

Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy

Rules for allocating social housing
2026 - 2031

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Introduction

Dorset Council, like all local housing authorities, is charged with administering a range of public law housing duties.

One such duty is to have a policy for the allocation of social housing.

In 2021, we adopted our first housing allocation policy. In 2025, a review of the policy was carried out and the findings informed amendments to the policy. This revised policy comes into effect from July 2026.

Our housing allocation policy operates across the whole of the Dorset Council area.

To allocate social housing, we work collaboratively with register providers of social housing that own stock in the Dorset Council area.

The demand for social housing exceeds the number of homes available to let, locally and nationally. For example, on the 31 March 2025, there were:

- 6,783 households on our housing register (including social housing tenants seeking a transfer).
- 22,142 units of social housing in Dorset (owned by 54 registered providers).

During the preceding year, from 1st April 2024 until 31st March 2025:

- 1,198 units were let to households on the housing register.
- the total number of applicants on the housing register was nearly equal to one-third (31%) of the total units of social housing.
- the total number of units available to let was equal to one-twentieth (5%) of the total units of social housing.
- the total number of units let was equal to only one sixth (17%) of the number of people on the housing register.

Typically, a person might have to wait several years before being allocated social housing.

We will allocate social housing transparently, making rational, lawful, and objective decisions in accordance with this policy.

This housing allocation policy outlines the rules for who can join our housing register. It explains who is eligible and how applicants are prioritised for social housing. The policy also describes the level of choice people may have in the housing they are offered, and how we nominate individuals for properties owned by registered providers.

Aims of Dorset Council's housing allocation policy

Our vision for housing, set out in the housing strategy, is to ensure our residents have access to affordable, suitable, secure homes where they can live well as part of sustainable and thriving communities.

We aim for this housing allocation policy to contribute to its vision for housing, by:

- making best use of social housing available to let.
- ensuring those most in need of social housing are prioritised for it.
- allocating social housing to people whose housing needs cannot be met by the commercial housing market.

The aims of our housing allocation policy, helps to meet the key objectives from the following Dorset Council housing strategies:

- housing strategy 2024 to 2029: enable residents to live safe, healthy, independent lives in homes that meet their needs
- homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2021 to 2026: prevent homelessness and arrange for suitable accommodation to be available for everyone
- tenancy strategy 2025 to 2030: [insert relevant objective(s), this will be added shortly]

1.0. Allocation of social housing

Outlining our policy for allocating social housing

- 1.1. We will allocate social housing following the policy and procedure set out in this document. Decisions about the allocation of social housing shall be taken by officers acting under delegated powers.
- 1.2. 54 private registered providers of social housing collectively hold around:
 - 22,142 units of social housing in the Dorset Council area
 - four-fifths (82%) are held by four private registered providers, three of which previously received transfers of housing accommodation from our predecessor district local housing authorities
 - the remaining one-fifth of units (18%) are collectively owned by 50 private registered providers, five of which are also Almshouse Trusts (collectively owning less than 1% of units)

Find information on private registered provider's social housing stock in the Dorset Council area [insert hyperlink on whole sentence this will be added shortly].

- 1.3. We will allocate social housing, which is low-cost rental accommodation, made available for rent at below the market rate, to people whose housing needs are not met by the commercial housing market.
- 1.4. We will allocate the following types of social housing:
 - general needs housing. This is the most common type of social housing. It can be allocated to any person with a need for social housing
 - supported housing. This type of social housing has special design facilities, or features targeted at specific persons requiring support, for example, housing designed for older people
- 1.5. Dorset Council will allocate social housing to be let at the following rent rates:
 - at a social rent rate - this is the most common type of rent, it is set in accordance with a national formula that takes account of relative local earnings, for properties, relative value and the number of bedrooms it has, or
 - at an affordable rent rate - where the rent to be paid by tenants can be no more than 80% of the market value of the property, or

- at an intermediate rent -often part of a specific named scheme. Rent must not exceed 80% of current market rate, the reduced rent is an opportunity for the tenant to save towards a house purchasing deposit. There may also be a future opportunity to purchase all, or a share of the property currently being rented
- I.6. We will allocate social housing to a person that is eligible and qualifies to join our housing register, by nominating them to be an assured tenant of social housing held by a private registered provider.
 - I.7. We will allocate social housing to tenants seeking a transfer of social housing, in line with the rules of the policy.
 - I.8. Tenants who under-occupy their social housing that seek a transfer to downsize to a smaller home, will be given priority for an allocation of housing and shall be exempt from disqualification rules relating to outstanding rent or service charge arrears that have been incurred because of under-occupation.
 - I.9. We will make objective decisions about the allocation of social housing. Information on what social housing we allocate will be published on the Dorset Home Choice website. We will allocate housing as quickly as possible (in line with the nomination agreement held with private registered providers), advertising homes available to let on any day of the week, for any duration of time, to minimise void periods and reduce waiting times.
 - I.10. We will carry out analysis of our housing register and the nominations we make to the registered providers, and lettings made by them, to make sure the needs of tenants and households on the housing register are met and to inform any future amendments to this policy. We will carry out consultation with tenants and households on the housing register, and anyone else interested in how social housing is allocated by us, to seek their views on changes that might be made to the way social housing is allocated.
 - I.11. When allocating social housing, we will offer households on the housing register, an opportunity to express their preference on types of property they might be allocated and a choice of accommodation. To accomplish this, a choice-based lettings scheme (CBL) is incorporated into this policy. We will ensure the primary purpose of the stock is to meet housing need.
 - I.12. People who are owed a relief duty or main housing duty by Dorset Council will not be given choice, but if they are allocated social housing, we will make sure that any housing offered will be suitable for their needs. We want to make sure tenancies are sustainable and communities are settled, viable and inclusive.

- 1.13. Alongside this, we will support tenants, households on the housing register and prospective applicants to choose the housing option which is best for them. This will include promoting a wide range of options within the Dorset Council area and elsewhere such as, low-cost homeownership, mutual exchange, the private rented sector. Information shall be provided about staying put options, where desirable, viable and feasible, such as aids and adaptations.
- 1.14. We aim to make the best use of available social housing by prioritising applicants with the greatest housing need. Social housing that is intended for households with specific needs (e.g. accessible housing, older persons housing, etc) will be allocated to households that have a need for such housing, such as vulnerable people with housing care and/or support needs that are inextricably linked, to compliment other programmes of care and support commissioned and provided by us.
- 1.15. If planning permission includes specific conditions, like giving priority to people with a local connection to the parish, those conditions will affect how we decide who gets social housing. Our housing allocation rules are designed to make the best use of available homes and meet people's housing needs.
- 1.16. This policy sets out how households can apply to join our housing register, how decisions will be made about applications, and the procedure to be followed when a review of a decision is requested.
- 1.17. We will make sure that language and interpretation assistance is available for people who have difficulty speaking or reading English.

2.0. Other rules outside this Policy

The policies for deciding who is allocated social housing in the Dorset Council area, that are not covered by this policy.

- 2.1. In collaboration with the registered providers, we may use local letting plans to allocate specific homes to people who meet certain criteria. These plans achieve a wide variety of housing policy objectives, for example to deal sensitively with lettings on new housing development sites giving priority to those with a local connection to the parish council area.
- 2.2. A local letting plan is used alongside the main allocation policy. It adds extra rules or considerations for how homes are allocated. This type of plan applies to a specific housing development and must be backed up with information showing why it is required.

- 2.3. We will publish local letting plans as separate documents, which will be revoked or revised as appropriate. If the plan is only meant to be in place for a limited time, it should also include details on how and when it will end.
- 2.4. The availability of housing through local letting plans will fluctuate depending on the specific characteristics of each new housing development and the planning conditions for initial and subsequent lettings.
- 2.5. We will monitor and review local letting plans regularly, as to their effectiveness, to make sure decisions are fair and not discriminatory, and whether they remain appropriate or necessary.
- 2.6. Registered providers that own stock in the Dorset Council area and operate a separate housing register from ours must have rules explaining how they will allocate any social rented homes that are not allocated from nomination arrangements agreed with us. These rules should:
- ensure people seeking to become a social housing tenant are prioritised for an allocation of social housing; and
 - ensure that their existing tenants who wish to transfer from their current home to another social rented home are prioritised for an allocation of social housing

Please refer to each Registered Providers website for copies of their housing lettings policies, which we take into consideration when allocating homes.

- 2.7. The availability of private housing in Dorset is restricted by high house prices, high numbers of second homes and a low wage economy. As a significant proportion of social housing in Dorset is rural, this policy aims to sustain these rural communities by giving local people in housing need, priority for these properties and reducing reliance on new social housing developments (see appendix 6 for list of parishes).
- 2.8. Some rural properties are subject to planning legal agreements, known as section 106 agreements, which restrict residency to applicants meeting specific parish or settlement criteria and these restrictions take precedence over the housing allocations policy standard criteria.
- 2.9. Where rural properties are not subject to planning legal agreements specifying specific parish or settlement criteria Dorset Council will advertise for applicants with a local connection to the parish or settlement which they are located in.

- 2.10. Where no applicant meets the criteria, the area will be expanded to the neighbouring parish or settlement or the wider Dorset Council area until a suitable application is received.
- 2.11. Dorset Council will allocate 75% of these properties in this way to help create mixed, sustainable communities.
- 2.12. Where the property is a specific type (for example is accessible) applicants from the wider Dorset Council area will be considered to ensure we are making best use of any property adaptations.
- 2.13. Community land trusts (CLTs) are independent, non-profit organisations that provide affordable housing and manage land for the benefit of the local community. Because CLTs set their own eligibility criteria and allocation processes based on community led priorities, they operate outside the rules of the allocation policy.

3.0. Eligibility

How we decide if a person is eligible for an allocation of social housing.

- 3.1. We can allocate social housing to people who have a right to live without any restrictions to residence in United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands.
- 3.2. We are not allowed to allocate social housing to persons from abroad who are subject to immigration control and those that are not subject to immigration control but for whom regulations stipulate should not be eligible for an allocation of social housing. We will allocate social housing to persons from abroad, only when the law allows. We will seek verification of a person's immigration status from the home office whenever there is any uncertainty about this.
- 3.3. We will not allocate social housing to persons from abroad who are not entitled to Universal Credit or Housing Benefit (regardless of whether they would apply for these benefits).
- 3.4. We will not assess the eligibility of existing social housing tenants who are seeking a transfer, as they are exempt from the usual eligibility rules for housing allocations.
- 3.5. We will provide people with a written decision about whether they are eligible for an allocation of social housing. We will issue decisions to each person via an individual online user account, or by the preferred method specified in their application.

