

You are a victim of domestic abuse but you can continue to live in your accommodation on a short-term basis.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as being any single incident or patterns of incidents of abuse between persons aged 16 or over who are or have been in an intimate personal relationship, they have, or have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child, or are relatives regardless of gender or sexuality.

Behaviour is 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour

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- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse (any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on the victim/survivor's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services)
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse

We will work with clients to ensure evidence is captured to reflect clients situations accurately and ensure that banding is awarded correctly.

If awarded, we will identify any areas of the city where you and your household's safety may be at risk.

**2.3. You are a victim of domestic abuse who is currently being provided with temporary accommodation in a refuge, or other form of temporary accommodation and you need to move to suitable settled accommodation.**

**2.4. You are experiencing harassment amounting to violence or threats of violence.**

You or a member of your household are experiencing harassment which amounts to violence or threats of violence but you can continue to live in your accommodation on a short-term basis.

This includes applicants who need to move due to:

- Intimidation
- Serious anti-social behaviour
- Harassment including harassment relating to a protected characteristic as detailed in the Equality Act 2010

This will need to be supported by evidence to enable us to take appropriate action.

If awarded, we will identify any areas of the city where you and your household's safety may be at risk.

**2.5. You are homeless and owed the main housing duty by Sunderland City Council under s.193(2) of the Housing Act 1996**

You must meet all of the following criteria:

- You are homeless,
- You are eligible for housing assistance,
- You are in priority need as defined by homeless legislation,
- You are not intentionally homeless,
- You have a local connection to Sunderland
- The Council's relief duty under s.189B(2) of the Housing Act 1996 has come to an end.

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This priority banding award will be assessed and awarded by the Housing Options Team at Sunderland City Council. This award will apply for as long as you are owed the main housing duty. When this duty ceases this award will be removed by Housing Options.

Full details regarding homelessness applications are outlined elsewhere in this Policy.

**2.6. You are threatened with homelessness and owed a duty by Sunderland City Council under s.195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (the 'prevention duty') and the Council has established that you are unable to remain in your current accommodation.**

You must meet all of the following criteria:

- You are threatened with homelessness within 56 days, or have received a valid Housing Act 1988, s 21, notice which expires within 56 days
- You are eligible for housing assistance,
- You have a local connection to Sunderland
- It has been determined by Sunderland City Council that you cannot remain in your current accommodation.

This priority banding award will be assessed and awarded by a homelessness prevention officer at Sunderland City Council's Housing Options Team.

This award will apply for as long as you are owed the prevention duty. When this duty ceases this award will be removed by a homelessness prevention officer at Sunderland City Council's Housing

**2.7. You are occupying accommodation that is considered to be insanitary and has been assessed as:**

- being prejudicial to your health as defined by the Environmental Protection Act 1990, or,
- as having a relevant category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations, and where it is agreed by the Council's Environmental Health Service or other suitably qualified assessor that the most appropriate course of action is for you to be rehoused and you are unable to afford to remedy the problem or you are considered to be vulnerable.
    - Applicants can find contact details on our website.

**2.8. You are occupying accommodation that is overcrowded in accordance with legislation**

You have been assessed as being overcrowded in accordance with:

- ss.324-326 Housing Act 1985 ('statutory overcrowding').

There are two legal definitions of statutory overcrowding – the 'room standard' and the 'space standard' (see Appendix 1). Only one of these standards needs to apply to be statutorily overcrowded, or,

- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System. This applies where a

Category 1 hazard is identified under category 11: 'Crowding and Space' and re-housing is deemed the most appropriate course of action.

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**2.9. You are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions**

You are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions. This will include but is not limited to applicants whose current accommodation:

• poses a serious threat to their health and safety

• is in a serious state of disrepair or is lacking basic facilities such as hot water and heating.

An assessment will need to be undertaken by the Council's Environmental Health Service or other suitably qualified assessor. It must have been assessed that remedial action is unreasonable, impractical or unlikely to be carried out within a reasonable time period and that the most appropriate course of action is for you to be rehoused.

**2.10. You are residing in supported accommodation and have secured employment and need to move as continuing to reside in supported accommodation will cause you serious financial hardship**

A financial assessment will need to be completed by your supported accommodation provider.

