

Questionnaire

Consultation on proposed changes to the Ealing Council's housing allocations policy

Introduction

Ealing Council is consulting on proposed changes to its existing housing allocations policy. Information you provide through this consultation will be used to inform the final policy. Your responses will not be linked to your existing housing application, if applicable, and will not impact on any services you currently receive from the council.

The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. All the information you provide as part of the public consultation will be used and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (incorporating the EU's GDPR).

This consultation will be open until 6 March 2020.

Proposal 1: Reduce the number of priority bands from four to three, by removing Band D

Current situation

The council uses a priority banding system to allocate social housing. Each applicant's current housing circumstances are assessed in line with the council's housing allocation policy and based on the information provided, the applicant is allocated a priority band (A, B, C or D), with the highest priority awarded to applicants in Band A through to the lowest priority for applicants in Band D. The current bands are determined using the following criteria:

- Band A - an urgent or emergency need for a household to be housed.
- Band B - a high priority to be housed based on the household's assessed housing needs.
- Band C - applicants with an identified housing need, which could be a statutory reasonable preference.
- Band D - all other applicants including those with no housing need.

The huge demand for social housing in the borough means that there are currently almost 9,500 households on Ealing's housing register. Most applicants on the register will not be offered a social housing tenancy, as there simply isn't enough social housing to go round. The council anticipates only 500 homes will become available as social lets in the current financial year.

Proposed change

The council believes that allowing households with no priority or identified housing need, and therefore little prospect of being housed, to join the housing register raises their expectations that they will receive an offer of housing when this is unlikely to happen.

The council proposes to reduce the number of bands from four to three. This means that:

- Bands A, B and C will remain, with all households with an identified housing need reassessed to be placed in a band.
- Households assessed as having no identified housing need will be removed from the housing register. They will be able to access information and advice about other housing options e.g. renting in the private sector, low cost ownership etc and accommodation in other parts of the UK.
- Households in Band D who may qualify for a different priority band, e.g. those applying for sheltered housing, will be moved to one of the remaining bands (A, B or C).

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the current four-band system should be replaced with a three-band system?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:					

Proposal 2: Review the current threshold of a household's financial resources, above which it would be ineligible to join the housing register.

A. Financial asset levels

Current situation

Applicants with more than £24,000 of financial assets, which can include but is not limited to monies held in bank accounts, savings, premium bonds, investment trusts, and/or financial interests by means of ownership in properties, etc., are not eligible to join the housing register.

Proposed change

The council previously consulted on the asset threshold in 2012 and would like to hear from households about what they consider is a reasonable financial asset level to be eligible to join the housing register.

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that £24,000 worth of financial assets is an appropriate threshold above which households become ineligible to join the housing register?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:					

B. Household income levels

Current situation

Applicants, including all members of the household, who have an income level of more than £60,000 per year, which can include salaries, pensions and other forms of income, are not eligible to join the housing register.

Proposed change

The council previously consulted on income threshold in 2012 and would like to hear from households about what they consider is a reasonable income threshold above which households become ineligible to join the housing register.

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that a household income of £60,000 is an appropriate threshold above which households become ineligible to join the housing register?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:					

C. Staggered income levels

Current situation

Currently, a single threshold of £60,000 is applied to any household applying to join the housing register, irrespective of the size of house they are applying for.

Proposed change

The council proposes adopting a staggered maximum income level on different bedroom size needs, which is as follows:

- Households requiring a one-bedroom property would have to earn less than £35,000 per year.
- Households required a two-bedroom property would have to earn less than £40,000 per year.
- Households requiring a three-bedroom property would have to earn less than £50,000 per year.
- Households requiring a four-bedroom property would have to earn less than £60,000 per year.