- 3.6. We will make sure that online accounts are kept available for a person to access, for a reasonable period after a decision has been made.
- 3.7. We will make a decision regarding eligibility for an allocation of social housing. This decision will be made when an individual applies to join the housing register. Additionally, it will be made when an individual who has been accepted into the housing register is subsequently considered by us for an allocation of social housing.
- 3.8. When deciding whether a person is eligible for an allocation of social housing, we will assess a person's (and that of their family members):
- nationality
 - economic activity
 - compliance with worker registration schemes
 - immigration status
 - entitlement to public funds
 - where they usually live and where they are living when they make an application of to join the housing register
- 3.9. We will not check if someone is eligible for social housing if they choose to withdraw their application from the housing register.
- 3.10. Our employees responsible for making decisions about eligibility for an allocation of social housing shall be provided with training about housing allocation law and practice.
- 3.11. We will inform persons from abroad who are eligible for an allocation of social housing, that changes to their immigration status could affect their eligibility for an allocation of social housing. This information will be given when they join the housing register.
- 3.12. A person whom we have deemed to be ineligible for an allocation of social housing, may make a fresh application if they consider they should no longer be treated as ineligible. It will be for the person to show that their circumstances have changed.
- 3.13. A full description of persons that are eligible for an allocation of social housing can be found in an Appendix Two of this policy.

4.0. Qualifying persons

How we decide if a person qualifies to join the housing register.

- 4.1. We will only allocate social housing to people who satisfy the qualifying criteria set out below.
- 4.2. We have decided that to qualify for an allocation of social housing, people must be:
 - capable of holding a tenancy, and
 - not guilty of past unacceptable behaviour, and
 - have a local connection to the Dorset Council area, and
 - not have sufficient income or savings to meet their housing needs from the commercial housing market
- 4.3. We have decided to disqualify a person for an allocation of social housing when they are:
 - incapable of holding a tenancy, or
 - guilty of past unacceptable behaviour, or
 - have no local connection to the Dorset Council area, or
 - have sufficient income or savings to meet their housing needs from the commercial housing market
- 4.4. A person applying to join the housing register must satisfy all qualifying criteria. When qualifying criteria includes a person's usual household member, they must also satisfy the applicable qualifying criteria. A person's usual household member is defined as:
 - someone who normally lives with the person making the application to join the housing register, and
 - someone who might be reasonably expected to live with the person making the application to join the housing register
- 4.5. Dependent children
We will consider various factors on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a dependent child resides with the applicant. A child's residence is defined as the address where they are cared for by their parents, guardians or others with parental responsibility (or legal equivalent) and where it has been agreed they live. If this address is not the same as the applicants, the child cannot be included on the application.
- 4.6. A person is not a qualifying person when they are incapable of holding a tenancy agreement, for example due to being:
 - aged under 18 years, or

- looked after children owed a duty of care, or
- aged over 18 years lacking sufficient mental capacity to hold a tenancy agreement

4.7. Exceptions apply to people who are incapable of holding a tenancy agreement, when they are:

- eligible children, relevant children, former relevant children, including former relevant children pursuing further education or training, entitled to care leaving support from Dorset Council, or
- aged over 18 years lacking sufficient mental capacity to hold a tenancy agreement but have a suitable guarantor (for example Dorset Council's adult social care) who can hold a tenancy on their behalf

4.8. A person, including members of their household, will not qualify for social housing if they have been involved in serious unacceptable behaviour in the past. Behaviour that was serious enough that it could have been reasonable to allow us or another Registered Provider to secure a possession order had the applicant been a tenant at the time the behaviour occurred, and the persons behaviour remains unacceptable at the date of application, and/or at the date any allocation of social housing might be made.

4.9. Unacceptable behaviour that makes an applicant unsuitable to be a tenant, includes breaches of tenancy conditions, for example due to:

- having outstanding rent or service charge arrears, or property related recharges connected to a tenancy (see exemption below), or
- causing nuisance or annoyance or allowing a visitor to do so, to others living or visiting the neighbourhood of their home, or to employees or contractors of Dorset Council and/or registered providers that own stock in the Dorset Council area who are carrying out housing management functions, or
- having an unspent conviction for allowing their home to be used for immoral or illegal purposes or an offence in their home or nearby to their home; or
- having an unspent conviction for an offence which occurred during and at the scene of a riot in the UK, or
- violence or threats of violence towards another person that caused them to leave the home they share with the applicant, with the intention of not returning; or
- damaging or deliberately neglecting their home, or
- deliberately making a false statement to be granted a tenancy by Dorset Council (or another landlord), or
- paying money or receiving money as part of a mutual exchange, or

- being guilty of conduct that makes it inappropriate to continue living in their home, due to the home being part of a building used for non-housing purposes (e.g. a property situated in the grounds of a school or a public park)

4.10. Unacceptable behaviour that makes an applicant unsuitable to be a tenant, includes having unspent convictions or having breached an injunction for serious anti-social behaviour, for example due to:

- entry to a dwelling house that has been subject to a closure order, or
- noise nuisance and environmental legislation, or
- violent offences, or
- sexual offences, or
- offensive weapons, or
- offences against property, or
- drug related offences, or
- modern slavery, or
- encouraging or assisting to cause serious antisocial behaviour, or
- conduct causing nuisance to landlord, or
- offences connected with riot

4.11. Exceptions to outstanding rent or service charge arrears or property related recharges, connected to a tenancy with us or a registered provider, apply for people who:

- were not the tenant, when the outstanding arrears and/or recharges were accrued (e.g. the arrears or recharges occurred after a person stopped being a tenant or were accrued by a former member of their household); or
- their outstanding arrears and/or recharges accrued are no longer outstanding (e.g. they have been repaid, or too much time has passed due to being accrued more than 6 years ago and never being acknowledged by the debtor), or
- If you are a social housing tenant asking to transfer, you can be considered if:
 - You have made a payment in the past month, and
 - You are fully up to date with your payments up to the point of nomination, and
 - The payments you've made are equal to the usual rent or service charge for the tenancy where the arrears or charges are owed.

This also includes tenants who:

- Fell into arrears because of the overall benefit cap, and
- Applied for a Discretionary Housing Payment but were refused.

- are a new applicant and have agreed a repayment schedule for the outstanding arrears or recharges:
 - and made at least three consecutive repayments as per the repayment schedule at point of application, or
 - are up to-date with their repayments up to and including nomination, or
- have outstanding arrears or recharges that do not relate to a tenancy (e.g. non-housing debts such as Council Tax arrears), or
- are a social housing tenant under-occupying their current home, by the Local Housing Allowance size criteria, and intend to downsize to a smaller home, and the arrears have occurred due to under-occupation, or
- their arrears or recharges were a result of them being a victim of domestic abuse, or
- are a serving, or former member, of the regular Armed Forces, or their spouse or civil partner is or was, and who have accrued mesne profit charges as a result continuing to live in a home provided to them by the Armed Forces, following a relationship breakdown

4.12. A person (including their usual household members) is a qualifying person when they have local connection to the Dorset Council area due to:

- normally being resident in the Dorset Council area, by their own choice (i.e. not been detained in custody, serving a custodial sentence, or detained under mental health laws), for a minimum of two years, or
- being employed in the Dorset Council area for 2 years or more for a minimum of 16 hours per week, or
- having any association with close family (defined as adult children, parents, siblings, or someone else who can be regarded as a near a relative) resident in the Dorset Council area, by their own choice, for a minimum of two years
- Any location requirements detailed in a s106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (applicants will be limited to bidding on properties within that development only)

4.13 Applicants with a local connection only through a Section 106 agreement (and do not meet local connection rules through residency, family, or employment) can only bid on properties within that specific development.

4.14. Exceptions to local connection requirements, apply to people who are:

- members of the UK Armed Forces community who are currently serving or have served in the Regular Armed Forces, or

- bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the Regular Armed Forces, who have recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in ministry of defence accommodation, following the death of their spouse, or civil partner, where the death was wholly or partially attributable to the service, or
- serving or former members of the Reserve Armed Forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partially attributable to their service, or
- divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of UK Armed Forces personnel who need to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence, or
- adult children of currently serving members of the UK Armed Forces who may no longer be able to remain in the family home, or
- tenants of any English local authority or registered provider that need to move to Dorset for work or an apprenticeship. Factors considered include;
 - travel distance and time
 - availability and affordability of transport in relation to earnings
 - the nature of the work and whether similar opportunities exist closer to home
 - personal circumstances such as medical needs or childcare
 - the length of the work contract
 - whether not moving would result in hardship.
- escaping violence, harm or harassment, (see 9.6) or
- Actively fleeing domestic abuse (within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021) from anywhere in the UK and are homeless as a result, or
- an eligible child, a relevant child or a former relevant child (aged 18-24) who is or was looked after by a local authority in England or Wales, or
- people who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act including those that are considered by Dorset Council to be intentionally homeless or not in priority need. or
- people who are homeless and owed a duty by Dorset Council under section s193(2) or s189(B) or s195(2) or s192(3) or s190(2), or
- Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller ethnicity with no local connection to any other local authority district, in the Dorset Council area, or required to be near special medical or support services which are available only in the Dorset Council area, or
- returning to the Dorset Council area where they previously were brought up or lived for a considerable length of time, following a period of imprisonment or hospitalisation, or
- are a social housing tenant under-occupying their current home in the Dorset Council area (by the local housing allowance size criteria) and intend to downsize to a smaller home, or

- are subject to Multi- Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and a multi-agency risk assessment has been carried out, or
- need to move to Dorset to provide care to a relative, or to receive care from a relative who has lived in Dorset for at least two years. The care must be essential to help the relative remain living independently and avoid residential or specialist accommodation
 - significantly reduce travel time for daily support.
 - daily care should be required for at least one hour per day.

4.15. A person is not a qualifying person when their earnings and/or savings, together with the other main earner in the household, allow them to meet their housing needs from the commercial housing market, due to:

- being the sole or joint owner of the property (including anyone with a mortgage on the whole or part of a home), such as a house, flat, second home or holiday home, which they usually live in or rent out to others, or owning land or a building intended for residential use, either in the UK or abroad, or
- having £16,000 or more of savings (£23,500 for adults who have been assessed by Dorset Council as needing care), or
- earning £60,000 or more of taxable income in the most recent tax year

4.16. Deliberate disposal of Assets (capital, savings or property)

The Council recognises that applicants may dispose of property, capital or savings for a variety of reasons. However, where such assets have been disposed of for nil or significantly reduced value, the Council will investigate whether this constitutes deliberate deprivation of capital. In making this assessment we will consider:

- The applicants' circumstances at the time of disposal
- Whether there was a reasonable alternative to disposal
- Whether the disposal was made to improve the applicant's housing priority

Where deliberate deprivation is established, we will assess the application based on notional capital.

4.17. Exceptions to homeownership, earnings and savings, apply to people who:

- are a person aged 55 years or older, who cannot stay in their own home and need to move into older people's accommodation or other types of older person specific social housing; or
- are a disabled person who requires accessible housing, whose current home is not suitable for adaptation under a disabled facilities grant, or housing renewal assistance (e.g. to purchase a new home, adapt or improve their

home, repair their home, demolish their home and build a replacement) from Dorset Council or through a third-party such as a home improvement agency; or

- have a home that is in such poor condition that living there could endanger the health of the applicant including anyone who normally lives there (or who is expected to live with them), and where there are no reasonable steps that the applicant can take to remove the danger, or they do not have the resources to fix the problem, or
- have a home that they could not sufficiently raise equity of £16k or more to enable them to afford alternative suitable accommodation, or
- have been deserted by the main wage earner following a relationship breakdown and may become homeless because the property is not affordable, or
- have let a house and cannot secure entry to it, because it is not safe to enter due to structural faults or where there are squatters living in the house, or
- it is probable that occupying the home would result in abuse from someone who currently lives there or from someone who previously lived with the applicant in that home or elsewhere, or
- are Armed Forces personnel or their families, in relation to any lump sum compensation received for injury or disability sustained on active service with Regular or Reserve Forces, or
- a young person leaving care, or a former care leaver, who is in receipt of funds paid to them because of compensation relating to the reason why they were a looked after child and/or because of experiences while a looked after child, or
- foster carers, adopters, special guardians, and family or friend carers approved by Dorset Council who have taken on the care of a child because their parents are unable to provide care, or
- are a social housing tenant under-occupying their current home (by the local housing allowance size criteria) in the Dorset Council area and intend to downsize to a smaller home

4.18. We may in exceptional circumstances choose to disapply the qualifying criteria in specific circumstances, for example people who are intimidated witnesses or protected persons who need to move quickly from another local authority area.