Applicants can find contact details for our Financial Assistance Team on our website.

**2.11. You need to move urgently to give or receive support for ongoing health or social care reasons. A move would prevent hardship to you or someone else.**

The support must be required on an ongoing daily and overnight basis and moving home is the only option available for you to be able to provide or receive this support.

You will need to provide information to support this need from Sunderland Care and Support or other supporting agency.

**2.12 You are 18 – 25 years of age and are receiving support from Together for Children and have an urgent need to move due to at least one of the criteria below:**

• You are currently residing in supported accommodation and the accommodation is needed for another young person.

• You are likely to become homeless.

• Your wellbeing is likely to be seriously impacted.

• You are ready to move on and the cost of providing your current

accommodation warrants an urgent move.

This banding award will be assessed based on supporting evidence from Together for Children

**2.13. You need to move in order to accommodate or to continue to accommodate a child**

**and at least one of the criteria below applies:**

• You are a prospective foster carer or adopter in assessment.

• You are temporarily approved as a connected carer.

• You are an approved foster carer or adopter.

• You are a provider of Supported Lodgings for young people.

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• There are child protection issues which necessitate an urgent need for housing, that is failure to secure suitable housing would result in the child being cared for by Together for Children.

• In addition, you are proactively accessing and making use of support from a personal adviser.

This banding will be assessed based on supporting evidence from Together for Children (or another Children's Services department within another Local Authority).

**2.14. Your household is forced to live apart**

You need to be re-housed as you cannot live together because there is not enough room available to the whole household in your current accommodation, or for some other reason that is beyond your control.

You will need to provide information to show that your household is living separately and the reasons for this.

**2.15. You need to be re-housed following your discharge from the Armed Forces or a relationship breakdown with a serving member of the Armed Forces**

You will be awarded this priority award if you need to be rehoused due to you being discharged from the Armed Forces and:

• you are required to leave accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence or

• you are currently living in private rented accommodation which is in close proximity to your military base and you were residing in that accommodation at the time of discharge

You will also be awarded this priority award if you are a spouse or civil partner, or a former spouse or civil partner, of a member of the Armed Forces following a breakdown in your relationship with your spouse or partner.

This priority award may also be awarded to former members of the Armed Forces who resided with family members immediately after being discharged. In this case, the granting of any award will be limited to three months after the date of discharge.

**2.16. Your home is within the Sunderland area - it is part of a regeneration scheme and is to be demolished or is subject to major building work**

We will phase the priority award to match the phasing of redevelopment work.

Your housing requirements will be assessed on your current housing need and not matched to your current home unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**Band 2 – Moderate Housing Need**

Band 2 will be awarded to applicants who have been assessed as having a moderate need for housing.

There will be some benefit in securing new accommodation, but the need will not be as urgent as those in Band 1 above.

Band 2 awards will be awarded for six months, unless specified otherwise in the particular award below. After this time the banding award will be reviewed and if the award has not been used appropriately it may be removed.

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**3.1. Your current home is having some impact on you, or a member of your household as a result of an existing medical condition or disability.**

We will consider the impact that your current home and its surrounding environment has on you. You may be able to access most of the areas in your home, but you either have difficulty or it is expected that there will be a deterioration in your health and a move would alleviate the impact of this.

An assessment will be made by Occupational Therapy and banding awarded based on this.

If awarded, we will identify what type of property will meet your assessed medical needs.

**3.2. You are homeless or threatened with homelessness, excluding those given greater priority under bands 2.5 and 2.6 above**

You have a local connection to Sunderland and:

• are homeless within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as

you:

- have no accommodation available in the UK or abroad
- have no legal right to occupy the accommodation
- have no accommodation available for your whole household (your household is currently split)
- cannot continue to occupy your accommodation as it is unreasonable to do so
- are at risk of violence from any person
- are unable to secure entry to your accommodation
- live in a moveable structure such as a caravan, mobile home or houseboat, but have no place to put it

or

• where Sunderland City Council has accepted it owes a statutory duty to you under the homelessness legislation as you are homeless or threatened with homelessness (excluding those given greater priority)

This priority banding award will be assessed and awarded by Sunderland City Council Housing Options Team. The banding award will apply for as long as you are homeless within the above meaning or as long as you are owed a statutory duty under the homelessness legislation. When this is no longer the case, this banding award will be removed.