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following maximum income thresholds, depending on the size of house being applied for?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
Maximum household income of £35,000 for those applying for a one-bedroom property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please state the reasons for your answer below, including if you think the income threshold should be different from what we have proposed:						
Maximum household income of £40,000 for those applying for a two-bedroom property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please state the reasons for your answer below, including if you think the income threshold should be different from what we have proposed:						

Maximum household income of £50,000 for those applying for a three-bedroom property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please state the reasons for your answer below, including if you think the income threshold should be different from what we have proposed:						
Maximum household income of £60,000 for those applying for a four-bedroom property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please state the reasons for your answer below, including if you think the income threshold should be different from what we have proposed:						

Proposal 3: To change the banding priority relating to accepted homeless households and introduce a band priority for households assisted by the council under its homeless prevention and relief duties

Current situation

Households where Ealing Council has accepted a statutory homeless duty are required by law to be prioritised in an allocation policy. The current priority bandings awarded to homeless households are:

- Band B for those in temporary accommodation where the lease of said accommodation had ended and the council is required to hand back the property to the landlord.
- Band C for the remaining accepted households in temporary accommodation or homeless at home.

Proposed change

The council proposes that the difference in priority for accepted homeless households should be based on the length of the time the applicant has been agreed as being statutorily homeless by Ealing Council. The council is proposing that Band C is awarded to newly accepted homeless households, and on the fifth anniversary of their current acceptance date, the priority increases to Band B.

The Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017 made a number of changes to the council's duties in assisting households at risk of becoming homeless and where possible preventing and/or relieving homelessness by undertaking the necessary actions to reduce the need for households to move into temporary accommodation. These actions can include negotiating rent levels with landlords, assisting households with maximising their income or helping them to finding cheaper accommodation. Where households accept a prevention or relief option, the council will allow such households who apply to the housing register to be awarded a Band C priority.

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following proposals?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
Priority should be based on the length of time since the household was accepted as homeless by Ealing Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:						
Band C priority should be awarded to households where the council has previously helped to prevent or relieve their potential homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:						

Proposal 4: To amend the assessment criteria related to overcrowded households so that same sex siblings of all ages would need to share rooms

Current situation

The council assesses all household members in determining the household's priority reason and band, and where there are siblings aged 21 and older in the household, they are awarded their own room.

Proposed change

The council proposes continuing to assess all household members in determining the priority reason and band. However, same sex siblings of any age will be required to share rooms, which means that overcrowded households will be reassessed and may not be considered overcrowded and/or may have a lower banding priority and/or will require a smaller sized property for their future housing option.

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed change to determining overcrowding, so that same sex siblings of any age would be required to share rooms?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:					

Proposal 5: To amend the 'move on' quota priority

Current situation

The council sets aside an annual number of social lets for households assisted by Ealing Social Services and in agreed supported housing projects in the borough, and prioritises eligible households with a Band B.

Proposed change

The council proposes to maintain the 'move on' priority, but remove the numerical quota allowing for all individuals from the agreed list of departments and organisations to be considered within the 'move on' priority. Additionally, the band priority level will be moved from Band B to Band C to ensure that they receive a similar priority to statutory reasonable preference households which the council is legally required to prioritise within its policy.

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following changes to the 'move on' priority?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
Removing the existing quota limit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:						
Reducing priority levels for 'move on' households from Band B to Band C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:						

Proposal 6: To introduce a fostering and adoption priority category

Current situation

The council sets aside an annual number of social lets for households assisted by Ealing Social Services.

Proposed change

The council is proposing a new priority category for households which foster or adopt children through Ealing Council's children's service and require alternative housing. This priority will be awarded Band B.

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree the introduction of a new priority category for households which foster or adopt and require alternative housing?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:					

Proposal 7: To amend the ‘working households’ priority

Current situation

The council awards Band D to households which qualify under the working household’s criteria if they do not qualify for another priority band in the allocations policy. Up to 20% of social lets were set aside for working households and ‘play by the rules’ council tenants.

Proposed change

The council proposes to retain the working households category and will award Band C status to households which meet the eligible criteria. There will be no set quota of social housing lettings set aside for this group, and they will bid for properties along with other prioritised households.

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with awarding band C priority to households that qualify under the ‘working households’ priority?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don’t know / can’t say
Award Band C to working households	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:						
Remove the quota for working households	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:						

Proposal 8: To remove the ‘play by the rules’ priority category

Current situation

The council currently awards Band D to existing Ealing Council tenants who qualify under the ‘play by the rules’ category if they do not qualify for another priority band in the allocations policy. The category aims to reward 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. Up to 20% of social lets were set aside for workings households and ‘play by the rules’ council tenants.