4.19. We will notify people if they are not a qualifying person, explaining reasons for the decision. A decision about whether a person is a qualifying person, will be made at the time of initial application, and again when considering making an allocation.

4.20. A person who we previously deemed to be not qualifying to join the housing register, may make a fresh application if they consider they should no longer be

treated as not qualifying. It will be for the person to show that their circumstances have changed.

5.0. Housing Register

Our procedure for maintaining the housing register and the type of information we store on it.

- 5.1. We keep a register of people who are eligible and qualify for an allocation of social housing, known as the housing register.
- 5.2. We keep the housing register in an electronic format on a software system, provided and maintained by a third-party organisation.
- 5.3. People applying to join the housing register will have opened an online individual portal, linked to a software system used by us to administer the allocation of social housing.
- 5.4. A person's online portal will allow them to make an application to join the housing register, request information about the housing register, express preferences about any home that might be allocated to them, etc. We will issue all decisions, including reasons for decisions, via a person's online individual portal.
- 5.5. We manage the housing register for people applying for an allocation of social housing, and for existing social housing tenants seeking to transfer to another home. Applications from new applicants and transfer requests from current tenants are recorded separately so they can be distinguished.
- 5.6. Our housing register contains information, such as:
 - the number of people on the housing register
 - the number of people falling into one or more of the statutory reasonable preference categories set out in law
 - the number of members of the armed forces community given additional preference
 - allocations made
 - adapted and accessible properties and how these are matched to people who have access needs
 - properties advertised as part of or outside of the choice-based lettings, and
 - nominations taken up

- 5.7 We will use information held on the housing register to inform our strategic approach to housing, such as, when assessing the housing needs of people in the Dorset Council area.
- 5.8 We will process and store personal data provided by people applying for an allocation of social housing, in compliance with data protection law. We are prohibited from divulging to members of the public that a person is a social housing applicant.
- 5.9 We will inform people of their right to view the information held about them on the housing register.
- 5.10 People applying to join the housing register must provide appropriate documentary evidence to show they meet the qualifying criteria. Dorset Council will verify this evidence and, where necessary, may contact other individuals or organisations to assist with the verification. All checks will be carried out on a case by case basis in line with UK data protection law.
- 5.11 A detailed list of information that applicants must provide to join the housing register can be found at Appendix Five.

6.0. Operation of the housing register

Our procedure for assessing applications to be put on the housing register, how the housing register may be amended and how people may be removed from the housing register.

- 6.1 We will accept a person on the housing register if they apply to be put on it and they are eligible for an allocation of social housing and are a qualifying person. A person who is not eligible for an allocation of social housing or is not a qualifying person, will not be accepted on the housing register. The date a person applies to the housing register shall be known as the registration date.
- 6.2 Applications to join the housing register will be made via an online form, which will be accompanied by guidance notes that are easy to understand and in plain language. A person can only make one application at any time to join our housing register, multiple applications from the same person to join the housing register are not permitted.
- 6.3 We will notify a person when they have been accepted on the housing register. A person's entry on the housing register will include details of:
- people who normally live with them, for example a member of their family (i.e. those with close blood or marriage relationships and cohabiting

partners), or children (their own, and/or a child they have adopted, fostered or a step-child), who normally lives with the person that is making the application to join the housing register on a permanent or regular basis, at least part of the time

- people who might be reasonably expected to live with them, for example children in the care of children services or staying with relatives but will return to live with their parent(s), if they are allocated social housing. In such circumstances, we will liaise with children services before reaching any decision about the allocation of social housing, or
- foster children, potential adoptive children, or other children whom a person has been approved by us to be involved in their upbringing, or
- children living with one parent who, by arrangement between two separated parents or because of shared residence order made by the family courts, are to begin living with their other parent), or
- children of a person who have earlier fled their home in fear of domestic abuse, or
- a person unable to return from hospital to their normal home, where they were living before going into hospital or
- a person who must live apart of their spouse or civil partner, because they have nowhere that they can live together, or
- a prospective carer, (the person making an application to join the housing register) who wishes to live with and look after another person
- the address of the person who applied to join the housing register
- the date on which the person was put on the register
- the most recent date on which an entry on the register was amended

- 6.4. We will amend a person's entry on the housing register when there is an alteration to our rules for allocating social housing. It is the responsibility for applicants to log into their portal account immediately if there is a change in their personal circumstances such as change of address or housing need and make any changes to their application as appropriate. This will then be assessed and confirmed by us.
- 6.5. We will review the housing register regularly to make sure information held about each person is up to date. We shall operate an annual rolling review, contacting people on the housing register, on the anniversary of their effective date, providing them an opportunity to confirm whether their housing needs have changed and to see if they still wish to remain on the housing register.
- 6.6. We will notify a person when their entry on the housing register is amended, explaining the reasons for any amendment. Any amendment that results in a person being afforded a higher priority, shall be given a new effective date. Any change that results in a person having the same degree of priority or a lower priority, will retain their original effective date.

- 6.7. We will remove a person from the housing register, in the following circumstances:
- a person who is no longer eligible or qualifies to be allocated social housing, or
 - a person requests to be removed from the housing register, or
 - a person dies, or
 - a person fails to respond to a first request and a follow-up request, to a review of information held about them on the housing register or other correspondence, such as request for information or an allocation of housing, or
 - a person has have moved away or no longer needs or wants to be housed by us
- 6.8. We will notify a person, via their online portal, when they are removed from the housing register, explaining the reasons for the removal.
- 6.9. We will consider every application received to join the housing register, provided it is made in accordance with the rules of this policy.
- 6.10. A person applying to join our housing register is required to provide sufficient detail about their personal circumstances, to enable us to assess their housing need, or to identify those cases where further investigation may be needed. We will liaise with other local authorities, other landlords and other agencies (e.g. adult social services, children services, NHS trusts, prisons and probation) to verify a person's circumstances and their housing needs. When carrying out liaison, we will do so in accordance with information sharing protocols. We may liaise with medical and welfare experts when assessing a person's application that suggests they have a medical or welfare need.

7.0. Decisions, reviews and complaints

How we make decisions and how people can ask for a review if they disagree with a decision.

- 7.1. We will notify a person of their decision and of the reason for it when:
- a person applies to be put on the housing register, explaining if they are eligible or ineligible for an allocation of social housing, or are a qualifying or non-qualifying person, or
 - we remove a person from the housing register, explaining why they are now ineligible for an allocation of social housing, and/or not a qualifying person,

- Any decision regarding the facts of an applicant's case that we consider when determining whether to allocate a home.
 - We remove a person from the housing register if they fail to respond to requests for information or other important correspondence, such as a request for details following a review of their application or an offer of housing.
- 7.2. We shall, when notifying a person that they are ineligible for an allocation of social housing, explain whether this is because:
- a person is subject to immigration control within the meaning of asylum and immigration law, or
 - because of other legislation that stipulates specified persons from abroad are ineligible for an allocation of social housing
- 7.3. We will, when notifying a person that they are not a qualifying person, explain whether this is because:
- they or a member of their household has been found guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour that makes them unsuitable to be a tenant. At the time the application is considered, they remain unsuitable because of that behaviour.
 - any other reasons why they are not qualifying person
- 7.4. A person can themselves request to be removed from the housing register. They can do so by notifying us via email or phone. We shall confirm receipt of such a notification and confirm when the request has been acted on. Following which, a person's portal shall be closed.
- 7.5. We shall inform a person of their right to request a review of the following decisions made by Dorset Council:
- they are ineligible for an allocation of social housing.
 - they do not meet the criteria to be considered a qualifying person.
 - the priority awarded and whether this is a fair reflection of their housing needs, medical conditions, other welfare needs, or any other facts regarding their entitlement to a reasonable preference for an allocation of social housing.
 - whether or not a person should receive additional preference due to having urgent housing needs or otherwise.
 - they have been unfairly suspended, or their application has been unreasonably cancelled.

- a person's priority is reduced due to the number of offers refused.
- offence related to information given or withheld by them.
- the type of property which will be allocated to them, or
- any other facts of their case which were considered when deciding whether to allocate social housing to them

7.6 A person must make a request for a review before the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date on which they are notified of our decision and reasons. We, may, in exceptional circumstances, allow a person a longer period to make a request for a review.

7.7 A person can request a review in writing, via email or letter or verbally via a telephone call or visiting our offices. A person is also entitled to instruct another individual or organisation, that can prove they have authority to act on their behalf and submit a request for review.

7.8. When making a request for a review, a person should set out the reasons for their request. This might be for the following reasons (this list is not intended to be exhaustive and the reasons shown below are provided for illustrative purposes only):

- the reliability of the evidence we relied on to make a decision
- how we interpreted the evidence it has relied on to make a decision
- the compatibility of our decision compared to housing allocation legislation
- whether there are sufficient facts available to us to reach a decision
- whether a person has been given the benefit of the doubt by us when a decision was made

7.9 A person cannot request a review of a decision reached on an earlier review. Upon receipt of a review request, we shall carry out a review of the decision in accordance with the procedure set out in the next chapter of this policy (Section 8).

7.10 We will notify a person when a review decision has been reached by email or post.

Complaints

7.11 We will notify people of the formal complaints process that is in place, including service standards and time frames for handling and responding the complaints, so people know what to expect. People will be informed of their right to make a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman [insert hyperlink to complaint policy and any hyperlink that might allow people to make a complaint online].

- 7.12 We will monitor complaints, to identify any areas where improvements and/or training are required.
- 7.13 We will invite people to provide feedback on their satisfaction with using our housing allocation policy and service. This might be when they join the housing register or when they are nominated to a private registered provider or at other times.

8.0. Review procedure

Our procedure for carrying out a review of a decision.

- 8.1. We will carry out a review of a decision as per the procedure set out below.
- 8.2. We will appoint an employee of appropriate seniority, who was not involved in the original decision, to carry out the review.
- 8.3. Individuals can provide written representations, which should reach us within the agreed timescale set by the reviewing officer.
- 8.4. At our discretion, we can offer verbal representations, if this happens an applicant can choose to have a representative of their choice attend with them.
- 8.5. If a verbal representation is arranged, we will let you know the date and time in advance. This review can take place over the telephone or at suitable office location. This will be no sooner than five days after the request, unless the individual agrees to a shorter notice.
- 8.6. When carrying out a review, we will consider all information available at the time of the original decision, along with any new or additional details provided before the review decision is made. The review will focus on whether the original decision was consistent with our housing allocation policy and compliant with the law.
- 8.7. When issuing a review decision, we will explain the reasons for the decision and provide information about the individual's right to seek a judicial review.
- 8.8. We will complete the review and notify the individual of the outcome by letter or email within 56 days of receiving the request. This timeframe may be extended if agreed with the person requesting the review.
- 8.9. We will monitor reviews, to identify any areas where improvements and/or training are required.

