

Oldham Council Allocations scheme

February 2026



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Introduction

- All local housing authorities in England are required to maintain an allocations scheme, pursuant to S.166A of the Housing Act 1996 (the Act). This is regardless of whether or not the authority owns the stock in its area or, as in the case of OMBC, forms part of a wider Common Allocations Framework (CAF) in which several different social landlords apply the same allocations policy.
- This scheme has been developed in line with relevant legislation and statutory guidance and sets out the criteria which will be used to allocate social housing, and the process to be followed, under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996. The accommodation this scheme applies to includes homes managed by members of the CAF; homes managed under PFI contracts for the council and other homes owned by Registered Providers with whom the council has a nominations agreement. The relevant legislation and guidance taken into account in adopting this scheme is contained in **Appendix 6**.
- There is no statutory requirement for the council to adopt a Housing Needs Register- or list of applicants- who have applied and have been accepted for rehousing under the scheme. However, the council has decided to operate a Housing Needs Register in the interests of fairness to applicants and the efficacy of operating the scheme.
- This scheme does not apply to certain categories of lets to social housing including assignment by way of mutual exchange; statutory succession, transfers of tenancy by Court order and internal transfers of tenants by a social landlord under the terms of their own lettings procedures by utilising their retained proportion of voids (if any). However, Registered Providers will be able to use the council's website to advertise properties with a priority to the allocating landlord. All social housing tenants in the borough may apply to join the Housing Needs Register and will be accepted providing they meet the eligibility and qualification criteria detailed in this scheme.

- This scheme also does not apply to other lets of housing administered by the council, such as units of temporary accommodation to homeless households, lets of assured shorthold tenancies by way of discharging a duty under Part VII of the Act, lets to gypsy/traveller plots, lets of commercial premises or lets of any home with non-secure tenure.

Aims of the scheme

- As there is a continued substantial demand for rented housing across Oldham, this scheme seeks to achieve a balance between enabling the council to fulfil its statutory duty to give reasonable preference to those in urgent need of housing, to allow fair access to all eligible housing applicants and also to promote more sustainable communities by, for example, allowing access to the Housing Needs Register to people with an established link to Oldham through work, volunteering, caring or residency.
- The scheme aims to provide:
 - A scheme that meets all legislative requirements.
 - Best use of our social housing stock to meet the needs of those in the most acute housing situations, particularly those who are homeless and in priority need; those at risk of violence or abuse and those with serious health conditions.
 - Assurance the Housing Needs Register accurately records housing needs in the borough.
 - A pathway into social housing for those with an established link to the community through residency, caring, working or volunteering.
 - Voids are let efficiently and in the minimum amount of time
 - Create and support sustainable neighbourhoods and communities
 - Choice to applicants balanced against the shortage of social housing.
 - A scheme that ensures that no group or individual is discriminated against as a result of this policy, to promote equal opportunities and have due regard to the elimination of discrimination.

Statement of Choice

- Applicants who have been accepted to join the Housing Needs Register will be able to exercise choice in regards to their housing. They will be able to express interest in properties by placing bids for available homes they qualify for. This is known as a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system. The vast majority of applicants will be able to place bids for suitable homes they want in areas of their preference using the council's CBL website. There are only a very few applicants who will have bids placed for them by officers or be direct matched to available properties. The council believes this provides a fairer scheme for applicants and is a more efficient use of council resources compared with a scheme which requires officers to direct match all available properties to applicants.

Common Allocations Framework

- A Common Allocations Framework (CAF) is in place in Oldham. The Registered Providers who are members of the framework allocate the majority of the homes they have available through Oldham Council's website. The partners of the CAF share this scheme for the majority of lettings.
- The CAF comprises the majority of Registered Providers operating in Oldham, who work together to develop, implement and review the approach to allocations in the borough.
- A list of the all the registered providers who are members of the Framework can be found at Appendix 7.

Amendments

- This allocations scheme will be subject to review on an annual basis. Amendments to the scheme will be approved by the Council's Director of

Communities and changes recorded in the chart at the beginning of this document. If significant policy changes are required the Council will undertake statutory consultation with key stakeholders including Registered Providers, Councillors and customers.

Eligibility and qualification

- To be eligible for an allocation of housing under this scheme, all applicants must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Be habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (aside from individuals described in regulation 6(2)(g),(l),(m),(n),(o) or (r) of the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility)(England) Regulations 2006)
 - b. Not subject to immigration control or in a class of person proscribed by the Secretary of State
- To qualify under the scheme, an applicant must:
 - a. Be at least 16 years old and have income sufficient to meet their housing costs
 - b. Have a **local connection** to the Oldham area
 - c. Have **capital** below the defined threshold
 - d. Not be guilty of **serious unacceptable behaviour**, including poor conduct during a previous tenancy and acts of housing related fraud
 - e. Be in a statutory **Reasonable Preference** or **Additional Preference group** or have a **locally identified housing need**
- To be accepted onto the Housing Needs Register, all applicants must meet both the eligibility and qualification criteria described above.
- The council will not accept applications from eligible applicants who do not meet the requirements of paragraph 14(e). Applicants in this situation will be assessed as 'adequately housed' and will not be able to access the Housing Needs Register.

- Certain eligible and qualifying applicants for reasons of past conduct, being intentionally homeless or having income above the defined threshold will receive reduced preference and placed into band 4.

Process to be followed (application)

- The council requires all applicants to apply through its website. Officers will be on hand to provide practical assistance to those who may encounter difficulties applying online for any reason. This may be by means of telephone assistance or by appointment at the Housing Options office.
- Applicants will have the opportunity to submit supporting documents via their online application portal. Applicants may also submit documents by providing them at the Housing Options office.
- All applicants will be required to submit proof of identification, NINO, bank statements (capital), proof of income and a 5 year address history.
- Applicants may submit an application without the required proofs but will be notified electronically through their application portal if there is further information to provide.
- If any information is not provided within 30 days the application will be closed and any new application will be assessed from the date of the new application
- Once all required information has been provided the council will issue its decision letter within 10 working days. The assessment will decide:
 - a. Whether the applicant is *eligible* to apply for social housing under this scheme
 - b. Whether the applicant *qualifies* under the scheme and, if so, what degree of priority they require
- All applicants must be both eligible for an offer of social housing and qualify under the scheme in order to be accepted onto the Housing Needs Register
- The decision letter will inform the applicant whether or not they have been accepted onto the Housing Needs Register. If they have not been accepted the letter will state the reasons for this. If they have been accepted the letter will inform the applicant of their:

- a. Priority group (band) and their priority date
- b. The type and size of property they are eligible to place bids for
- The decision letter will provide instructions on how to request a review of the decision if the applicant believes the decision is wrong (see: **reviews**)

Changes in circumstances

- All applicants are required to inform the council of any change in the circumstances relevant to their application. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Birth of a child
 - Household member leaving home
 - New person joining household
 - Move to alternative accommodation
 - Improvement or deterioration in medical condition.
- Applicants must inform the council within 4 weeks of the change having occurred.
- The council will also require all applicants to complete an annual review. This will ensure all applications are up to date and take into account relevant circumstances at all times. Applicants will be notified of their annual review date at least 4 weeks in advance.
- If an applicant fails to complete their annual review the application will be suspended. If the applicant fails to provide the requested information within 4 weeks the application will be cancelled.
- If an applicant informs the council of a relevant change in circumstances more than 4 weeks after the change occurred, the council will amend the priority date to the date on which the information was provided unless there are mitigating circumstances explaining why the information could not have been provided sooner.
- Any change in circumstances will be assessed in-line with this scheme. This means that following re-assessment, the applicant's priority may increase, reduce or they may no longer qualify under the scheme.