Proposed change

The council proposes to remove the 'play by the rules' priority category from the revised allocations policy, as it is not a true housing need.

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals to remove the 'play by the rules' priority?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:					

Proposal 9: To amend the sheltered housing priority bands

Current situation

The council awards Bands C and D to households that are eligible to be considered for sheltered housing, which is specific accommodation for older residents aged 60 and older.

Proposed change

The council proposes to remove Band D, so all applicants eligible for sheltered housing will be placed in Band C on this priority ground only.

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that all residents who are eligible to be considered for sheltered housing should receive Band C priority?

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the box below to give reasons for your answer:					

Ealing Council recognises the importance of promoting equality and inclusion to improve public services for everyone. The council will be considering how the proposed changes might affect people with the following protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

12. From the list above, do you feel that any particular group of people will be affected more than others by the proposed changes? If so, please let us know below:

About you

Please tell us a little about yourself. This information helps us to ensure we can make research and consultation more accessible and inclusive. All personal information is kept completely confidential and is used for research purposes only. It will not be transferred to any third party. It will also not be linked to your existing application for housing, if applicable.

13. Are you currently:

- A council tenant
- A housing association tenant
- A private tenant
- A home owner
- Living with family / friends
- A local voluntary organisation or other advocacy service
- Other (please specify)

14. Are you:

- ☐ A homeless household accepted by Ealing Council
- ☐ An existing council tenant not seeking a transfer
- ☐ An existing council tenant seeking a transfer
- ☐ Any other applicant registered on the housing register
- ☐ A voluntary sector organisation
- ☐ None of the above

15. If you are currently on Ealing Council's housing register, which banding have you been given?

- ☐ Band A
- ☐ Band B
- ☐ Band C
- ☐ Band D
- ☐ Awaiting a decision on banding
- ☐ Not applied

16. What is your age group?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75-84
- ☐ 85+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

17. Are you?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe

18. What is your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Gay man
- ☐ Gay woman/ lesbian
- ☐ Heterosexual/ straight
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe

19. Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

20. If yes, do you live and work full time in a gender role opposite to that assigned at birth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

21. Are you married or in a civil partnership?

- ☐ Yes - married
- ☐ Yes - in a civil partnership
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

22. (For women only) Are you...?

- ☐ Currently pregnant
- ☐ Have been pregnant in the last 12 months
- ☐ Have given birth in the last 12 months
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to say

23. What is your religion?

- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Any other religion (please specify)

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as having a disability if s/he 'has a long term physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

24. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/ can't say
- ☐ Prefer not to say

25. If yes, please indicate the type of disability that applies to you

- ☐ Physical disability
- ☐ Sensory disability
- ☐ Learning disability
- ☐ Mental health condition
- ☐ Long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy
- ☐ Other (please specify if you wish)

26. Which ethnic group do you consider you belong to?

- ☐ **White** - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British
- ☐ **White** - Irish
- ☐ **White** - Gypsy/Irish Traveller
- ☐ **White** - Other
- ☐ Any other White background
- ☐ **Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups** - White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ **Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups** - White and Black African
- ☐ **Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups** - White and Asian
- ☐ Any other Mixed/ multiple ethnic background
- ☐ **Asian/ Asian British** - Indian
- ☐ **Asian/ Asian British** - Pakistani
- ☐ **Asian/ Asian British** - Bangladeshi
- ☐ **Asian/ Asian British** - Chinese
- ☐ Any other Asian background
- ☐ **Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British** - African
- ☐ **Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British** - Caribbean
- ☐ Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background
- ☐ **Other ethnic group** – Arab
- ☐ Any other ethnic group

What happens next?

If you are completing a paper version of the questionnaire, please return it to:

Housing Allocation Policy Review
Housing Demand Department (Allocations and Applications Team)
4th Floor (Purple Zone), Perceval House
14-16 Uxbridge Road
Ealing
London W5 2HL

Once we have gathered the views of everyone who replies to this consultation, we will review the findings of the consultation and submit a revised housing allocation policy to the council's cabinet to consider in due course. Once agreed, we will publish the revised housing allocations policy on the council's website.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.