9.0. Applications and information

Our procedure for social housing applications, how applicants are informed about their rehousing prospects, and how their information on the housing register is managed.

Applications for an allocation of social housing

9.1. We are aware of our public sector equality duty and shall work to ensure that no applicants are discriminated against or treated unfairly. We will provide advice and information, free of charge, to people in the Dorset Council area, about the right to make an application to join the housing register, regardless as to whether a person might wish to make an application. This shall include information about:

- application procedures
- qualification and prioritisation criteria
- how to apply for advertised vacancies
- how people on the housing register are selected for an allocation
- advertising criteria (e.g. priority for bungalows is given to older people or accessible housing for disabled people.), and
- review procedures

9.2. We will provide guidance notes that are easy to understand and in a plain language, to help a person complete their application to join the housing register.

9.3. We will provide any assistance necessary, free of charge, to people in the Dorset Council area who are likely to have difficulty without assistance to make an application to join the housing register.

9.4. We will use information from housing register applications to assess whether applicants are likely to have:

- priority under the rules of this policy
- difficulty in making an application or choosing their accommodation without assistance
- access or support needs

9.5. We will only request information needed to assess whether a person is eligible and qualifies to join the housing register and priority for housing. Appropriate evidence could include:

- valid passport or other identity documents
- birth certificate

- rent arrears repayment plan
- a contract of employment
- wage/salary slips
- bank statements
- tax and benefits information, for example proof that a person is in receipt of welfare benefits
- Proof of current address

After applying, applicants will be required to provide supporting documents. These documents can be uploaded immediately or up to 7 working days after submission of the application.

- 9.6. In cases involving harassment or domestic abuse, we will seek relevant supporting evidence from agencies such as the police, social services, and health when assessing priority for housing allocation.
- 9.7. We will make further enquiries as to what assistance applicants might require. For example, assistance may be provided to people with physical or mental impairments, people who may have difficulty in living independently in the community without care and or support.
- 9.8. We will work together with other relevant agencies and providers, to ensure people can make an application to join the housing register and consider support requirements at different stages of the allocation process. This extends to people who do not have access to or are unable to use a computer or the internet.
- 9.9. We, together with social services, prisons, probation and relevant health bodies and professionals, other housing providers, the voluntary sector, carers and user groups, will identify people who are likely to require intensive support throughout the process, such as assistance to choose accommodation that is appropriate to their needs, and make sure that suitable assistance is available. We will provide the assistance or rely on other organisations and individuals to provide assistance.
- 9.10. We will provide access to translation and interpreting services, for people whose first language is not English. Where there is a significant number of speakers of a particular language, we might publish information in that language.
- 9.11. We will provide information in other accessible formats for people with various communication needs, for example people with learning disabilities, people with literacy issues and people with a visual or hearing impairment.

- 9.12. We will provide information to people who are likely to have difficulty accessing information, for example, via home visits or housing advice surgeries to prisoners, the Gypsy and Traveller community, etc.
- 9.13. We will provide user-friendly information about our housing allocation policy via the Dorset Council website [insert hyperlink to be added shortly], via the telephone and in printed hardcopy form upon request.
- 9.14. We will provide information to a person when they apply to join the housing register, about how their application will be treated. We provide a calculator on the Dorset Council website that people can use to estimate average waiting times to being rehoused. [View the housing wait time calculator](#)
- 9.15. We intend to make available general information about the profile of social housing stock in the Dorset Council area. This might include the type, size and location of the stock, whether it is accessible or could be adapted, whether there is access to a shared or private garden, how old it is, and how frequently it is likely to become available.
- 9.16. We will provide information about appropriate housing options which might be available to people in the Dorset Council area. This information shall be made available when someone applies to join the housing register and more generally via the housing allocation policy website. This might include information about:
- private rented accommodation
 - low-cost homeownership options
 - mobility schemes, which enable people to move out of the Dorset Council area, and
 - home improvement policy or aid and adaptation services which enable people to remain in their existing accommodation for longer
- 9.17. We will provide information to people when they first join the housing register, that a choice-based system is being used to allocate homes, so they know how the system works and to assist them to participate successfully in bidding for homes being advertised as available to let.
- 9.18. We will provide generalised information, via the applicant's portal account and the Dorset Home Choice website, about how many bids have been received for a particular property and the band that the successful bidder was in, to help people on the housing register make decisions about what sort of homes to bid for.
- 9.19. We will provide generalised information, via the Dorset Home Choice website, about the number of direct lettings made.

- 9.20. We will, upon request from a person on the housing register, provide personalised feedback about a particular vacancy they might have been interested in but were unsuccessful when bidding for it. This might include their relative position on the shortlist, or why they were unsuccessful.
- 9.21. We will provide people on the housing register with information about vacancies which are advertised. Vacancies advertised via the Dorset Home Choice website, will be notified to people who cannot use a website and at their request we will bid on a vacancy on behalf of a person.
- 9.22. Our Dorset Home Choice website shall be accessible for people who have visual impairment or learning disabilities. As much as possible, this information shall be provided using symbols and maps. This information shall help people to determine:
- whether they are entitled to bid for a property
 - whether a property meet their needs and any other requirements
 - what their likelihood of success would be if they made a bid for a property

It will also give basic details about a property such as:

- location,
- type (e.g. flat, bungalow, etc)
- size (e.g. number of bedrooms)
- floor, and whether or not it has a lift
- type of heating
- whether it has a garden
- the amount of rent payable
- type and level of adaptations
- condition of the property
- access to services
- information about transport, education and other local public services, and
- what type of applicant is entitled or excluded from bidding for a property, or who will be given a preference for a property

Information about the housing register

- 9.23. If a person requests to view their housing register entry, we will provide them with a free copy.
- 9.24. We will not, without the consent of a person, share any information about them that is included on the housing register. We will share information about a person (with their consent,) on the housing register, for example, to ensure that a person is

properly assisted to participate in bidding for a home that is advertised by the policy and that they are housed properly.

- 9.25. We will share personal information without consent if a lawful basis can be identified, for example a person's safety is at risk. We will determine on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate to share information regarding safeguarding concerns, including, but not limited to concerns about domestic abuse, with other agencies (such as private registered providers). Where there is a need to share data without consent, this shall be done in accordance with UK data protection law.
- 9.26. We will make sure employees responsible for making decisions about the allocation of social housing, have appropriate knowledge and training to allow them to identify possible victims of domestic abuse.
- 9.27. We will implement information sharing protocols to ensure clarity on what information will be shared, with whom, and for what purpose. These protocols will cover organisations such as social services, statutory bodies, and voluntary agencies.
- 9.28. When devising information sharing protocols, and when passing on information about individuals on the housing register, we will be mindful of responsibilities under data protection legislation.
- 9.29. We will inform people, both when they apply and when they join the housing register, of their right to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office if they believe their personal data has been shared without consent.
- 9.30. We will obtain from applications, information to monitor the fairness of allocations and compliance with equal opportunity requirements. Information about ethnicity, disability, gender, age, religion, and sexual orientation shall be collected through applications.
- 9.31. We will inform applicants, both when they apply and when they join the housing register, of their right to make a complaint to the Equality and Human Rights Commission if they believe they have been discriminated against in social housing allocation decisions.
- 9.32. We will, once an application is submitted, keep people informed about what happens next. This might include:
 - sending confirmation that the application has been received, when it will be verified and what checks will be made
 - asking for any information that has not been supplied by the person making the application and give 7 working days to provide it (this can be extended at

Dorset Council's discretion) and make them aware of how it may affect their application if they fail to provide it

- advising people that they must inform Dorset Council about any changes in circumstances that could affect their application and level of priority, or

- 9.33. When a decision is made that a person can join the housing register, we will inform them about the level of priority they have been awarded, and that they should notify us immediately about any changes in circumstances which could affect their application and their level of priority
- 9.34. We will aim to verify applications within eight weeks.
- 9.35. People applying to join our housing register shall be asked to sign a declaration that the information they have provided is correct to their knowledge. We will advise people that register providers can raise action in the court for recovery of possession where a tenancy has been given based on information being knowingly withheld or false information knowingly supplied by a person.
- 9.36. We will carry out checks to verify an application when it is received and again at point of nomination.
- 9.37. High risk offenders with an offending history will always require an appropriate risk assessment, which will take MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) guidance into account where appropriate. They will only be considered for the housing register once a multi-agency risk assessment is carried out to consider what type of accommodation is appropriate.

10.0. Allocations

Our procedures for offering choice to people on the housing register, including making offers, rights to refuse, and how choice applies to homeless applicants and disabled people requiring accessible housing. It also explains when choice may be restricted.

Choice

- 10.1. We will prioritise people on the housing register, and allocate homes, following the procedure set out in this chapter. Decisions about allocations will be made by our employees tasked with administering housing allocation functions.
- 10.2. Most applicants will be entitled to express a choice about the type of social housing that they might be allocated. A minority of applicants, on some occasions or in specified circumstances will not be entitled to choice and instead will be made a direct let of social housing and/or have a bid automatically placed on their behalf.

- 10.3. We will provide people on the housing register with the opportunity of selecting the property they wish to be allocated. People will be able to apply (referred to as 'bidding') for homes which are advertised as vacant on the Dorset Home Choice website. People will be able to bid for up to six homes per day.
- 10.4. We will operate an 'open advertising' approach whereby all people on the housing register, and members of the public, can find out about vacancies which are advertised on the Dorset Home Choice website.
- 10.5. Specialist accommodation may be advertised via the Dorset Home Choice website to give people more choice. Where homes are designated for a specific purpose (such as housing for older people or adapted homes for disabled people), the advert will clearly state that applicants with relevant housing or support needs will be prioritised.
- 10.6. We will work together with other relevant agencies and providers to ensure people can bid for homes. This extends to people who do not have access to or are unable to use a computer or the internet. People that may have difficulty in bidding for homes without assistance, for example people with physical or mental impairments, shall have access to any necessary assistance to make a bid, such as the system automatically placing a bid for them (known as auto bidding).
- 10.7. We reserve the right to reject a bid on grounds of risk: People who pose a risk to themselves, to other individuals, or are at risk from other individuals, for example due to sexual or violent offences, shall be restricted in the homes that they shall be nominated to. The extent of risk posed shall be determined based on the facts and evidence available concerning a person's application. Any decisions made about risk shall give a person the benefit of the doubt where evidence is inconclusive.
- 10.8. We reserve the right to make a direct let to manage the risk posed by some people or for other management reasons. A direct let is when a direct offer is made to a household bypassing the usual bidding process or this policy. Examples of when a direct let might be made, include (the following list is illustrative only and is not intended to be exhaustive):
- people whose home has been compulsory purchased, where Dorset Council must offer a specific property to meet legal requirements.
 - people who are tenants, who need to leave their original home to facilitate an area regeneration scheme, who have not bid for any advertised homes that would be suitable for them to occupy
 - people who are homeless or owed certain homelessness duties (relief duty and main duty) who do not bid for any advertised homes that would be suitable for them to occupy

- people seeking a move under a witness mobility policy
- people managed under multiagency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) who pose a serious risk to the community, such as level 1 or 2 cases involving sexual or violent offenders

10.9. Our housing software system creates a shortlist of applicants who meet the advert criteria and have placed a bid. It lists everyone needing a home of that size, then ranks bidders in descending order of priority.