Process to be followed (advertising & letting)

- A landlord who is part of the CAF or who has a nominations agreement with the council will place an advert of an available property to let on the council's CBL website. The landlord may decide to place the advert prior to the property being ready to let, to ensure there is minimal turnaround between the previous tenant vacating and the new tenancy starting.
- The landlord will detail relevant property features and stipulate any particular requirements in its advert text. For example, if the property is adapted to the needs of a disabled person priority may be given to applicants who have a need for a property of this type.
- The council will decide whether there are any applicants on the Housing Needs Register who may require **direct matching**. If there is a potentially suitable applicant who is eligible for direct matching to the property, the council will inform the landlord of the applicant's details.
- If there are no potentially suitable applicants for direct matching the council will decide whether the advert needs to stipulate that the property will have priority for a certain group(s) in order to contribute to meeting its Lettings Plan priorities.
- Properties may be advertised at any time. Each listed property will have a closing date within which the customers will need to register their bids. Usually, properties will be advertised for a minimum of 3 working days.
- Applicants who are suspended due to being under offer to another property or because further information is required to assess their circumstances will not be able to bid.
- Once the bidding period ends, the CBL system will sort all bids in order of their priority banding group to create a shortlist. If there are any stipulations added to the advert, the system will sort applicants by banding group and stipulation. For example: if a level access property was advertised with a priority for applicants with an assessed medical need for such accommodation, applicants who meet this priority will be considered first in band order. If the advert states that priority will be given to those in a

particular Reasonable Preference group, those applicants will be considered first.

- Shortlists will be ordered by banding group, with applicants bidding from the emergency band being considered first, then band 1, and so on. When a shortlist produces applicants from the same band, both of whose circumstances meet any particular advert requirements, priority will be given to the person with the earliest band date. If the dates are the same, priority will be given to the applicant who was registered on the scheme the earliest. If those dates are the same, the priority will be given to the applicant who placed their bid first.
- The relevant landlord will initiate contact with the successful bidder to discuss and make arrangements for the tenancy allocation process.
- If the landlord determines that the person at the top of the list is unable to be a tenant of the property for any reason, the landlord will notify the council of the reasons for this. The landlord will then make contact with the applicant next on the shortlist. This process will continue until the shortlist is exhausted.
- If no suitable tenants can be sourced from the shortlist the landlord will be able to re-advertise the property. If this does not produce a suitable tenant then the council will be able to direct match the property to an applicant from the Housing Needs Register.
- Registered Providers who are not part of the CAF and who do not have a nominations agreement with the council are welcome to place adverts of properties on Oldham's CBL website. The landlord should make contact with the Housing Options service to discuss the process and any fees which may apply.

Refusals

- If, at any stage, the applicant refuses an offer of accommodation the council considers was reasonable, the application will initially be downgraded to Band 4 for 12 months. After the 12 months their application will be not automatically re-instated but an assessment of their housing need will be

carried out and they will be awarded a priority based on their circumstance at that time of the new assessment. If the applicant refuses another offer of accommodation, the application will be cancelled.

- Factors the council will consider in determining whether an offer was reasonable include:
 - Whether the information provided in the property advert enabled the applicant to make an informed choice to place a bid
 - Whether the location of the property increases the risk of violence, abuse or intimidation
 - Whether the applicant, due to circumstances beyond their control, cannot take up the offer of accommodation.

Decision makers

- Officers within the council's Housing Options service will make all decisions pertaining to the administration of this scheme. The table below details which officers will be responsible for decision making:

Decision (on)	Officer responsible (minimum level)
Eligibility, qualification and priority to be awarded; whether to stipulate priority in advert to meet Lettings Plan targets	Allocations Officer
Requests for review	Independent Allocation Officer
Direct match	Housing Register and Customer Support Manager (HRCSM)
Sensitive let	Housing Register and Customer Support Manager (HRCSM) in conjunction with relevant landlord
Exceptions to Policy	Head of Housing Needs
Local Lettings Policy	Housing Register and Customer Support Manager (HRCSM)/ Head of Housing Needs in conjunction

	with relevant landlord and elected portfolio holder
Amendments to the allocation scheme	Deputy Chief Executive

QUALIFYING CRITERIA

Local connection to Oldham

- An applicant will have established a local connection to Oldham if they meet either of the following criteria:
 - a. They meet the definition of local connection defined in S.199 of the Housing Act 1996
 - b. They are any of the following:
 - In paid work in Oldham
 - in a work-related training placement in Oldham
 - volunteering in Oldham for a minimum of 16 hours/month with a constituted tenants/residents organisation; a registered charity or not for profit organisation. The qualifying person must have been carrying out volunteering activity for at least 6 months and be able to verify this.
 - Performing a caring role for a vulnerable person who lives in Oldham
 - currently serving in the regular forces or who were serving in the regular forces at any time in the five years preceding their application for an allocation of social housing
 - bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service
 - existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service

- have been determined as being owed the full homelessness duty by the council under section 193 (2).
- High risk victims of Domestic Abuse who are subject to MARAC and who need to move to Oldham as part of an agreed safety plan
- Applicants who are social housing tenants in another area of England who need to move because they work in the Oldham MBC area or need to take up an offer of employment in the area should refer to paragraph 139 of this scheme.

Income & capital threshold

- The council considers that applicants who own a share (in whole or in part) in a home in the UK or abroad either outright or with a mortgage are generally not to be treated as in a category of housing need and so applications from people in these circumstances will be disqualified.
- An exception to this rule would be where an applicant falls into one of the emergency groups detailed in the banding scheme and whose equity in the property is not reasonably likely to be able to secure a purchase of a suitable home on the open market.
- Applicants who have savings in excess of £16,000 (or £10,000 for applicants who have not included children to be rehoused) will receive reduced preference and placed into band 4. The council considers it likely that such applicants would be able to secure a suitable home under the terms of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy in the private rented sector in the borough. The council also considers the threshold of £16,000 to be reasonable as it is consistent with the threshold set by central government regarding entitlement to Universal Credit.
- The council will take into account previous disposals of assets or capital when determining whether to disqualify applicants for these reasons. If, for example, an applicant has made a large recent purchase(s) of non-essential items which brings their savings below the threshold, or transferred cash or assets to others, then the council may treat these actions as having not occurred.
- Irrespective of their current housing need, applicants with children included on the application whose total net household income is above £60,000 per

annum (and applicants without children whose net household income is above £35,000 per annum) will receive reduced preference and placed into band 4.