**3.3. You are overcrowded, do not qualify under band 2.8, but are lacking a bedroom(s) for members of your household.**

We will assess your bedroom entitlement in accordance with the Bedroom Allocation Criteria as described in this Policy.

You will be awarded this priority banding if, following this assessment, we determine that you require an additional bedroom(s) for your household.

**3.4.You are a young person aged 18 – 25 who is being supported by Together for Children and are ready to move into your own accommodation.**

This includes but is not limited to young people who are ready to move on from:



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• Foster care

• Supported lodgings

• A residential home

This banding award will be assessed in accordance with supporting evidence provided by Together for Children.

**3.7. You need to move to provide or receive some care and support**

You need to move to give or receive daily support for health or social care reasons to prevent hardship to you or to someone else but the need does not qualify for greater priority under band 2.11 above.

You will need to provide information to support this need.

**3.8. You are suffering financial hardship and are at risk of becoming homeless**

You need to move as you cannot afford your housing costs and are at risk of becoming homeless in the future. A move to more affordable accommodation would ease or improve your financial circumstances and would prevent hardship.

**3.9 You need to move as you share facilities with people who are not members of your household**

You need to move as you share facilities, such as a kitchen or bathroom, with people who are not members of your household and you either:

• have dependant children residing with you.

• are pregnant.

• have regular access to your children.

You will need to provide evidence of any access that you have to your children.

**3.10. You need to leave your current housing which is tied to your employment**

You live in accommodation that is tied to your employment and have been asked to leave this accommodation as you are retiring or have been made redundant.

This banding award will not apply if you are losing your home though your own actions for example, you have resigned from your job or have been dismissed by your employer.

You will need to provide evidence of your circumstances for this award to be made.

**Band 3**

All other applications which are not in a priority need.

**Exceptional Circumstances - Prioritisation**

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority may prioritise an applicant from any band for an allocation outside the standard process / banding criteria. This will only occur where there is an urgent and overriding housing need that cannot reasonably be met through the usual allocation framework/s.

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To ensure fairness and transparency:

- Decision-making will be undertaken by a dedicated Panel, comprising senior officers and specialists relevant to the application.
- The Panel will apply a standardised approach to assess the case against agreed criteria, ensuring consistency and equity.
- All decisions will be fully documented, including the rationale for prioritisation, and subject to audit and review.

This process will only be used in exceptional circumstances and only where it is demonstrably necessary to prevent significant harm or hardship.

RPs operate differently with some using Choice Based Lettings (CBL) and some using nominations. For those operating CBL, the RP will be provided with details of the case to allow consideration against their policy. For those operating via nominations, if an application meets EC they will be prioritised for a nomination.

**Used and cancelled applications**

**An application is considered 'used' when an applicant:**

• accepts a tenancy from a registered provider;

• is assigned a tenancy through a partner landlord;

• is granted a succession of tenancy through a partner landlord;

• purchases or part-purchases their own property, for example right to buy, shared ownership or outright ownership through a partner landlord; and

• has carried out a mutual exchange.

This means the application will no longer be included in the system and the applicant will have to register again if they wish to access the Housing Register.

An applicant can request a review of any decision to treat an application as "Used".

**Cancelled Applications**

An application will be cancelled in the following circumstances:

• it is used;

• at the applicant's request;

• if an applicant does not respond to a review letter or other correspondence;

• if an applicant moves and does not inform us of their new address;

• if an applicant leaves the country and they are subsequently prevented from being registered because of immigration status;

• if we find that an applicant has supplied false, misleading or incomplete information connected with their registration; and

• if it is a duplicate application.

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This means the application will no longer be included in the system.

An applicant can request a review of any decision to treat an application as Cancelled'.

**Appeals/review**

Applicants will be able to request a review against any decision relating to:-

1. Eligibility

2. Facts of the case

3. Review Banding Status

4. Date of registration

5. Used/cancelled applications

6. Reasonableness of offer

7. Suspension

8. Exceptional allocation

9. Homelessness

**Reviews**

Requests for a review must be made in writing within 21 days of the date of receiving a decision letter.