10.10. Homes are advertised daily. As a rule, homes which have been advertised shall be offered to a person who:

- has the highest priority under the policy, and
- has been on the housing register the longest (by date of completed application submitted to join the housing register), and
- has a local connection to Dorset Council (some homes have a planning stipulation that requires it is allocated to a person with a local connection to the parish or surrounding parish in which the property is located)
- matches the lettings criteria for that home (e.g. the type of home, its size and bedroom needs of the household, its location, accessible adaptations have been made or might be possible, etc), and
- matches any quotas that might be in place

10.11. A person's date of registration to join the housing register shall be based on the date they submitted a completed application, including all relevant supporting documentation, such as proofs of identity.

10.12. We may reject a bid for a home, if the property isn't suitable for the person. This could be because of risks to or from others, or because the home doesn't meet the person's specific needs. A person can see the reasons why they might have been rejected or bypassed for a home via their online individual portal.

10.13. When we do reject a person's bid, they shall be provided with the reasons for this decision and inform them of their right to request a review of the decision.

We shall keep a record of reasons behind decisions to reject bids. This information will help in monitoring the operation of the housing allocation policy and make sure individuals or groups are not systematically disadvantaged. Common reasons for rejecting a person on the housing register might include the person has already refused a very similar property and has said they're not interested in receiving a similar offer.

10.14. We will make sure property advertisements provide people with sufficient information about homes which are available to bid for, so they can make an informed decision about whether to bid for it.

When a home is advertised, the following details will be provided if supplied by the private registered providers:

- provision type, for example general needs, housing for older people
- photo of property or street scene
- rent type and charge, for example social/affordable/intermediate rent, weekly rent and service charges and any other property related charges
- unit size and maximum occupancy for each unit, for example studio, number of bedrooms, non-self-contained or self-contained
- letting criteria priorities (when applicable); such as giving priority to under-occupiers or applicants with accessibility needs
- tenure type, for example flexible tenancy, secure tenancy
- condition of home, for example type of windows/boiler/insulation/walls, whether it has a loft, number of floors, installation of renewable technology and if so, what type, state of repair, modernity of amenities and services, heating system and energy performance certificate, year of build
- location, for example street name and postcode
- accessibility, for example approach routes, ramps, steps, entrance doors, corridors and doors, lifts and stairs, gardens, adaptations already made to individual homes
- local services, for example GP surgery, schools/colleges/universities, Jobcentre Plus, post office, public transport
- typical running costs, for example Council Tax, heating, water

Nominations to a property and refusals

10.15. We will provide people with appropriate advice and assistance to help them to bid effectively.

10.16. The fact that an applicant has made a bid for a home should not be treated as meaning that we have made a final decision to allocate it to them. We will, on occasions, withdraw an allocation or nomination of home, for example, if a person:

- is no longer eligible to be allocated social housing
- no longer qualifies to join the policy
- would be overcrowded or under-occupy a home if it was allocated to them,
- does not require such adaptations, but they have been allocated a home that has adaptations to make the home accessible for a disabled person

- is disabled and requires adaptations to be made to a home that has been allocated, to make accessible for them, but it is not possible for adaptations to be made to the home
- the home is designated as supported housing (e.g. sheltered housing, extra care housing) and the person does not need such housing
- the person would be at risk of domestic abuse, violence, or threat of violence due to the locality of the home that has been allocated to them

10.17. When using discretion to allocate a home outside the rules and procedures of this policy, we will ensure the individual has an exceptional level of need or that their circumstances are so unusual they would not otherwise be adequately prioritised.

We will keep a clear audit trail and record the reasons for any such allocation. All decisions will follow a formal authorisation process and require approval by the Service Manager. Discretion will be used rarely.

10.18. The Registered Provider will allow people a reasonable period to decide about any home they have been nominated to, providing them with an opportunity to view the home before making a decision as to whether they wish to accept or reject the home to which they have been nominated.

They will allow sufficient time for people who require additional assistance and/or support to arrange for an adviser or an advocate (who may be a friend or family member) to accompany them when viewing a home and to take advice in making their decision to accept or reject an offer.

10.19. Before a nomination can be made to the Registered Provider, the applicant will be asked to provide up to date information, including but not limited to:

- evidence that they continue to be eligible for an allocation of social housing, qualify to be on Dorset Council's housing register, and are entitled to reasonable or additional preference for the allocation of social housing, and
- the number and ages of other persons who normally reside with them as a member of their family or who might reasonably be expected to reside with them

This information must be received by Dorset Council within 48 hours of the request being made. Failure to provide the information within in the required timescale will result in the applicant being bypassed for that property and further action may be taken against the applicant for failing to engage (implied refusal).

10.20. Applicants in Bands One, Two and Three may refuse up to three suitable properties. After the third refusal, they will be moved to Band Four for a period of 12 months. All applicants will be reminded of this limit whenever an offer of housing

is made.

- 10.21. Applicants in Band Four may refuse one offer of suitable social housing. If they decline a second offer, they will be suspended from the housing register for 12 months. This policy aims to reduce delays caused by repeated refusals. Applicants will be reminded of this limit whenever an offer is made.

People who are homeless or owed a homelessness duty

- 10.22. We will make an automatic bid to any person who is owed a relief or main homelessness duty.
- 10.23. People who are owed a homelessness duty have the right to refuse a suitable housing allocation. If a person does refuse a suitable offer, within the meaning of the Housing Act 1996 part 7, we will make them aware that the duty of homelessness assistance may come to an end.
- 10.24. People can stay on the housing register if they are still eligible and meet the rules, even if our duty to help them as a homeless applicant has ended. However, they will no longer get the same homeless priority. Instead, their housing needs will be reassessed, and any priority will be based on their current situation. If they are still homeless, they will continue to receive a priority for that reason.

Disabled people

- 10.25. Housing which has been designed or adapted to meet the needs of disabled people, known as accessible housing, will be advertised in the same way as other homes. Accessible housing shall be prioritised for people who have access needs. This will be explained in the advert.

Disabled people can apply for accommodation that does not meet their needs, but this will be assessed by relevant parties to check it is reasonable and practical to adapt the home.

- 10.26. When an accessible property is advertised, the advertisement shall give sufficient information about the level of adaptations and/or accessibility features in the accommodation, so that applicants can make informed decision on whether to bid for the particular property. Information shall be included about external access to the property (e.g. whether there is a ramp up to the property and whether there is accessible parking nearby) and relevant information about the surrounding area (e.g. local shops and public transport that is easily accessible).

10.27. We propose to establish and maintain a database of accessible properties owned by all registered providers with stock in the Dorset Council area. Disabled people shall be able to see the full range of accessible properties, including the number and types of properties, accessibility features, and the level of adaptations of each property and location. Such information shall be provided to assist disabled people to decide whether to bid for a particular home which is advertised.

10.28. We will provide disabled people with additional assistance and support, depending on the nature and degree of their disability.

Restricting choice

10.29. We will set advertising criteria for properties and people who meet the criteria will be given preference for that property. For example, advertising criteria will be used for:

- local lettings plan's, which are used to achieve housing management and other housing policy objectives
- a certain proportion of homes may be let to applicants who are homeless
- to match applicants with access needs to accessible accommodation

10.30. We will not allow every person to express an interest in or be considered for any, and every available home to let. People shall not be permitted to bid for homes, which would result in overcrowding or under occupation. Therefore, couples and single people will not usually be permitted to bid for a home that has more than one bedroom, unless there is an evidential need for a couple to have a two-bedroom home.

10.31. We will make a final decision on whether it is appropriate to nominate a person to any particular property. When doing so the following shall be considered:

- a. provision type (for example a home is housing for older people and person has no need for such housing, or a home is general needs housing, and a person has a need for supported housing or housing for older people)
- b. rent type and charge (for example a person cannot afford the pay the rent and all other property related charges for a home)
- c. unit size (for example a person and their household would under-occupy a home)
- d. letting criteria restrictions (for example a home must be allocated to disabled people with accessibility needs)
- e. location (for example a home would result in a person or members of their household being at risk to or from others)
- f. properties subject to s106 Town and Country Planning Act, local lettings plans, and/or specific social landlord requirements will be prioritised accordingly.

11.0. Prioritisation

Our procedures for prioritising people for an allocation, determining bedroom entitlements and setting quotas.

11.1. When allocating homes, we will give a preference to people in the following order of bands:

- Band One: people with priority housing needs
- Band Two: people with high housing needs
- Band Three: people with medium housing needs
- Band Four: people with low housing needs

11.2. People who might fall into more than one band shall be placed in the band that gives them the greatest priority.

Band One: priority housing need

- Owed a main homelessness duty
- priority medical grounds
- UK armed forces
- fleeing domestic abuse
- priority welfare grounds
- disaster/emergency

Band Two: high housing need

- homelessness relief duty
- under occupying social rented housing
- overcrowded by two or more bedrooms
- foster carer/adopters and care leavers
- insanitary and unsatisfactory housing conditions
- medical grounds
- welfare grounds
- hardship grounds
- giving up accessible housing

Band Three: medium housing need

- homeless household
- homeless prevention duty
- social housing tenants right to move
- UK armed forces community
- Overcrowded by one bedroom

Band Four: low housing need

- social housing tenants seeking a transfer
- need for older person housing
- supported housing: not ready to move

- reduced preference for 12 months
- low housing need

11.3 We will, when making decisions about prioritisation, disregard a persons' household members, if such household members are ineligible for an allocation of social housing.

Bedroom criteria

11.4. When deciding if a person's household is overcrowded, for the purpose of determining the priority they should be afforded, make an assessment against the UK Government's Bedroom Standard, which allows a separate bedroom each for:

- any adult couple
- any remaining adult aged 21 years or over
- two males aged 10 to 20 years
- one male aged 10 to 20 years, and one male aged 9 years or under
- one male aged 10-20 years (if there are no males aged 0-9 years to pair with him)
- two females aged 10 to 20 years
- one female aged 10 to 20 years, and one female aged 9 years or under
- one female aged 10-20 years (if there are no females aged 0-9 years to pair with her)
- two children regardless of sex aged 9 years or under
- any remaining child aged 9 years or under

This criterion does not apply to households accommodated in temporary accommodation by Dorset Council.