- The council at all times reserves the right to investigate and verify the circumstances of applicants. If the applicant is unable to account for their capital or income, the council will disqualify the application. If false information is provided or information material to the assessment is concealed by an applicant, the council will disqualify the application and consider taking enforcement action.

Serious unacceptable behaviour, deliberately worsening housing conditions and fraud

- A person will not qualify under this scheme if:
 - s/he or a member of the household is considered to be guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour, and
 - at the time of the application or offer of housing, they are still deemed to be unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of that behaviour.
- Unacceptable behaviour can include (but is not limited to):
 - Owing significant **housing related debt** (either former or current tenancy). Includes: rent arrears and rechargeable repairs where there is no agreement to repay; or an agreement has not been adhered to
 - Failing to comply with a current or past tenancy agreement with a council, Registered Provider or private landlord, which led to the landlord seeking or obtaining a possession order
 - Conviction for illegal or immoral purposes
 - Causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors
 - Committing certain criminal offences in or near the home and still posing a threat to neighbours or the community
 - Being violent towards a partner or members of the family
 - Allowing the condition of the property to deteriorate
 - Allowing any furniture provided by the landlord to deteriorate due to ill treatment

- Obtaining a tenancy by deception, for example, by giving false information
 - Paying money to illegally obtain a tenancy
 - Losing accommodation provided in connection with employment due to conduct making it inappropriate for the person to reside there
 - Abandoning a previous tenancy
 - Misusing prescribed or illegal substances unless there is evidence to show that the applicant is adhering to a drug reduction programme and the support provider confirms this
 - Behaving in a threatening manner.
-
- The council will also consider during its assessment whether the applicant has:
 - Deliberately worsened their housing conditions
 - Provided fraudulent information or withholds information in connection with their application.
 - Examples of deliberately worsening housing conditions include: moving out of, or altering, accommodation which would have been reasonable to continue occupying; committing actions to unnecessarily overcrowd the household.
 - Under section 171 of the Housing Act 1996, it is a criminal offence when an applicant knowingly or recklessly makes a statement which is false in a material particular, or knowingly withholds information which the authority have reasonably requested him to give in connection with the allocation of housing. An offence is also committed if the applicant allows a third party to provide false information on his or her behalf or at his or her instigation.
 - If the council decides that an applicant (or person acting on their behalf) has given false information or withheld information, it will disqualify the application and consider taking legal advice with a view to prosecution.
 - The council reserves the right to suspend an application if there is a suspicion any aspect of it may be fraudulent, pending an investigation into the circumstances.

- If the council or landlord determines a tenancy was granted as a result of false information, the landlord may seek possession of the property under Ground 5 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985.
- In making a decision to disqualify an applicant, the council will judge the situation on a case-by-case basis. Factors it will consider can include: The relevance of any convictions and whether they are spent or unspent; the severity of the behaviour; the likelihood of it repeating and any compliance with any rehabilitation requirements or willingness to repay housing related debt, etc.
- If an applicant is disqualified for any reason the council will write to the applicant to inform them of the decision and the grounds for it. The letter will provide instructions for how to request a review of the decision if they disagree with it. A disqualified applicant can reapply to the Housing Needs Register in the future if they can evidence there has been a significant improvement in their behaviour. Examples of evidence signifying improvement:
 - Proof of repayment of arrears or rechargeable repairs; adherence to repayment plans
 - Evidence of compliance with a rehabilitation programme
 - Letter of support from a professionally qualified person with knowledge of the applicant's case- e.g. a Probation Officer or Social Worker

Reasonable Preference

- Part Vi of the Housing Act 1996, amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires local authorities to give *Reasonable Preference* – or priority- to the following categories of applicant:
 - A- People who are homeless
 - B- People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are

occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3)

C- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions

D- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to disability) and:

E- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others)

- There is no requirement to give equal weight to applicants within the Reasonable Preference (RP) criteria; the council can decide to give applicants within certain RP groups greater priority than those in other RP groups. The council may also decide to give other classes of qualifying applicants greater or equal priority to those in statutory RP groups, so long as the priority to those applicants does not dominate the scheme at the expense of those within RP groups.
- The council defines its own indicators of need within the *insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing* and *medical or welfare* RP groups. Appendix 1 details how the council will determine whether an applicant meets one of these criteria.

Additional Preference

- The council must give Additional Preference (AP) to certain classes of applicants from the Armed Forces community who fall within one of the RP groups and have urgent housing needs, being:
 - former members of the Armed Forces
 - serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
 - bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner

- serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
- The Council will also give AP to other eligible, qualifying applicants who need to move due to:
 - Life threatening illness or sudden disability
 - Those who are homeless and require urgent re-housing as a result of violence or threats of violence
- The council will place any eligible, qualifying applicant whom it assesses as having Additional Preference into the highest priority banding group providing they meet the definition outlined in the table in paragraph 107.
- In cases of applicants who present as statutorily overcrowded- i.e. those who live in accommodation which contravenes the room and or space standards detailed in the Housing Act 1985- the council will investigate the circumstances which gave rise to the overcrowding. This may involve a referral to the council's environmental health service to consider enforcement action and an assessment of the situation under the council's Part VII homelessness duties.
- Where the household can remain in severely overcrowded conditions until such a time as a suitable Part VI offer is available, the council will consider whether the household separately meets the urgent medical/welfare criteria detailed in the banding table.

Locally identified housing need

- The council will also permit other eligible and qualifying applicants not in a statutory RP or AP group to join the Housing Needs Register where to do so will contribute to the council's wider housing and corporate objectives. This includes:
 - Applicants who are under-occupying social housing
 - Applicants not utilising adapted social housing

- Applicants who remain in accommodation which was obtained by having voluntarily agreed to a previously owed prevention or relief duty being ended by provision of privately rented accommodation
 - Applicants who wish to provide fostering services to the council and require a secure home of an appropriate size
 - Oldham council care leavers who would benefit from secure social housing
- Applicants who are eligible and qualifying must be in either one of the Reasonable Preference, Additional Preference or Locally Identified Housing Need groups detailed above in order to receive a priority band.
 - Applicants who are eligible and qualifying but are not assessed as having Reasonable Preference, Additional Preference or a locally identified housing need will be placed into group 4 and will only be able to place bids for properties which have been readvertised due to the original shortlist having being exhausted.

PROVISIONS RELATING TO ALL ALLOCATIONS

Property size eligibility

- The government's Bedroom Standard will be used to assess the property size appropriate for the household. Applicants will only be considered for accommodation with a suitable number of bedrooms or bed spaces for their household.
- The council will award an additional bedroom(s) to applicants who have a household member(s) who, for reasons of medical, welfare or disability absolutely requires a bedroom of their own, or who has a registered carer who needs to provide overnight care or requires an additional room for medical/disability related equipment.
- The council will also award an additional bedroom to applicants who are approved foster carers, or who are applying to adopt a child, but cannot do so because their current property has been deemed too small for the

addition of a child into the household. The council's Children's Services department will support applications on this basis.

