

Allocations of council and housing association accommodation in village areas

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

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.

If an applicant wants to be offered housing in a village area in the district, they will need to show that they have a local connection with the village. To demonstrate that an applicant has a local connection, they would need to fall into one of the following bands:

Band A

- Persons who live or have their workbase in the parish and have done so for 10 years or more.
- Persons who have lived in the parish for longer than 10 years previously.
- A keyworker performing an essential service for the village community where there is an established need for the person to be rehoused to maintain the service.

Band B

- Persons who live or have their workbase in the parish and have done so for longer than 5 years.
- Persons who have lived in the parish for longer than 5 years within the last 15 years.
- Persons whose parents, siblings or adult children live in the parish and have done so for 10 years or longer.

Band C

- Persons who live or have their workbase in the parish and have done so for longer than 2 years.
- Persons who have lived in the parish for longer than 2 years within the last 15 years.
- Persons whose parents, siblings or adult children live in the parish and have done so for 5 years or longer.

When a vacancy arises in a rural area, 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 send it 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 do not have a local connection with the village or 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 provided the applicant has a housing problem. The most important criteria for vacancies in villages is the strength of the local connection with the village. After that, the Council considers the level of housing need the applicant has and the length of time they have been on the waiting list.

The short list is sorted according to the strength of the local connection with the parish. Therefore, applicants who are in housing need and have a Band A connection are placed at the top of the list and then Band B applicants in housing need and so on. If there are a number of applicants within the same local connection band, then the applicants are further sorted according to which category they have been placed in on the waiting list.

The best way of explaining the process is to use an example:

example case study

The Council has a vacancy of a two bedroom house in a village. The property is advertised stating that only applicants with a connection with the village and a two bedroom requirement can apply.

Seven applicants send vouchers to the council stating they would like to be considered for the vacancy. On checking the vouchers, one applicant does not have a local connection and one applicant only has a need for a one bedroom property. Both of these applicants are excluded from consideration.

Of the five vouchers remaining, three are from applicants with a Band A local connection with the village, one is from an applicant with a Band B local connection and one from an applicant with a Band C local connection. The three applicants with a Band A connection are placed at the top of the list.

The Council then looks at the level of housing need of the three applicants with a Band A connection. One of the applicants is in the High Priority category and the other two are in the Priority category. The list now looks like this:

First place

Applicant one (has a Band A connection and is in the High Priority category)

Second place

Applicants two and three (both with a Band A connection and both in the Priority category)

The successful applicant will therefore be Applicant One.

In practice, some vacancies can attract many applicants and it is often the case that there is more than one applicant in the same local connection band and in the same category of housing need. In these circumstances, the length of time the applicants have been on the waiting list will be taken into consideration.

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. As part of the verification process, the Council normally contacts the local district Councillor to check on the applicant's connection with the village.

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 Council or 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. You can also text your application.

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 a village area?

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



Any Questions?

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