

How vacancies of council and housing association accommodation are allocated

This factsheet explains how the Council allocates vacancies of Council and Housing Association accommodation.

Applicants who want to be rehoused apply to join the Council's housing waiting list and are then placed in one of three different categories according to how serious the Council believes the applicant's housing problems are:

1. High Priority Category

For people with very serious housing problems, where severe hardship is likely to result unless rehousing is offered as soon as possible.

2. Priority Category

For people with housing problems which could be improved by offering rehousing.

3. No priority Category

For people without housing problems who would like to move.

When there is a vacant property, the vacancy is advertised by the Council and the advert states which type of applicant can apply for the individual vacancy. For example, if there is a vacancy of a three bedroom house then only families with a three bedroom need will be invited to apply.

Applicants who want to apply for a vacancy have one week in which to complete a voucher and either send or e-mail it to the Council. The vouchers tell the Council which applicants want to be considered for the vacancy.

In order to decide who is allocated the property the Council will sort through the vouchers received from applicants. Vouchers from applicants who are not of the right family size for the vacancy are excluded (for example a family with a one bedroom need would not be considered for a three bedroom house.)

Once all the ineligible applicants are excluded, the Council then creates a short list of people who may be offered the vacancy.

The short list is sorted in order of the priority category of each applicant and then the date of application. The best way to explain this is by using an example:

example case study

A vacancy of a two bedroom house is advertised. Applicants who want to be considered for the property respond by sending or e-mailing vouchers to the Council.

The Council sorts the vouchers and excludes vouchers where the applicant's family would be too large or small for the property.

The Council now considers the housing needs of the remaining applicants and is left with a list of ten applicants who are eligible and want to be considered for the vacancy. In this example, of the ten applicants, none are in the high priority category, eight are in the priority category, and two are in the no priority category.

As there are no applicants in the high priority category to consider, the property would be allocated to the applicant in the priority category who had been waiting the longest on the list.

In practice, some vacancies can attract up to a hundred applicants but the process of choosing the successful applicant is the same.

Once a successful applicant has been chosen, the Council carries out a verification of the applicant's circumstances. This is to make sure the applicant has given the Council the correct information about their housing situation and is not trying to fraudulently obtain a tenancy.

Some frequently asked questions...

How do applicants get onto the waiting list for rehousing?

Anyone who wishes to be considered for affordable housing needs to complete an application form which is available from the Councillor from housing associations in the district.

How do applicants obtain vouchers to apply for vacancies?

All applicants on the waiting list are sent vouchers to apply for properties. However, if you look for vacancies on the website, you can e-mail your voucher straight from the website.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised in three ways. There is a noticeboard in each of the Council offices in the district and adverts are placed on the noticeboards. Vacancies are also advertised via an ansaphone system (02380 285100) and on the internet (www.newforest.gov.uk/homesearch)

Are all vacancies advertised?

Almost all vacancies of Council and partner Housing Association properties in the district are advertised. Very rarely, vacancies are not advertised, for example when a property is needed on a temporary basis for a homeless family.

What if no-one applies for a vacancy?

In most cases there is a long waiting list for vacancies. However, from time to time, the Council finds that some vacancies can be difficult to let. In those circumstances, the property is normally re-advertised allowing applicants with smaller households or to apply. If the property is still difficult to let, then applicants outside the district would be able to apply.

What about vacancies in village areas?

In village areas, the strength of an applicant's local connection with the village is also considered when vacancies are allocated. See the Council's factsheet, "Allocations of Council and Housing Associations Accommodation in Village Areas".



Any Questions?

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