- Properties advertised will vary in overall size and will therefore have a specified number of bedspaces. Households will be matched to properties which meet or exceed their established need. For example, a three-bedroom property will have either 4, 5 or 6 bedspaces. A household of 5 people will be made offers of three-bedroom accommodation with either 5 or 6 bedspaces; studio flats are only suitable for 1 person and so will be allocated to single people and not couples.
- The council will permit some applicants with more than one RP category to make bids for properties which are one bedroom or 1 bedspace smaller than their assessed bedroom need providing: this does not result in a statutory overcrowding situation; the allocation results in an overall improvement in housing conditions and the landlord nominated to agrees.
- The council will permit all applicants who are downsizing from 3 bedroom (or larger) social housing to bid for properties of up to two bedrooms in size (see: **Downsizers**). The applicant will need to demonstrate they can afford to pay the rent on a 2 bedroom property and the landlord nominated to must agree to the property being under-occupied. The council must receive the resulting vacancy from the landlord.
- Under-occupancy by applicants who are not downsizing from larger social housing can be permitted to a maximum of 1 bedroom. This will be considered on rare occasions where there are no suitable bidders requiring a property of that size and applicants would be subject to an affordability assessment.

Property type eligibility

- Applicants who are accepted onto the Housing Needs Register will be advised of the property size and type they are able to be offered.
- Most applicants will be able to place bids for any property type (e.g. flats, houses, bungalows).

- Some applicants will not be offered certain types of property. For example: an applicant who requires level access accommodation due to disability will not usually be made offers of properties above the ground floor with no lift.
- Where a property is adapted for use by a disabled person, preference will be given to applicants with the highest priority whose needs best match the facilities of the particular property. For example: a property with level access will usually be allocated to an applicant who requires use of such a property. Where a particular property has been purpose-built or specially adapted, the council in consultation with the Community Occupational Therapist may make a direct match or bid specifically on behalf of applicants whose needs can be best met by the property.
- Houses will be offered in preference to households with children aged 16 and under unless the applicant has a specific medical/welfare/disability related reason for a home of that size.

Who may be included in an application

- The council will require all applicants and household members included on an application to have a need to live together and demonstrate a long-term commitment to the home.
- The need to live together is defined as:
 - A requirement to give or receive care in the home- e.g. parents and children; carers of another adult household member
 - Longstanding family arrangements- e.g. where children of an applicant have reached aged 18 years but remain living in the family home
- Long-term commitment to the home is defined as:
 - All household members included on an application will have lived together for at least 12 months at the date of application
 - All household members must genuinely live in the application address as their only or principal home and have no other accommodation it would be reasonable for them to occupy.

- The council will verify the need to live together and long term-commitment to the home by requiring the applicant to produce evidence. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Proof of Child Benefit award
 - Proof of Carer's Allowance
 - Child Arrangement Order
 - Current and previous tenancy agreements and records
 - Current and previous Housing Benefit, Council Tax and DWP records
 - School registration details
 - NHS records (such as GP registration address details)
- In cases of shared custody of children, the council will require evidence that the child resides at the application address more than half of nights in a calendar year.
- Children will only be listed on one housing application at any one time.
- Where an applicant has included a child previously rehoused by the council when in the care of another, the council will not include the child in the application. This is unless it is necessary to provide the child with a new home due to safeguarding reasons, or matters arising from family court proceedings brought by the council. Rehousing that child in a new household will be supported by the council's Children's Services department.
- In all cases, children must have lived at the application address for 12 months at the point of application. The exceptions are: newly born and newly fostered/adopted children and those need to move due to safeguarding/child protection reasons.

Applications from and allocations to board members, staff members and councillors

- In order to ensure the council is seen to treat all applicants fairly, the application form will ask the applicant to identify whether they or a household member is a:

- Elected member of Oldham Council
- Employee or board member of the council or any registered provider operating in Oldham
- Family member of any of the above
- Family members are defined as anyone who shared a legal or blood bond. Legal bonds include marriages, civil partnerships, adoptions, and guardianships. Blood bonds exist between individuals who are directly related through a common ancestor. This includes both close and distant relatives such as siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins.
- Applications to the Housing Needs Register from those who meet the criteria above and who have Reasonable Preference will be assessed in the normal way, but registration, eligibility, qualification, and the assessment of Reasonable Preference will require the approval of two senior officers employed by the council.
- Any allocation of accommodation to those with or without Reasonable Preference will require the joint approval from a senior officer of the relevant Registered Provider and the relevant Director of the council.

Applicants in prison or on remand

- Applicants already registered on the Housing Needs Register, who are then sent to prison or placed on remand, will be able to remain on the Register, but their application will be suspended. They will be advised to contact the Housing Options service with confirmation of the date of their release from custody or remand to enable their records to be updated. Applicants can actively bid for properties up to 56 days before their release.
- Applicants who wish to apply to join the Housing Needs Register from a prison or remand centre may do so. If the applicant is eligible and qualifies to join the scheme, their application will remain suspended until the date of their release is established. 56 days before the expected release date the application will be approved to bid for homes and may be made offers of accommodation.

- If an applicant will be homeless or threatened with homelessness on their release from custody or remand, they can request an interview with the Housing Options service.

Sustainability risk assessment

- A Sustainability Risk Assessment will be used to determine if an applicant has the skills and financial means required to manage a tenancy. This may include an affordability assessment. The risk assessment may be carried out before a firm offer of accommodation is made. It is the responsibility of the Landlord offering the tenancy to undertake such checks. The applicant will not be charged for this assessment.
- If the applicant is considered to be medium or high risk, this does not necessarily deem them unsuitable for housing. Tenancies may be offered subject to specific conditions, such as the requirement to engage in tenancy support either from the Landlord or partner agencies. All conditions are subject to Landlord discretion.
- In extreme cases applicants may be classed as unsuitable and deemed too high risk to sustain a tenancy. In these cases the reason for the unsuitability will be explained and the applicant will have the right to request a review of the decision by the Landlord.

Applicants requiring support

- If an applicant has been assessed as needing support to sustain a tenancy and such support is not in place, has been declined or cannot be arranged before the proposed tenancy commencement date, an offer of accommodation will be held until such support is in place. If this cannot happen in a reasonable timeframe the council in conjunction with the relevant landlord will consider making an offer to another applicant. The council will consider whether to direct match another property to the applicant at the point they have support in place.
- **Management Discretion Priority**

Management Discretion Priority may be awarded at the discretion of the housing authority in exceptional circumstances where the standard allocation criteria do not adequately address the needs of a household. This priority is intended for cases involving urgent risk to health or safety, severe medical or welfare needs, safeguarding concerns, or other circumstances deemed exceptional by the authority. Allocation under Management Discretion is not automatic and requires approval by an authorised officer or panel, supported by appropriate evidence.