In the review request an applicant should explain why they think the decision was wrong and provide any available evidence.

Each review will be considered by a senior member of staff who was not involved in the original decision. The officer will consider the review on the basis of the applicant's individual circumstances, their written submissions and in accordance with the Policy. Furthermore, careful note will be taken of relevant legislation, including statutory instruments and Codes of Guidance. The reviewing officer will normally notify the applicant of the outcome of their decision within 28 days, or 56 days for homelessness reviews.

Possible Outcomes of a Review

• Uphold the original decision – the applicant will be notified in writing and give reason supporting the review decision.

• Reject the original decision – the decision letter will explain why the original decision has been rejected and what actions will be carried out and the reasons for doing so.

**Information and Decision Making**

Information

Applicants have a right to request general information which will enable them to assess:

• how their application is likely to be treated under the Policy (including, in particular, whether they are likely to be regarded as a member of a group of people who are to be given preference by being placed in the relevant category); and

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• whether housing accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available to them and, if so, how long it is likely to be before such accommodation becomes available for allocation to them.

Applicants also have the right to request the Council to inform them of any decision about the facts of their case which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing to them.

Information can be requested by contacting the Council.

Decision Making

In accordance with the Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997, no elected member of the Council will at any stage be involved in the decision making of the allocation of properties within the Policy. The regulations do not prevent an elected member from representing their constituents in front of any decision-making body.

**Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy**

Monitoring the Policy

The Council will monitor the Policy to ensure it continues to meet our aims and objectives and to continuously improve our services.

Reviewing the Policy

The Council will provide monitoring reports at least annually to our customers, Council's Cabinet, relevant scrutiny committees and Leadership teams.

The Council will continue to review the appropriateness of the Policy and respond to changes such as legislation, demand and supply, new technology (which may make the management of the Policy more effective) and other strategic issues.

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**Summary of Bands**

| **Band 1 – Urgent Housing Need (For 12 weeks)** | **Band 2 – Moderate Housing Need (For 6 months)** | **Band 3 – General housing need (No limit)** |
|---|---|---|
| • You are homeless and owed the main housing duty by Sunderland City Council under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996<br>• You are threatened with homelessness and owed a duty by Sunderland City Council under s.195 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (the 'prevention duty') and the Council has established that you are unable to remain in your current accommodation.<br>• You need to move as your current housing is having a severe impact on your health and wellbeing<br>• You are experiencing domestic abuse including controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour<br>• You are a victim of domestic abuse who is currently being provided with temporary protection in a refuge, or other form of temporary accommodation and you need to move to suitable settled accommodation<br>• You are experiencing harassment amounting to violence or threats of violence.<br>• You are occupying accommodation that is considered to be insanitary<br>• You are occupying accommodation that is overcrowded in accordance with legislation | • Your current home is having some impact on you, or a member of your household as a result of an existing medical condition or disability.<br>• Homeless, in the relief duty<br>• Homeless but not priority need and intentional<br>• You are overcrowded, do not qualify under band 2.8, but are lacking a bedroom(s) for members of your household.<br>• You are a young person aged 18 – 25 who is being supported by Together for Children and are ready to move into your own accommodation.<br>• You need to move to provide or receive some care and support<br>• You are suffering financial hardship and are at risk of becoming homeless<br>• You need to move as you share facilities with people who are not members of your household<br>• You need to leave your current housing which is tied to your employment | • No priority need.<br>• Those wishing to move house |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • You are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions<br>• You are residing in supported accommodation and have secured employment and need to move as continuing to reside in supported accommodation will cause you serious financial hardship<br>• You need to move urgently to give or receive support for ongoing health or social care reasons. A move would prevent hardship to you or someone else.<br>• You are 18 – 25 years of age and are receiving support from Together for Children and have an urgent need to move<br>• You need to move in order to accommodate or to continue to accommodate a child<br>• Your household is forced to live apart<br>• You need to be re-housed following your discharge from the Armed Forces or a relationship breakdown with a serving member of the Armed Forces<br>• Your home is within the Sunderland area - it is part of a regeneration scheme and is to be demolished or is subject to major building work | | |

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