11.5. When deciding if a person's household is under-occupied, for the purpose of determining the priority they should be afforded, we will make an assessment against the UK Government's Local Housing Allowance bedroom criteria, which allows a separate bedroom each for:

- any adult couple
- any person aged 16 years or over
- two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
- two children aged 9 years or under
- any other child
- a member of a couple who cannot share because of a disability or medical condition
- a child who cannot share because of a disability or medical condition

- a foster child (if a person is an approved foster parent)
- a non-resident carer providing overnight care to a person or a member of their household (one room is allowed, regardless of the number of carers who stay overnight)

11.6. We will when allocating a home, use the UK Government's Local Housing Allowance bedroom criteria, to decide the number of bedrooms a person (taking account of who is usually a member of their household) requires. The following types of homes will be allocated to people with the following bedroom need:

Bedsit

- any adult/couple or
- any person aged 16 years or over

One-bedrooms

- any adult/couple or
- any person aged 16 years or over

Two-bedrooms

- any adult/couple with any one of the following:
 - any person aged 16 years or over
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
 - two children aged 9 years or under
 - any other child

Three bedrooms

- any adult/couple with any two of the following:
 - any person aged 16 years or over
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
 - two children aged 9 years or under
 - any other child

Four bedrooms

- any adult/couple with any three of the following:
 - any person aged 16 years or over
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
 - two children aged 9 years or under
 - any other child

Five bedrooms

- any adult/couple or
- any person aged 16 years or over with any four of the following:
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under

- two children aged 9 years or under
- any other child

Six bedrooms

- any adult/couple with any five of the following:
 - any person aged 16 years or over
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
 - two children aged 9 years or under
 - any other child

Exceptions allowing an extra bedroom when assessing overcrowding and bedroom need

- a member of a couple who cannot share because of a disability or medical condition
- a child who cannot share because of a disability or medical condition
- a foster carer who has fostered a child, are an approved foster carer or about to become an approved foster carer and have written evidence from Children's Services.
- a non-resident carer providing overnight care to a person or a member of their household
- Where the applicant or partner is pregnant, and the Mat b1 certificate has been received, and it is the first child
- Other exceptional circumstances

Quotas

11.7. We may set quotas to ensure fair allocation across different needs, but applicants in bands one, two and three will never be given lower priority than those in band four.

11.8. Quotas will be based on housing need and demand in the Dorset Council area, using data from the housing register. We will consider:

- the size and composition of the housing register, including the housing needs people have, and
- the profile of stock and vacancies which are likely to become available

11.9. If we set quotas, they will be flexible and adjustable to reflect changing circumstances, ensuring significant housing need continues to be met even after a quota is reached.

- 11.10. We shall monitor who is being allocated properties and publish information on performance against quotas that have been set.

12.0. Information about this allocation policy

Our procedure for providing copies of this policy, consulting people on future changes, and using UK guidance on social housing allocation when making decisions about social housing allocations.

- 12.1. We will publish a summary of this housing allocation policy and provide a printed copy free of charge to any person who requests one. The summary will be available to download from the Dorset Council Website in 2026. Copies can also be requested by contacting our Housing Register Team:

Email: dorsetcouncilhomechoice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Phone: 01305 221739

- 12.2. We will make available a full copy of this policy for inspection at our office, [insert address]. We will, upon request from a person, provide a copy of the policy, and payment of a reasonable fee, maybe requested, to cover the cost of printing a copy.
- 12.3. We will regularly review and update this policy. We will, before modifying this policy, have regard to all relevant statute and local strategies and policies, including our:
- homelessness strategy
 - housing strategy
 - tenancy strategy
- 12.4. The Portfolio Holder for Housing may approve minor and/or legislative amendments to the housing allocation policy at any time to ensure it remains compliant with legal requirements. without the need for further approval.
- 12.5. We will, before making an alteration to the policy which would be a major change of policy, send a copy of proposed alterations to every registered provider, which own stock in the Dorset Council area and provide them with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposals.
- 12.6. When we make a significant change to the policy, which would affect a many people on the housing register, we will notify them and consult widely. Consultation will include stakeholders such as health services, community justice services, voluntary organisations, social housing tenants, people on the housing register and the public. The consultation approach will depend on the scale of the changes and may involve the following:

- a small sounding board group of social housing tenants and people on the housing register,
- a social housing tenant scrutiny panel, or
- public consultation

12.7. We will refer to statutory guidance published by the UK Government when reviewing and amending this housing allocation policy, and when making decisions about housing allocation policy and practice.

13.0. Co-operation with private registered providers

Our procedure for working with registered providers to nominate people from the housing register for a vacancy.

- 13.1. We will work together with register providers that own and manage social housing in the Dorset Council area, to make best use of the available social housing. We will make nominations to registered providers, for them to offer an allocation of social housing to people on our housing register.
- 13.2. We will comply with requirements set out in a nomination agreement with registered providers, when making nominations for social housing to persons from our housing register.
- 13.3. The Nomination agreement will have clear objectives, based on a thorough analysis of need and demand. It will specify the proportion of lettings that private registered providers in the Dorset Council area will make available to us.
- 13.4. The nomination agreement will set out any criteria which has been adopted for accepting or rejecting nominations and how any disputes shall be resolved.
- 13.5. We will monitor and regularly review the nomination agreement, to demonstrate that obligations are being met and to ensure they reflect changing needs and demand.
- 13.6. We will, when making nominations to a registered provider, make sure the details of a nominated person are accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date and provide information about any vulnerability, support needs and arrangements for support, where this information is available.
- 13.7. We will also agree an information sharing protocol with private register providers of social housing who own or manage stock in the Dorset Council area, covering issues such as rent arrears, antisocial behaviour and support needs.

I 4.0.False statements and withholding information

Our procedure for when someone applying for social housing gives false information and/or withholds information.

- I 4.1. We will consider, when a person knowingly or recklessly makes a false statement or knowingly withholds information that would be reasonable to provide on a housing register application, (including during review proceedings), as a reason for disqualification from joining the housing register.
- I 4.2. We will look at the circumstances of each person rather than applying a blanket approach and whether to institute criminal proceedings against a person who has given false information or withheld information.
- I 4.3. We will take appropriate steps to vet employees who make decisions about the allocation of social housing and require some decisions to be validated by a senior member of staff, via a system of random checks, to minimise the risk of employees allocating incorrectly or potentially fraudulently.

I 5.0.Elected members

The role of our elected members in allocating of social housing

- I 5.1. Our elected members shall not be part of a decision-making body at the time an allocation decision is made, when either the accommodation concerned is situated in their electoral ward or the person subject to the decision has their sole or main residence there.
- I 5.2. Elected members shall be permitted to represent their constituents in front of any decision-makers, such as seeking or providing information on behalf of their constituents and be permitted to participate in the decision-makers deliberations prior to a decision.
- I 5.3. Elected members shall not attempt to confer an advantage on any person seeking an allocation of social housing. Elected members shall ensure compliance with our Code of Conduct and shall consider whether they are required to declare an interest before participating in such deliberations. Elected members shall seek to obtain advice from our monitoring officer, should there be any doubt.
- I 5.4. Elected members shall be involved in policy decisions that affect the generality of social housing in their electoral ward.

- 15.5. Elected members shall be responsible for determining allocation policies and monitoring the implementation of this policy, to ensure the operation of the policy is open and accountable and systems are compliant with our policy objectives.

Appendix one – statute

Law

[Housing Act 1996 Part VI Allocation of Housing Accommodation](#)

Statutory guidance

[Allocation of accommodation guidance for local authorities](#)

[Providing social housing for local people](#)

[Right to move and social housing allocations](#)

[Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse](#)

[Improving access to social housing for members of the armed forces](#)

Regulations

[The Allocation of Housing Regulations 1996](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(Procedure\) Regulations 1997](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(England\) Regulations 2000](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

[The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[The Housing Act 1996 Additional Preference for Armed Forces\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Right to Move\) \(England\) Regulations 2015](#)

[The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness \(Eligibility\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020](#)

[The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness \(Eligibility\) \(England\) and Persons subject to Immigration Control \(Housing Authority Accommodation and Homelessness\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

[The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness \(Eligibility\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

Appendix two – eligibility

The following classes of persons, subject to satisfying a habitual residency test, will be eligible to join this scheme:

- British citizens (constituting the nations of England, Scotland and Wales)
- Commonwealth citizens with a right of abode in the UK immediately before 01 January 1983 who have remained commonwealth citizens throughout (excluding non-British citizens from Pakistan and South Africa, but inclusive of citizens from Gambia and Zimbabwe)
- Irish citizens (constituting the nations of Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland)
- EEA Nationals (other than those from Ireland) and their family members, who:
 - have acquired limited leave to enter and remain in the UK
 - were frontier working before 31 December 2020, or;
 - are lawfully residing in the UK by 31 December 2020, but still have to apply to, or acquire status under the EU Settlement Scheme before the deadline of 30 June 2021, and are covered by the “Grace Period statutory instrument”
- persons exempt from immigration control (e.g., diplomats and their family members based in the UK and some military personnel).
- persons granted refugee status by the UK Government
- persons granted exceptional or limited leave to enter or remain in the UK with condition that they and any dependents have resource to public funds (e.g: humanitarian or compassionate circumstances)
- persons with current leave to enter or remain in the UK with no condition or limitation, and who are habitually resident in the UK, The Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland (defined as the Common Travel Area) (a person whose maintenance and accommodation is being sponsored must be resident in the Common Travel Area for five years since date of entry or date of sponsorship, unless the sponsor has died)
- persons who have humanitarian protection granted under the Immigration Rules (e.g., a person whose asylum application has failed, but they face real risk of harm if they returned to their state of origin)
- persons who moved to the UK as child seeking asylum and have been given limited leave to remain
- persons who have limited permission to enter or remain in the UK, from November 2018 onwards, due to Calais leave
- persons who have limited permission to enter or remain in the UK as the family member of a relevant persons of Northern Ireland
- persons who have leave to enter or remain in the UK under Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) of the Immigration Rules, and your leave is not subject to a condition requiring you to maintain and accommodate yourself or any person dependent upon you
- persons who are a relevant Afghan citizen, such as one who has worked for the UK government in Afghanistan

- persons who have permission to enter or remain in the UK and left Afghanistan in connection with the collapse of the Afghan government took place on 15 August 2021 and are allowed to claim housing and welfare assistance from the state
- persons who are currently living in the UK and previously was living in Ukraine before 1 January 2022 and left as a result of the Russian invasion which took place on 24 February 2022 and have arrived in the UK under the Ukraine family scheme or the homes for Ukraine scheme and have been granted leave to remain
- persons who have been granted limited leave to remain due to being a victim of human trafficking or slavery
- persons who were living in Sudan before 15 April 2023 and left as a result of conflict that commenced on 15 April 2023 and have been granted leave to remain and are allowed to claim housing and welfare assistance from the state and do not have a person that will sponsor your stay in the UK
- person who are EEA Nationals means nationals of any of the EU member states, and nationals of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

Even when an Applicant is eligible for an allocation of social rented housing, only those who are habitually resident in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Isle of Mann or the Channel Islands, will be eligible for an allocation (except persons which exempt from the requirement to be habitually resident, as defined in law or statutory guidance).

Applicants who are subject to immigration control or are an ineligible person from abroad will not be eligible for an allocation of social rented housing

Appendix three – banding

Band One: priority housing need

Owed a main homelessness duty

People who are owed a homelessness duty by Dorset Council under section 193(2). This applies to those that have a priority need, are not intentionally homeless, and must be provided with suitable accommodation.