THE BANDS

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Direct Match only	
CBL	
Band 1	
Emergency (additional preference) & Exceptional group	
Category	Definition
1. Emergency- medical & welfare	Includes: applicants living in accommodation which poses an imminent & unavoidable risk of serious harm who have no other reasonable housing options; applicants who, due to sudden illness or disability are permanently unable to access the home or basic facilities within it (e.g. a toilet) and adaption is not feasible; former members of the Armed Forces who have urgent housing needs; serving or former members of the Armed Forces suffering from a serious injury attributable to their service; bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner; serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.
2. Emergency- violence, abuse, intimidation	Applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social housing tenants in Oldham whose landlord requires the tenant to move for this reason and are unable to accommodate from

	<p>within their retained proportion of voids. The resulting vacancy will be returned to OMBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High Risk victims of domestic abuse who are subject to MARAC as part of an agreed safety plan.
3. Emergency- Prohibition Order	Criteria is a notice served by OMBC under S.20 Housing Act 2004 and conditions at the property must present an imminent threat of serious injury to the occupant(s) or be life-threatening.
4. Compulsory Purchase/Decant	<p>Applies to social housing tenants in Oldham whose landlord requires them to move due to estate regeneration*, or because a decision has been taken to permanently dispose of the property they live in. The relevant landlord must be a CAF member or have a nominations agreement with OMBC.</p> <p>* A special lettings plan may be agreed between the landlord and OMBC which allows the tenant to take part in choice based lettings. In this case a new category in one of the groups below will be created.</p>
5. Management Discretion	An exceptional housing priority awarded at the discretion of the housing authority for urgent risk, severe medical or welfare needs, or other extraordinary circumstances, outside the normal allocation criteria.
6. Oldham Care Leavers	Young people leaving care who, due to their needs, require an offer of social housing.
7. Giving up 3+ bedroom social housing	Applies to social housing tenants in Oldham where the resulting vacancy will be returned to OMBC.
8. Giving up extensively adapted social housing	Applies to social housing tenants in Oldham where the resulting vacancy will be returned to OMBC. In the main this refers to fully wheelchair accessible accommodation that is no

	longer required by the tenant/occupier.
Band 2	
Reasonable Preference and locally identified housing need- upper	
Category	Description
1. Main Housing Duty	Applicants who are homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless (s.193(2))
2. Homeless at home	Applicants who have received notification that the council has met either the s.188 or s193(2) duty to accommodate because the applicant elected to remain in their present accommodation on a temporary basis
3. Prevention duty (priority need)	Those owed the S.195(2) duty who have children, are pregnant or would likely be found to be in a Priority Need group due to vulnerability
4. Giving up 2 bedroom social housing	A social housing tenant in the borough who is giving up 2 bedroom accommodation to move to a smaller property, and the resulting vacancy will be given to OMBC
5. Giving up adapted or ground floor social housing	A social housing tenant in the borough who is giving up a ground floor property to move to a higher floor, or who is giving up a home with adaptations (such as a level access shower) to move to a non-adapted property on at least the first floor
6. Supported Accommodation Move-on	Applicants who live in accommodation that is intended to provide short-term housing and support and where the support provider confirms the applicant has satisfactorily completed a programme of intensive housing-related support and is ready to move into independent living. This includes young people leaving care (from outside of the borough) who, due to their needs, require an offer of social housing.
7. Applicants who have more than one reasonable preference category	Applicants who qualify under at least two of the criteria from band 2, categories 3-6.
Band 3	

Reasonable Preference and locally identified housing need- lower	
Category	Description
1. Prevention duty	Includes: Those who are owed the homelessness prevention duty S.195(2) but who are not placed in band 2, category 3
2. Those who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996)	Includes: the initial relief duty owed to all eligible persons who are homeless (189B[2]); rough sleepers; those who have no accommodation, those who have accommodation but it would not be reasonable to occupy; those who have accommodation but cannot secure access or, in the case of movable structures has no lawful place to keep it
3. Overcrowded, insanitary or otherwise unsatisfactory	Applicants occupying insanitary, overcrowded or unsatisfactory housing conditions. For a list of criteria, see appendix 1.
4. Medical, welfare inc. disability	Applicants who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds related to a disability. For a list of criteria, see appendix 2.
5. Hardship	Applicants who need to move to a certain locality in the borough of Oldham where failure to meet that need would hardship to themselves or others.
6. Category 1 Hazard	Applicants living in a private rented tenancy in the borough whose situation, despite intervention from the council's environmental health team, is unlikely to be resolved within 6 months
7. Continuing duty	Applicants to whom the council previously owed a prevention or relief duty under Part VII who voluntarily agreed to the duty being ended by provision of private rented accommodation, remain living in that accommodation and wish to reapply to the housing register. This is regardless of whether they otherwise would be considered 'adequately housed' (Band 4)

Band 4 Reduced Preference	
Category	Description
1. Refusal penalty	Applicants who refuse one offer of accommodation and the council was satisfied the offer was reasonable-will be placed into this band for 12 months. If another offer is refused at any time, applicant will be disqualified.
2. Housing related debt	Applicant owes housing related debt to OMBC or CAF landlord but no agreement in place to pay this or payment plan not being adhered to
3. Intentionally homeless	When the council has made a decision at any time under its Part VII obligations that the applicant is homeless intentionally; includes those who are in priority need
4. Unacceptable behaviour	Applicants previously in a higher band found to have committed behaviour making them unsuitable to be a tenant will be placed into this band for 12 months and consideration will be made to removing them from the housing register
5. Income threshold	Eligible & qualifying applicants from any reasonable or additional preference category whose household income is above the defined threshold

- Applicants in the emergency band, groups will have their circumstances reviewed after 4 months of their band date award. If the applicant has not moved, the council will consider whether their emergency status is still necessary. If there has been an improvement in circumstances the applicant will either be placed into the band they previously occupied, or, removed from the Housing Needs Register if they no longer qualify.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Lettings Plan

To assist the council in monitoring performance against its corporate objectives, including its homelessness reduction goals, the council will produce an annual

lettings plan. The plan will detail approximately how many properties it expects to receive for advert each year by size and type and which categories of applicants within each banding category it anticipates will fill those property vacancies. (See exhibit 1)

- The council believes the banding system provides an appropriate balance between prioritising people in statutory Reasonable Preference groups and making the best use of our limited stock in the borough in line with its strategic objectives.
- There may be times when the council decides it needs to give greater weight to certain categories of applicants to help achieve this balance. This means that the council may decide to advertise certain vacancies with a priority to applicants from one (or more) of the categories listed in the banding table. If, for example, the council has an unsustainable number of families living in temporary accommodation, it may indicate in certain property adverts that bids will be considered first from applicants in band one, categories one, two or three before others..
- The lettings plan will be reviewed annually or as required and can be viewed at appendix 4.

Downsizers

- The council considers that in order to make best use of the social housing stock available in the borough it should take all reasonable steps to encourage under-occupied homes to be made available to families who require them.
- The council will incentivise and support those who are living in social housing of at least three bedrooms to move to a smaller home should they wish.
- Applicants downsizing from three bedroom or larger accommodation will be permitted to bid for properties with two bedrooms, even if they are a single person or a couple with no children living with them.

