

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Ealing Council's housing allocations policy?

The housing allocations policy sets out who is eligible to be considered for social housing by Ealing Council, how their housing needs will be assessed, and what relative priority their application will be given.

It also determines how Ealing's housing register or waiting list will work and how social housing in the borough will be allocated and let.

2. Why is the council proposing changes to its housing allocations policy?

Under the Localism Act 2011, councils were given more freedom to decide who can and cannot join their housing registers and who can be allocated social housing. Ealing Council used this freedom to change its allocation policy in 2012. Since that time, the Government has set out a number of new regulations which councils must incorporate into their policies. Ealing Council also believes that the demands placed upon social housing have also changed in recent years, and a more fundamental reassessment and revision of the policy is needed.

Fundamentally, the council believes it is now time to undertake the review of its current policy to make sure that social housing is offered to those with the highest housing needs. The policy must ensure that those in the highest need are prioritised to ensure that they have the best chance of being offered social housing in the future.

3. What are the main changes the council is proposing to make?

Ealing Council is proposing to:

- Reduce the number of priority bands from four to three by removing Band D.
- Consider what level of financial resources should make certain households ineligible to join the housing register, because they have sufficient assets and/or income to be able to source their own housing options.
- Place all who are residing to temporary accommodation into Band C and moving them to Band B after five years. Currently such households are placed in Band C and move to Band B when their temporary accommodation becomes unavailable. This can lead to random and inequitable results, with some households receiving permanent social housing before others due to events outside their or the council's control.
- Introduce a new band for homeless households which approach the council for assistance and are offered a property (most likely in the private rented sector) at the point where the council has prevented or relieved their homelessness with the offer of accommodation, with an award of Band C.
- Require same sex siblings of any age to share bedrooms rather than having the opportunity of their own room at 21. This reflects the shortage of housing supply in Ealing.
- Retain a 'move on' scheme, which is an annual quota of social housing lets for applicants placed by Ealing Social Services and agreed supported housing projects in the borough, but remove the quota rules so that more applicants can apply to be rehoused without the current time deadlines and reduction of the band from B to C.

- Introduce a new fostering and adoption priority, with an award of Band B and no quota levels for households which foster or adopt a child. This is aimed at supporting the council's objective of increasing adoption and fostering in the borough.
- Remove the 20% annual lettings quota for the following two groups:
 - The working households priority will remain, and eligible applicants will be awarded Band C.
 - The 'play by the rules' priority, for tenants who wish to transfer to alternative accommodation and have demonstrated they are a 'model' tenant by complying with the terms set out in the tenancy agreement, will be removed.
- With the proposed removal of Band D, all applicants eligible for sheltered housing will be awarded Band C.

The cumulative effects of these changes will be to reduce the size of the housing register to roughly 6,000 households. As those 6,000 households would have been those who would have received offers under the previous scheme, the council still believes that it will be meeting housing need in the borough. The proposals will however enable it to both manage expectations and target resources more effectively.

4. How will the changes affect me if I am in Bands A, B or C?

Unless your personal circumstances change, it is expected that the majority of households in Bands A and B will remain in those bands. Households in Band C will be affected, including homeless households which have been accepted by Ealing Council for more than five years and overcrowded households which have older children.

5. How will the changes affect me if I am in Band D?

Unless your personal circumstances have changed, you will be removed from the housing register.

6. I am in temporary accommodation. When will I be rehoused permanently?

The shortage of social housing locally means that you will have to wait for a number of years in temporary accommodation, with larger households waiting longer as larger social housing units become available less often. The council will advise you of other housing options, including social housing and private rented accommodation in Ealing, across London and outside of London.

7. I have savings of more than £24,000. Will I be eligible for social housing?

You are currently not eligible to join the housing register. However as we are consulting on both asset and income levels, it may be possible under the revised housing allocation policy.

8. How can I comment on the proposals being made?

The council is holding a statutory consultation for residents and organisations to provide their views and comments. You can find details at

www.ealing.gov.uk/AllocationReview.