Priority medical grounds

People (or someone from their household) who have urgent medical needs and require stable accommodation because of their health condition, due to:

- the condition is expected to be terminal, and re-housing is required due to unsuitable accommodation or to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care, or
- a condition is life threatening and existing accommodation is a major contributory factor, or
- a planned discharge from hospital is imminent and there is no accommodation available that is reasonable to occupy, or
- Extensive adaptations are required, and adapting the current home is not possible because it is either technically unfeasible, unsuitable due to a progressive medical condition, or not cost-effective. (This applies where remaining in the current property is clearly impractical and urgent rehousing is essential.)

UK Armed Forces community

People who are members of the UK Armed Forces community, who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories and have urgent housing needs:

- former members of the Regular Armed Forces (including those who are close to leaving or have recently left the Regular Armed Forces, or
- serving in the Regular Armed Forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness (including mental ill health) or disability which is wholly or partially attributable to the person's service, including those who need to move to suitable adapted accommodation, or
- serving or have served in the reserve forces and suffering from a serious injury, illness (including mental ill health) or disability which is wholly or partially attributable to the person's service, or
- bereaved spouses of civil partners of those serving in the Regular Armed Forces where the bereaved spouses of civil partners have recently ceased,

or will cease, to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their partner whose death was attributable (wholly or partially) to that service.

Domestic abuse

This includes people who need to move because they are fleeing domestic abuse (within the meaning of the domestic abuse act) from anywhere in the UK. It covers those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, or who are living in a refuge or other safe temporary accommodation in the Dorset Council area, having escaped domestic abuse, or

Priority welfare grounds

People who need to be urgently rehoused because of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out, who are:

- witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remained in their current home, or
- escaping serious antisocial behaviour, or
- hate incidents, or
- harassment (for example racial, religious or sectarian, homophobic, transphobic,).

Disaster/emergency

People who have lost their home because of a disaster, such as a fire, flood or other emergency.

Band Two: high housing need

Homeless relief duty

People who are homeless and owed the section 189(B)(2) initial (relief) duty (by Dorset Council).

Under-occupying social housing

People who are tenants of a Private Registered Provider property within the Dorset Council area and are under-occupying their home, as defined by Local Housing Allowance size criteria, and who wish to transfer to a smaller property.

Overcrowded by two or more bedrooms

People occupying overcrowded housing, by two bedrooms (by the Bedroom Standard criteria).

This banding does not apply to households accommodated in temporary accommodation by Dorset Council.

Foster carers, adopters and care leavers

People with a need for accommodation, who are:

- foster carers and adopters, special guardians, and family and friend carers (who have taken on the care of a child because their parents are unable to provide care), who need a larger home in order to accommodate a looked after child, approved by or being assessed by Dorset Council, or
 - is an eligible child
 - age 16/17
 - currently looked after by children's services
 - has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, including time after their 16th birthday
 - has support of a personal advisor, Needs Assessment, Pathway Plan, and continued care until leaving care
- relevant child
- age 16/17
 - currently looked after by Children's Services
 - has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, including time after their 16th birthday
 - has a personal adviser, needs assessment, pathway plan, accommodation and financial support for education, training, and employment
- former relevant children
- age 18 to 24
 - Previously an eligible child or relevant child
 - Personal Adviser, Pathway Plan (reviewed regularly), assistance with accommodation, living costs, and education/training

Insanitary and unsatisfactory housing conditions

People occupying insanitary, or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions, for example due to:

- entirely lacking bathroom or kitchen or the bathroom or kitchen is in such disrepair as to make it unusable, or
- lacking inside WC, or
- entirely lacking cold or hot water supplies, electricity, gas, or a fixed adequate heating system, or the cold or hot water supplies, electricity, gas or heating is in such disrepair as to make it unusable, or
- property in serious disrepair, due to significant damage or deterioration in a property, where repairs are needed to make it safe, habitable and usable, or

- tenants who need to be rehoused because of them being displaced from rented accommodation in the consequence of Dorset Council making a housing order (prohibition or demolition order), where suitable alternative accommodation on reasonable terms is required and is not otherwise available to the person.

This list is not exhaustive, and the banding shall only be awarded for the duration of the disrepair.

Medical grounds

People who need to move on medical (including any grounds relating to a disability), due to:

- a mental illness or disorder (including Armed Forces veterans with mental ill health, or
- a chronic or progressive medical conditions (e.g. MS, HIV/AIDS); or
- an infirmity due to old age, or
- a need for improved heating (on medical grounds), or
- a need for older peoples housing (on medical grounds) or
- a need for ground floor accommodation (on medical grounds), or
- a need for adapted housing and/or extra care facilities, such as a property with an additional bedroom or bathroom, where the current home could technically be adapted but doing so would involve significant delays, high costs, or complex works. (This applies where adaptation is possible but not ideal, and rehousing would better meet the person's needs), or
- the need to move, following hospitalisation or long-term care, or
- moving on from a drug or alcohol recovery programme.

Welfare grounds (including grounds relating to a disability)

People who need to move on welfare grounds, due to:

- a physical or learning disability or sensory impairment, or
- learning difficulties; or
- the need to give or receive care; or
- the need to recover from the effect of violence or threat of violence, or physical, emotional or sexual abuse (e.g. victims of domestic abuse); or
- people who cannot fully look after themselves because of certain limitations or circumstances making it difficult to manage daily tasks without support, or
- young people at risk (i.e. child(ren) in need, 16–17-year-olds, lone parents under 18); or
- people with behavioural difficulties; or

- being ready to make a planned move from supported housing (commissioned, managed or owned by Dorset Council), where they are provided with care, support or supervision in resettlement accommodation, or a managed property, or a hostel for homeless people, or
- Being vulnerable (e.g. having learning disabilities) and not expected to find their own accommodation, who wish to live independently in the community, with appropriate care and support.

Hardship

People who need to move to a particular locality in the Dorset Council area, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others), for example due to accessing specialised medical treatment or financial implications.

Giving-up accessible housing

People occupying accessible housing adapted for disabled people, who no longer require such accommodation and wish to move.

Band Three: unmet housing need

Homeless Households

People who are experiencing homelessness (within the meaning of Housing Act 1996 Part 7 Homelessness) in the Dorset Council area, that have either not made an application for homelessness assistance, have withdrawn their application for homelessness assistance, or any homelessness duty of assistance owed has ended, including people:

- with no fixed abode, or
- living with friends, or
- rough sleeping, or
- Intentionally Homeless
- homeless upon departure from prison.

Homelessness prevention duty

People who are threatened with homelessness and owed a homelessness duty by Dorset Council under section 195(2). The council must take reasonable steps to help them keep their current home or find somewhere else to live.

Social tenants right to move for work

People who are a social housing tenant anywhere in England and need to move to the Dorset Council area for work reasons. This includes those who already

work in Dorset or have a genuine job offer (including an apprenticeship) that will last more than 12 months and involves at least 16 hours of work per week.

UK Armed Forces community

People who are members of the UK Armed Forces community, who are:

- divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Regular Armed Forces service personnel, who need to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence, or
- adult children of Regular Armed Forces service personnel, who may no longer be able to remain the family home.

Overcrowded by one bedroom

People occupying homes that are overcrowded by one bedroom based on the Bedroom Standard.

This banding does not apply to households accommodated in temporary accommodation by Dorset Council.

Band Four: other housing needs

Social tenants seeking transfer

People who are secure tenants of a private registered provider in Dorset Council area who are seeking a transfer, and who are not entitled to a reasonable preference for an allocation of social housing (for example they would not be placed in any of the above bands).

Need for older person housing

People aged 55 years or over requiring older persons housing and do not meet the criteria in the bands above.

Supported housing: not ready to move

People not ready to make a planned move from supported housing (commissioned, owned or managed by Dorset Council). This includes those receiving care, support or supervision in resettlement accommodation, or a hostel for homeless people.

Reduced preference for 12 months

People who have had their priority on the housing register reduced for 12-months because they have refused 3 offers of suitable housing that would have been reasonable to accept.

Low housing need

Any other person who is eligible for an allocation of social housing and qualifies to join the housing register.

Appendix four: registered providers that own social housing stock in the Dorset Council area.

Providers include:

- Abri Group Limited
- Anchor Hanover Group?
- Aster Communities
- Bournemouth Churches Housing Association Limited
- East Boro Housing Trust Limited
- Hastoe Housing Association Limited
- LiveWest Homes Limited
- Magna Housing Limited
- Places for People Homes Limited
- Sage Homes RP Limited
- Sanctuary Housing Association
- Sovereign Housing Association Limited
- Stonewater Limited
- The Guinness Partnership Limited
- Willow Tree Housing Partnership Limited

Appendix Five: Information applicants need to provide when making an application to join the housing register

Submission of supporting documents

After submitting your application, you must provide the required supporting documents when requested. If you are unable to provide all the documents at the time of submission, you will have up to 7 working days to supply them. If the documents are not received within this timeframe, your application will be closed. Applicants requiring assistance should contact the housing service via telephone on 01305 221739 or via email dorsetcouncilhomechoice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk - please quote your application reference number.

Note: During the assessment of your application, we may ask you to provide additional information.

How to Submit Your Documents

You can submit your documents in one of the following ways:

- Online:
Log into your Portal Account and upload the requested documents via the Actions Page.
- By Post:
Send photocopies to:
The Housing Register Team
Dorset Council
County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester DT1 1XJ
(Please allow time for delivery and include your application number on each document.)
- In Person:
You can take your documents to a local library or County Hall where staff can assist you with scanning and uploading your documents.

Required Documents to establish eligibility and qualification to join the Dorset Council Housing Register.

I. Nationality and immigration status

Provide applicable documents:

- Passport

- Right to remain papers (e.g. Home Office letters)
- EU Settlement Scheme confirmation
- Biometric residence permit (front and back)
- Share code from the Government website to prove immigration status

2. Identity (Applicants aged 18+)

Provide one of the following:

- Driving Licence
- Passport
- Citizen Card
- EU ID Card
- Bus Pass

3. Proof of Current Address

Provide one of the following (dated within the last 3 months):

- Utility bill (gas, electric, water)
- Council Tax bill
- Letter from DWP
- Letter from an official body (e.g. NHS, Solicitor, Social Services)

4. Proof of Local Connection via

Residency – currently resident and have been for two years prior to the application date

Provide one or more of the following:

- Tenancy Agreement
- Utility Bill
- Car Insurance document
- Mobile phone contract
- Council Tax Bill

(You can access and screenshot your Council Tax summary at Dorset Council Tax Portal)

Family – currently resident and have been for two years prior to the application date

Provide:

- Tenancy Agreement or Utility/Council Tax bills for each year (up to 2 years)
- Most recent Utility bill

- Full birth certificate (to confirm relationship)
- Written confirmation of relationship
(Include marriage certificate if name has changed)

Note: Bank statements and driving licences are not accepted as proof of local connection or residency.