- The council will provide a cash amount per bedroom given up to those who accept an offer of a property, payable upon their tenancy at a new home starting.
- The council will also offer other financial support to those who are downsizing from three bedrooms to assist with their move. This will include payment of removals fees and cash/vouchers for essential items such as flooring or white goods.
- The council will also offer practical support to downsizers who require it and an officer will be on hand to assist in bidding or being direct matched for suitable new homes; arranging removals and acting as a point of contact throughout the downsizing process.
- The cash value of incentives and support will be reviewed periodically. At the date of commencement of this scheme, the amount per bedroom given up shall be up to £1,500 with an up to additional £750 towards removals, flooring or white goods.
- Rightsizing (See exhibit 2)

Local lettings policies (LLP)

- Registered providers, including members of the Oldham CAF, may request LLPs for certain neighbourhoods to address specific local issues and/or to help to build sustainable communities in the case of new-build homes. Properties which are subject to a LLP will have additional criteria applied in relation to the applicants who are eligible to apply for the property.
- The Council will make the decision about whether to implement a LLP in consultation with the relevant landlord. Any decision to implement a LLP will consider the implications for equal opportunities and the need for the council's scheme overall to meet the allocation needs of those owed a Reasonable Preference. LLPs will be subject to review initiated by the council. The review will consider whether the policy is still relevant and effective.
- The Council reserves the right to apply any criteria to LLPs whilst meeting the statutory duty for Reasonable Preference.

- Any request for a LLP must include the following information:
 - The period of time for which the LLP will be operational
 - Extent of area affected by the LLP
 - Aims and objectives of the LLP
 - Suitability of the eligibility criteria
 - Details of the selection process and any additional selection criteria
 - Consultation on the proposed LLP
 - An equality impact assessment
 - Details of how the properties will be advertised and how applications will be verified
 - Monitoring and review process
 - Any additional considerations

Offers to homeless applicants

- For cases for whom the council has accepted a full homeless duty under sections 193 (2) or 195 (2) the council may decide to make a direct match which will fully end its Part 7 homelessness duty.
- The Council may exercise the powers granted by s.148 of the Localism Act 2011 to end the homelessness duty by making an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, without requiring the applicant's agreement.
- Where an applicant owed a full homelessness duty successfully bids for accommodation, or is direct matched to a property, the offer will be the applicant's final offer and will end the council's homelessness duty if it is a suitable offer and is refused.
- An applicant will be required to leave any temporary accommodation they occupy and make their own accommodation arrangements.
- An applicant will continue to have a right of review under the homelessness legislation as to the suitability of the accommodation offered. Therefore homeless applicants are strongly advised to accept the offer that has been made even if they intend to challenge its suitability.

Young people leaving care

- The council wants to ensure that young people leaving the care of Oldham Council are helped to access secure and suitable long-term housing. Care leavers are awarded Reasonable Preference in this category in line with protocols between Oldham Council's Housing and Children's Services. Applicants must be a former relevant child as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2002.
- The criteria for an award of Reasonable Preference include:
 - A care leaver is ready to move to independent settled housing and is genuinely prepared for a move to independent living
 - They possess the life skills necessary to manage a tenancy, including managing a rent account
 - They need at least a medium-term support package
 - The support needs have been assessed and the support package is in place
 - The applicant's vulnerability is such that a private rented sector offer would through its short term, potentially insecure nature have a detrimental effect on their vulnerability
- Care leavers who have lower levels of need or who do not have a support package will be expected to be assisted by Children's Services and the Housing Options service to move on to private rented accommodation.

Older people's housing

- Applicants for older people's housing must be:
 - Aged at least 55 or 60 years (depending on the property concerned) or;
 - Have a need for supported accommodation due to vulnerability or disability.
- Older people's housing will be specifically marked when a property is advertised and clearly indicate the support service charges that are applicable.

Extra Care Housing

- Applicants who express an interest in Extra Care housing- social housing schemes for older people which provide onsite care and support- will be allocated following an assessment of their medical and social care needs. The assessment will be conducted via a panel which will include a representatives of: The Allocations service, the commissioned onsite care provider, the relevant landlord, the Adult Social Care service (e.g. the applicant's social worker) and the Adult Social Care Commissioning service. The Extra Care Housing Assessment and Allocation Guidance is appended.
- The application process, eligibility and qualification criteria detailed in this scheme applies to applicants to Extra Care housing. However the council will not normally advertise vacancies in its Choice Based lettings system.
- Instead, the council will direct match applicants to vacancies of the area and property type of their choice. Consideration will be given to the onsite commissioned care provider's ability to meet the needs of the applicant in the relevant scheme prior to making an offer of accommodation.
- Where there is more than one applicant potentially suitable for the property, it will be offered to the person who has been in the highest band the longest with consideration also being given to their care and support needs identified via Adult Social Care. Where there is more than one potentially suitable applicant for a vacancy, priority will be given to any applicant who would have either Additional Preference or any of the emergency/exceptional categories under the banding scheme. Applicants with reasonable preference or other locally identified housing need will be considered next in turn of qualification date.

The Right to Move

- Subject to the Allocations of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015, the council will not apply local residency criteria to social housing tenants in other areas of England who need to move because they work in or need to take up work in Oldham.

- The council will accept out of area applicants on this basis providing they can demonstrate: They need to move; the 'work' is neither short term or marginal in nature and not ancillary to work in another district. Work must be remunerated (i.e. not voluntary work).
- In determining whether the applicant needs to move and whether the work is short term or marginal or ancillary to work in another district, the council will consider the Secretary of State's recommendations outlined in the Statutory Guidance accompanying the Regulations at paragraphs 16-34.
- Applicants must at a minimum meet the criteria for the Hardship Reasonable Preference Category before the council will agree to dispense with the Local Connection qualification criteria detailed in this scheme.
- Applicants accepted on the basis of the Right to Move Regulations will not be permitted to bid through the CBL system. Instead, the council will set aside a maximum of 10 direct lets per annum. If an applicant refuses an offer, the council will cancel the application.

Serious offenders and applicants who present risk

- It is sometimes necessary to provide housing in a managed way which will minimise the risk to the community and allow supervision of the individual to be maintained. This may also apply to individuals currently living in the community who are considered to pose a risk to themselves and/or others, although they have not been convicted of an offence.
- The council will work with the police and probation services to assess and manage risk and will apply special arrangements where cases are referred through the Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPPA); any protocol with probation services or during day-to-day case management conducted between the Housing service and Adult Social Care or Health teams. Officers will attend case conferences with the police, probation, adult social care and health professionals to attempt to agree a planned and managed relocation pathway.
- This may result in restrictions being placed on the choice of property or area that is open to an applicant or may result in a direct offer of suitable

accommodation being made to an applicant at the point where they have sufficient priority under the scheme to receive such an offer.