Employment

Provide:

Contract of employment (showing permanent employment over 16 hours/week for 2+ years)

- 3 months of recent wage slips
- Full name and address of workplace

If self-employed, provide:

- 2 years of HMRC tax returns
- Invoices/receipts showing self-employment in Dorset Council area (16+ hours/week)

5. Employment (All Working Applicants)

Provide:

- 3 months of recent payslips
- Contract of employment

6. Residency of Dependent Children (Under 18 or in Full-Time Education)

Provide:

- Full birth certificate
- Child Benefit letter (showing children's names) or
- Recent bank statement showing benefit payments

7. Financial Information (All Applicants)

Provide:

- 3 months of recent bank statements (including savings/Post Office accounts)
- Pension Service award letter (if applicable)
- Details of any children's savings account

- Mortgage statement and estate agent's details (if homeowner)
- Any benefit letters

Supporting evidence dependent on circumstances

1. Parish Connection

Provide:

- Proof of relative's residency in the parish (e.g. Tenancy Agreement, Utility bill)
- Full birth certificate (to confirm relationship)
- If a name has changed by marriage, a copy of the marriage certificate is also required.
Written confirmation of relationship
- Proof of employment in the parish (employment contract and recent wage slips)

Note: Parish connection priority is assessed case-by-case based on property criteria (e.g. Section 106 Agreement or Local Lettings Plan).

2. Armed Forces

Provide:

- Armed Forces ID
- 3 months of recent wage slips
- Proof of discharge date (if applicable)

3. Health and Support Needs

If you or a household member has health-related needs that affect your housing situation, please provide supporting information relating to your circumstances from the following list:

- Medical Evidence:
 - PIP (Personal Independence Payment) award letter
 - Disability Living Allowance award letter
 - Confirmation from a GP or medical professional explaining how a medical condition affects your housing needs
- Critical/Essential Support Needs: If you need to move to receive or provide essential care and support, please provide:
 - A letter from a relevant practitioner (e.g. GP, social worker, care coordinator) stating:
 - The medical diagnosis
 - The type of care/support required or provided

- Why this support cannot be delivered by anyone or any service in your current area
- Support from a Family Member in Dorset: If your move is related to receiving support from a family member living in the Dorset Council area, please provide:
 - Proof that your family member has lived in Dorset for more than 2 years (e.g. utility bill, tenancy agreement)
 - A letter confirming your relationship to them
 - A statement outlining the support they will be providing

4. Overcrowding

Provide:

- Copy of current tenancy agreement showing number of bedrooms in the property or
- Letter from Letting agent or landlord confirming the number of bedrooms in the property
- If living with family, a breakdown of all household members

5. Pregnancy

If any individual included in your Housing Register application is pregnant, please provide:

- Mat BI certificate (usually provided on or around 20 weeks)

Appendix Six – Parish List

A

Abbotsbury Parish, Affpuddle and Turnerspudde Parish, Alderholt Parish, Alton Pancras Parish, Anderson Parish, Arne Parish, Ashmore Parish, Askerswell Parish, Athelhampton and Puddletown Parish

B

Batcombe Parish, Beaminster Town Council, Beer Hackett Parish, Bere Regis Parish, Bettiscombe Parish, Bincombe Parish, Bishop's Caundle Parish, *Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish, Bloxworth Parish, Bourton Parish, Bradford Abbas Parish, Bradford Peverell Parish, *Bridport Town Council, Broadmayne Parish, Broadwindsor Parish, Bryanston Parish, Buckland Newton Parish, Burleston and Tolpuddle Parish, Burstock Parish, Burton Bradstock Parish

C

Cann Parish, Castleton Parish, Catherston Leweston Parish, Cattistock Parish, Caundle Marsh Parish, Cerne Abbas Parish, Chalbury Parish, Chaldon Herring Parish, Charlton Marshall Parish, Charminster Parish, Charmouth Parish, Cheselbourne Parish, Chetnole Parish, Chettle Parish, *Chickerell Town Council, Chideock Parish, Chilcombe Parish, Child Okeford Parish, Chilfrome Parish, Church Knowle Parish, Clifton Maybank Parish, *Colehill Parish, Compton Abbas Parish, Compton Valence Parish, Coombe Keynes Parish, Corfe Castle Parish, *Corfe Mullen Town Council, Corscombe Parish, Cranborne Parish, Crichel Parish, Crossways Parish

D

Dewlish Parish, *Dorchester Town Council, Durweston Parish

E

East Chelborough Parish, East Holme Parish, East Lulworth Parish, East Orchard Parish, East Stoke Parish, East Stour Parish, Edmondsham Parish, Evershot Parish

F

Farnham Parish, *Ferndown Town Council, Fifehead Magdalen Parish, Fifehead Neville Parish, Fleet Parish, Folke Parish, Fontmell Magna Parish, Frampton Parish, Frome St Quintin Parish, Frome Vauchurch Parish

G

*Gillingham Town Council, Glanvilles Wootton Parish, Goathill Parish, Godmanstone Parish, Gussage All Saints Parish, Gussage St Michael Parish

H

Halstock Parish, Hammoon Parish, Hanford Parish, Haydon Parish, Hazelbury Bryan Parish, Hermitage Parish, Hilfield Parish, Hilton Parish, Hinton Parish, Hinton St Mary Parish, Holnest Parish, Holt Parish, Holwell Parish, Hooke Parish, Horton Parish

I

Ibberton Parish, Iwerne Courtney (Shroton) Parish, Iwerne Minster Parish, Iwerne Stepleton Parish

K

Kimmeridge Parish, Kington Magna Parish

L

Langton Herring Parish, Langton Long Parish, Langton Matravers Parish, Leigh Parish, Leweston Parish, Lillington Parish, Littlebredy Parish, Litton Cheney Parish, Loders Parish, Long Bredy and Kingston Russell Parish, Longburton Parish, Lydlinch Parish, *Lyme Regis Town Council, Lytchett Matravers Parish, *Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council

M

Maiden Newton Parish, Manston Parish, Mapperton Parish, Mappowder Parish, Margaret Marsh Parish, Marnhull Parish, Marshwood Parish, Melbury Abbas Parish, Melbury Bubb Parish, Melbury Osmond Parish, Melbury Sampford Parish, Melcombe Horsey Parish, Milborne St Andrew Parish, Milton Abbas Parish, Minterne Magna Parish, Morden Parish, Moreton Parish, Mosterton Parish, Motcombe Parish

N

Nether Cerne Parish, Nether Compton Parish, Netherbury Parish, North Poorton Parish, North Wootton Parish

O

Osborne Parish, Okeford Fitzpaine Parish, Osmington Parish, Over Compton Parish, Owermoigne Parish

P

Pamphill Parish, Piddlehinton Parish, Piddletrenthide Parish, Pilsdon Parish, Pimperne Parish, Portesham Parish, *Portland Town Council, Powerstock Parish, Poxwell Parish, Poyntington Parish, Pulham Parish, Puncknowle Parish, Purse Caundle Parish

R

Rampisham Parish, Ryme Intrinseca Parish

S

Sandford Orcas Parish, Seaborough Parish, *Shaftesbury Town Council, Shapwick Parish, *Sherborne Town Council, Shillingstone Parish, Shipton Gorge Parish, Silton Parish, Sixpenny Handley and Pentridge Parish, South Perrott Parish, Spetisbury Parish, St Leonards and St Ives Parish, Stalbridge Town Council, Stanton St Gabriel Parish, Steeple with Tyneham Parish, Stinsford Parish, Stockwood Parish, Stoke Abbott Parish, Stoke Wake Parish, Stour Provost Parish, Stourpaine Parish, Stourton Caundle Parish, Stratton Parish, Studland Parish, Sturminster Marshall Parish, Sturminster Newton Town Council, Sutton Waldron Parish, *Swanage Town Council, Swyre Parish, Sydling St Nicholas Parish, Symondsburys Parish

T

Tarrant Crawford Parish, Tarrant Gunville Parish, Tarrant Hinton Parish, Tarrant Keyneston Parish, Tarrant Launceston Parish, Tarrant Monkton Parish, Tarrant Rawston Parish, Tarrant Rushton Parish, Thorncombe Parish, Thornford Parish, Tincleton Parish, Todber Parish, Toller Fratrum Parish, Toller Porcorum Parish, Trent Parish, Turnworth Parish

U

Up Cerne Parish

V

*Verwood Town Council

W

Wareham St Martin Parish, *Wareham Town Council, Warmwell Parish, West Chelborough Parish, West Compton Parish, West Knighton Parish, West Lulworth Parish, *West Moors Town Council, West Orchard Parish, West Parley Parish, West Stafford Parish, West Stour Parish, *Weymouth Town Council, Whitchurch Canonorum Parish, Whitcombe Parish, *Wimborne Minster Town Council, Wimborne St Giles Parish, Winfrith Newburgh and East Knighton Parish, Winterborne Came Parish, Winterborne Clenston Parish, Winterborne Herringston Parish, Winterborne Houghton Parish, Winterborne Kingston Parish, Winterborne Monkton Parish, Winterborne St Martin Parish, Winterborne Stickland Parish, Winterborne Whitechurch Parish, Winterborne Zelston Parish, Winterbourne Abbas Parish, Winterbourne Steepleton Parish, Witchampton Parish, Woodlands Parish, Woodsford Parish, Wool Parish, Woolland Parish, Wootton Fitzpaine Parish, Worth Matravers Parish, Wraxall Parish, Wynford Eagle Parish

Y

Yetminster Parish

* Properties in these parishes would not be included within the rural allocation process and would not normally have restrictive letting criteria unless associated with a Community Land Trust (CLT) scheme.

Glossary of terms

This section shows the key definitions used in this Policy.

Allocation	When Dorset Council nominates a person to be an assured tenant of accommodation held by a private registered provider of social housing.
Eligibility	The rules set out in UK immigration law, which Dorset Council must follow to check by the nationality which persons can and cannot be allocated social housing.
Qualification	The criteria Dorset Council has chosen to decide which persons are entitled to join its housing register.
The housing register	The list of people to whom Dorset Council can allocate social housing.
Allocation policy	The procedures (i.e. this document), Dorset Council follows when allocating social housing, which includes including all aspects of the allocations processes and descriptions of persons who will make decisions.
Notifications	Decisions made Dorset Council about a person's application to join the housing register, including the extent of priority they are entitled to, or to remain on the housing register.
Review	A person's right to ask Dorset Council to reconsider a decision made about their housing register application.
Review procedure	The rules Dorset Council shall follow when carry out a review of a decision.
Case	The information held by Dorset Council about a person on the housing register.
Applications	The process people must following when applying to join the housing register.
Choice	The way by which people can express a preference about the type of social housing they might be allocated.

Banding	The way Dorset Council prioritises people when selecting someone on the housing register for an allocation of social housing.
Nominations	Arrangements held between Dorset Council and private registered providers of social housing for selecting a person on the housing register for a social rented home available to-let.
Dorset Council	The area of the local authority district.
Private Registered Provider	Organisations that own social housing and are on the register of social landlords maintained by the Regulator of Social housing and are regulated by it.
False statements	When a person knowingly and recklessly provides false materials when applying for an allocation of social housing, which is a criminal act
Withholding information	When a person knowingly withholds information about the application for allocation of social housing, which is a criminal act.
Local lettings policy	A set rules explaining how the usual rules for allocating social housing will be changed for particular types of homes, or particular locations of homes or particular types of people.
Public portal	Online software system used by Dorset Council, which allows people to apply to join the housing register, view and express a preference for home advertised as available to-let, receive notifications of decisions and more.