Direct matching

- The council intends that the vast majority of its lettings under this scheme will arise from bids placed through Choice Based Lettings. However the council reserves the right to make direct offers at any time, for any reason to ensure it is able to meet the requirements of households and the council's corporate objectives. All applicants being considered for Extra Care Housing will be made a direct offer.
- Direct matches will, wherever possible, be considered prior to a property being advertised publicly. However in exceptional cases, the council may withdraw an advert to enable a direct match.
- Examples of when the council may consider a direct match to an applicant include, but are not limited to:
 - Those who are in the emergency/exceptional categories (Band 1)
 - To aid wider case management objectives- e.g. hospital discharge, MAPPA or MARAC cases
 - To support timely move-on from supported or temporary housing
 - To facilitate an emergency move for people at very high risk
 - To make a final offer of accommodation under Part VII
 - The allocation would benefit from being officer-led to ensure best use of stock. This can include officers creating 'allocation chains' to enable the resolution of the greatest level of housing need arising from a single initial vacancy
 - Where either the property has unusual characteristics or the household has unusual need and CBL cannot easily facilitate an appropriate lettings outcome
 - All applicants accepted to the Housing Needs Register on the basis of the Right to Move Regulations will be made one direct offer.

- To ensure the council continues to treat applicants equitably, the use of direct matching will be monitored. Authorisation for a direct match will be required from the officer identified in the chart in paragraph 47.

Exceptions to policy

- In order to be equitable in its treatment of applicants the council will adhere to the requirements of this policy in administering the scheme. On occasion there will be exceptional circumstances which necessitate a housing register/allocation decision being made outside of this scheme under management discretion.
- The officer(s) identified in the chart in paragraph 47 will be responsible for deciding any matters which cannot be resolved within policy. It is not intended that this discretion will be exercised in anything other than the most exceptional cases, such as an applicant who presents with unique or unusual circumstances which are not expressly or implicitly addressed in this scheme.
- In making a decision to exercise discretion, the decision maker will weigh the applicant's level of housing need against the overall aims of the scheme and the council's continued ability to act equitably towards all applicants.
- The use of exceptions to policy will be recorded and monitored to ensure the ongoing efficacy of the scheme.

Reviews

- An applicant has the right to request information pertaining to any decision about the facts of their case which is likely to, or has been, taken in respect of whether to allocate housing accommodation to them.
- An applicant has the right to request a review of any decision arising from matters considered in paragraph 154 and also the right to request a review of any decision taken as to whether they are ineligible for reasons of immigration control, or whether they qualify to join the scheme.

- To exercise their right to review, an applicant must request this in writing within 21 days from the date they were notified of the decision. An applicant may nominate a representative to make the request if they wish.
- An applicant (or their representative) should set out the reasons for requesting the review including why they disagree with the original decision and submit any evidence in support of their request.
- Upon receipt of a request for review, the council will acknowledge this request in writing and inform the applicant that their request will be considered by an officer in the Housing Options department. The reviewing officer will be at least one level senior to the person who made the original decision.
- An applicant may request to submit verbal representations. The reviewing officer will consider on a case-by-case basis whether this is necessary.
- The reviewing officer will complete their review and notify the applicant of their decision within 8 weeks. If the request is particularly complex, or if the applicant has submitted various pieces of information for consideration, the council may extend this deadline and will notify the applicant of this.
- The reviewing officer will inform the applicant of their decision in writing and set out the reasons for the decision. If the decision is to uphold an adverse decision, the reviewing officer will, where possible, provide housing options advice relevant to the applicant's circumstances.
- The decision notification shall state that if the applicant remains dissatisfied then they proceed to the second stage of the complaints process and the notification will explain the process for requesting this. When this stage results in a final response, applicants may then consider submitting a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). Applicants will usually have 12 months from the date of the final decision to log a case with the LGSCO.

Data protection

- The council will not divulge to any member of the public that a person is an applicant for social housing without the applicant's consent.
- All information held by the council relating to a person's application is subject to the General Data Protection Regulations. The council will seek the express consent of applicants to share personal information about them or any member of their household.
- Applicants have the right to request information held about them but submitting a Subject Access Request and receive a copy of information held on any computer or paper file. A reasonable charge may be levied for this.
- In certain circumstances and irrespective of whether consent has been obtained, relevant information may be shared about an applicant or their household member. This may include:
 - For the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime and fraud
 - In accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 (section 115)
 - Where there is a serious threat to the applicant or a third party, including staff or contractors
 - Where information is relevant to the management or support duties of the proposed landlord or support organisation to ensure the health and safety of the applicant, a member of their household or a member of staff.

Appendix 1

Reasonable Preference category C: indicators of overcrowded, insanitary or otherwise unsatisfactory housing conditions

Overcrowding

Overcrowding will be assessed by comparing a household's bedroom entitlement against the bedrooms which are available to them in their current accommodation. A bedsit is considered to have one bedroom and one bed space. In cases where an applicant lives in accommodation with two living rooms, the council may determine that this room is available as sleeping accommodation.

Enquiries will be necessary to establish the reasons for and likely duration of any overcrowding before any priority banding status is awarded.

The council will apply the Bedroom Standard in determining how many bedrooms a household will be entitled to. A bedroom will be allocated to:

- A person living together with another as husband and wife (whether that person is of the same sex or the opposite sex)
- All persons over the age of 21, who are not cohabiting
- Two children, whether of the same sex or not), aged less than 10 years
- Two persons of the same sex aged 10 to 20 years
- Two persons of the same sex where one person is aged between 10 years and 20 years and the other is aged less than 10 years
- Any person aged under 21 years in any case where he or she cannot be paired with another occupier of the dwelling so as to fall in one of the above categories

The bedroom requirement will be increased if any person within an applicant's household has a confirmed reason which absolutely necessitates their having a separate bedroom and their current accommodation is not adequate, e.g. if a bedroom is required for a registered carer who does not live permanently at the applicant's address but who stays overnight on a regular basis, or if an applicant needs a 'sterile room' for ongoing medical treatment, such as dialysis, or if the size and amount of prescribed equipment required due to their medical condition would not allow for reasonable use of 1 bedroom.

Applicants will only be considered for properties which meet their specific housing need, in terms of property size. The number of actual bed spaces required will be compared with those in a property to ensure that households are only considered for accommodation that meets their established housing need. For example, a three-bedroom property may have either 4, 5 or 6 bed spaces. Applicants who have a need for a property of this size will not be

allocated a three-bedroom property with fewer bedspaces than their need. Studio flats are considered to have one bedspace and are only suitable for a single person household.

Insanitary or otherwise unsatisfactory accommodation

Property condition

The fact that an applicant may be living in a property which is unfit for human habitation, e.g. by having inadequate ventilation or lighting, a lack of an inside WC or cooking facilities, having pest control issues, etc does not automatically mean that the authority must accept a duty to assist them under the Housing Act 1996 Part VI.

Before any priority banding is awarded to reflect the poor condition of an applicant's property, enquiries will be necessary to establish if the applicant has explored all reasonable avenues to effect essential repairs or improvements, e.g. by contacting the landlord responsible for maintaining the property with a view to getting repairs completed.

Private Sector Enforcement Officers will advise both applicants and the Housing Options Team on the specific options available to a household living in unsatisfactory conditions.

The award of a banding priority can only be made after consultation and liaison with a Private Sector Enforcement Officer to ensure a consistent approach. The Private Sector Enforcement Officer will make recommendations regarding priority.

Lacks exclusive use of facilities

The council considers that any eligible and qualifying applicant who lacks their own exclusive use of facilities in their present accommodation are living in unsatisfactory accommodation and will be considered in Reasonable Preference category C for the purposes of this scheme. Mostly this applies to: people living in shared accommodation such as HMOs; lodgers; people living with relatives or friends and those who are 'NFA' or 'sofa surfing' as they have

no housing. It does not apply to applicants who hold any tenancy (either solely or jointly) of a self-contained property; nor does it apply to the co-habiting spouse or partner of any person who holds any such tenancy, nor does it apply to applicants who own- in whole or in part- any property in the UK or abroad.

High-rise with children

The council may award Reasonable Preference to applicants living above the 4th floor with children aged 16 and younger. Each case will be reviewed individually, taking into account the landlord's current policy of children living at height.

Applicants seeking Older Person's housing

The council considers that any eligible and qualifying applicant who is at least 55 years of age and wishes to move to age-designated housing (either with or without onsite support) and who currently does not live in accommodation of this type is living in unsatisfactory housing for the purposes of this scheme and will be considered to be in Reasonable Preference category C.

Appendix 2

Reasonable Preference Category D: applicants who need to move on medical grounds, including grounds relating to a disability

In considering whether an applicant requires a move on grounds relating to health or disability, the council considers that all of the government's following suggested indicators of criteria relating to Reasonable Preference category D may apply:

- a mental illness or disorder
- a physical or learning disability
- chronic or progressive medical conditions (e.g. MS, HIV/AIDS)
- infirmity due to old age
- the need to give or receive care
- the need to recover from the effects of violence or threats of violence, or physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- ability to fend for self restricted for other reasons
- young people at risk
- people with behavioural difficulties
- need for adapted housing and/or extra facilities, bedroom or bathroom
- need for improved heating (on medical grounds)
- need for sheltered housing (on medical grounds)
- need for ground floor accommodation (on medical grounds)
- need to be near friends/relatives or medical facility on medical grounds
- need to move following hospitalisation or long term care

The presence alone of any particular medical condition or set of circumstances does not guarantee an award of Reasonable Preference on medical, welfare or disability grounds. The council will assess whether the current accommodation is causing, exacerbating or hindering recovery from the situation. The council will also consider whether it would instead be reasonable to stay in the current accommodation. For example: by providing adaptations to meet the access needs of a disabled person; by assisting with provision of care in the home or transport to receive care; in the case of victims of anti-social behaviour by taking relevant tenancy enforcement and police action against the perpetrators.

Appendix 3

Reasonable Preference category E: Hardship grounds

An award of Reasonable Preference Category E will be made where the applicant demonstrates that they:

- need to move to a particular locality within the Oldham MBC area to give or receive care; access specialised medical treatment or to take up an employment, education or training opportunity
- will be caused hardship if they are prevented from moving on these grounds

In determining whether to make an award for this reason, the council will consider the availability of transport links and the applicant's ability to utilise them as well as the means of the applicant's carer (if applicable) to travel to them to provide support. It will also consider whether appropriate support is available closer to the applicant's current home. In the case of employment, the council considers that work (or job offers) of a permanent nature of at least 16 hours per week to be employment relevant to this section. In the case of education or training opportunities, it will consider whether similar opportunities are available closer to the applicant's current home.

An award of Reasonable Preference E is not intended to apply to applicants who have needs in common with others, e.g.: those who wish to move closer to a child's school. That is unless there are particular overriding factors applying to the person which are not shared in common with others. In all cases, the council will require evidence that the applicant will be caused genuine hardship by not being able to move; e.g. evidence of the applicant's (or carer's) current income and expenditure.

Appendix 4- Lettings plan 2026-2027

To assist the council in achieving its corporate objectives, including its homelessness reduction goals, the council will produce a lettings plan. The plan details the proportion of vacancies it anticipates will go to each category of applicant over a one-year period through Choice Based Lettings (CBL), by property size.

The council believes the anticipated proportion of lets by category in the table will adequately address a wide range of housing need in the borough. However, many factors can influence lettings performance and who ultimately is allocated a particular property through CBL. Therefore, if the council believes its lettings plan targets are not being met, it will restrict bidding to- or prioritise- certain applicants for some vacancies. E.g., if there is a rise in homelessness, the council is not achieving its proportion of lets to homeless households, or it requires greater move-on opportunities for people ready to leave supported accommodation it may consider applicants from band 2, category 1 and/or category 2, etc, before all other bidders.

EXAMPLE:

Band & category	OP accom	1bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
All Band 1	10%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%
Band 2 cat 1	2.5%	17.5%	30%	37.5%	37.5%
Band 2 cat 2	1%	5%	30%	37.5%	37.5%
Band 2 cat 3-7	25%	25%	10%	5%	5%
Band 3 cat 1-3	30%	12.5%	7.5%	5%	5%
Band 3 cat 4-6	25%	15%	5%	1%	1%
Band 3 cat 7	5%	12.5%	5%	1%	1%

All Band 4	<5%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The plan will be reviewed annually or as required through regular monitoring of lettings and housing needs data and will be agreed with the relevant Director and portfolio holder. The plan will be developed in conjunction with the Common Allocation Framework Providers.

Appendix 5

Extra Care Housing

Assessment and Allocation Guidance October 2023



ECH Procedure and
Guidance Oct 2023 (

APPENDIX 6

LIST OF LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The following statutes, statutory guidance and regulations have been considered in drafting this scheme:

- Section 17 Childrens Act 1989
- The 1996 Housing Act (Part VI) as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- The Housing Act 1996 (Part VII) as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England (MHCLG 2012, as amended) including:
 - Providing social housing for local people (December 2024)
 - Right to Move and social housing allocations (March 2015)
 - Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse (January 2022)
 - Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces (December 2024)
- The Allocation of Housing (qualification criteria for Armed Forces Personnel) (England) Regulations 2012 and supplementary statutory guidance December 2013
- Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- Allocation of housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations
- Homeless Strategy 2021 (OMBC)
- Tenancy Strategy 2015 (OMBC)

APPENDIX 7

LIST OF COMMON ALLOCATIONS FRAMEWORK (CAF) MEMBERS

Provider	Address	Telephone	Website
Oldham Council	Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham OL1 1UT	0161 770 3000	www.oldham.gov.uk
First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO)	22 Union Street Oldham OL1 1BE	0161 393 7117	www.fcho.co.uk
Guinness Northern Counties	3 Argyle Parade Darnhill, Heywood Rochdale OL10 3RY	0845 605 9000	www.ncha.co.uk
Onwards	Quay Plaza 2 1 st floor – Lowry Mall Salford Quays Salford M50 3AH	0345 620 1120	www.onwards.co.uk
Regenda	St Chad's Centre Limegreen Parade Oldham OL8 3HH	0344 736 0066	www.regenda.org.uk
ForHousing	2 Fircroft Road Fitton Hill Oldham OL8 2QN	0300 123 5522	www.fourhousing.co.uk
Housing 21	Housing 21 Units 403 / 404 Chambers Business Centre Chapel Road Hollinwood	0345 604 4447	www.housing21.co.uk

	Oldham OL8 4QQ			
Great Places	119 Union Street Oldham OL1 1TE	0161 3242	484	www.greatplaces.org.uk

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