



Lettings Policy

All Durham Key Options documentation can be provided in large print, audio tape or CD, electronically via email or in Braille. We can also provide an induction loop, BSL interpreter, same gender interview or home visit if required.

If you would like us to provide this information in your first language, or would like us to provide a translator and meet with you to discuss its contents, please contact us on the relevant Durham Key Options telephone number as listed below. We can also provide same gender interviews and home visits within County Durham when required.

Punjabi

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਾਤਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰੀਏ ਜਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਅਨੁਵਾਦਕ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਕੇ ਇਸਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਵਸਤੂ ਤੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਕਰੋ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦੁਰਹਮ ਕੀ ਐਪਸ਼ਨਸ (Durham Key Options) ਦੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ। ਅਸੀਂ ਲੋੜ ਪੈਣ ਤੇ ਕਾਉਂਟੀ ਦੁਰਹਮ (County Durham) ਦੀ ਹੱਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਘਰ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਲਿੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਕਰਵਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Bengali

আপনি যদি উপরে দেওয়া বিবরণ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান বা আপনি যদি একজন দোভাষীর দারা এই বিষয় আলাপ করতে চান তবে দয়া করে নিচে দেওয়া ডারাম টেলিফোন নম্বরের তালিকা থেকে নম্বার বেছে নিয়ে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন। দরকার হলে আমরা শূধু পুরুষ বা মহিলা দারা আপনার সাথে আলাপ করতে পারি এবং কাউন্টি ডারাম এলাকায় বসবাসকারী হলে আমরা আপনার ঘরে এসে আলাপ করতে পারি।

Hindi

यदि आप चाहते हैं कि हम आपको आपकी मातृभाषा में सूचना प्रदान करें, या आप एक अनुवादक चाहेंगे जो आपके साथ सूचना के बारे में चर्चा कर सके, तो कृपया हमें नीचे दिये गये उचित Durham Key Options टेलीफोन नम्बर पर सम्पर्क करें। यदि आवश्यकता हो तो हम County Durham के भीतर समान लिंग के व्यक्ति द्वारा इंटरव्यू के अलावा आपके घर आकर भी बातचीत कर सकते हैं।

Cantonese

如果你需要此資訊的其他語言版本，或者你需要一名翻譯工作人員與你一同探討此資訊的內容，請通過杜倫郡以下相關號碼聯絡我們。如果需要，我們還可以安排同性別的工作人員與你訪談，以及杜倫郡內家庭拜訪。

Mandarin

如果您需要此資訊的其他語言版本，或者您需要一名翻譯工作人員與您一同探討此資訊的內容，請通過杜倫郡的以下相關號碼聯絡我們。如果需要，我們還可以安排同性別的工作人員與您訪談，以及杜倫郡內家庭拜訪。

Polish

Jesli potrzebujesz aby ta informacja zostala udostepniona w jezyku polskim lub jesli potrzebujesz tłumacza, ktory moglby sie z Toba spotkac i omowic tresc tej informacji, skontaktuj sie z nami wybierajac odpowiedni numer telefonu z dostepnych opcji ponizej. Jesteśmy w stanie zapewnić też rozmowe z osoba tej samej płci oraz wizyte domowa w obszarze Durham.

French

Si vous desirez recevoir ces informations dans votre langue maternelle ou si vous souhaitez que nous vous procurions un traducteur pour vous rencontrer et en discuter le contenu, veuillez nous contacter en selectionnant l'indicatif correspondant a Durham, parmi les options des numeros de telephone indiquees ci-dessous. Nous pouvons en outre, organiser des entrevues avec une personne de meme sexe ainsi que des visites a domicile dans le comte de Durham quand cela est requis.

Arabic

إن أردت الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغتك الأم أو إن أردت وجود مترجم لمناقشة هذه المعلومات فيمكنك الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الموجود أدناه الخاص بخدمات مدينة درم. يمكننا أيضاً تأمين مقابلات مع أشخاص من نفس جنسك كما يمكننا ترتيب زيارات منزلية ضمن مدينة درم إن احتاج الأمر لذلك

Urdu

اگر آپ چاہتے ہیں آپ کو یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان میں فراہم کی جائیں یا آپ کو ایک مترجم کی ضرورت ہے جو آپ سے مل کر اس کے مندرجات پر گفتگو کرے تو آپ نیچے دی گئی ڈرہم ٹیلیفون فہرست کے مطلوبہ نمبر پر ہم سے رابطہ قائم کریں ہم آپ کو آپ کی جنس کے مطابق عورت یا مرد مترجم بھی مہیا کر سکتے ہیں۔ ڈرہم کاؤنٹی میں ضرورت پڑنے پر گھریلو دورے بھی کیے جاسکتے ہیں۔

📍 Chester-le-Street	0191 387 1919	📍 Sedgefield	0845 505 5500
📍 Derwentside	0845 850 5600	📍 Teesdale	01833 690 000
📍 Durham City	0191 301 8499	📍 Wear Valley	01388 765 555
📍 East Durham	0800 032 0835		

CONTENTS	PAGE
-----------------	-------------

1. DEFINITIONS	
-----------------------	--

Definition of terms used in this document	5
---	---

2. INTRODUCTION	
------------------------	--

Common Lettings Policy	7
------------------------	---

Equalities Statement	8
----------------------	---

3. LEGAL CONTEXT	
-------------------------	--

Reasonable Preference	8
-----------------------	---

Additional Preference	9
-----------------------	---

4. APPLYING FOR A HOUSE – THE HOUSING REGISTER	
---	--

How to apply and who to contact	9
---------------------------------	---

Who can apply	10
---------------	----

Verification of Information	10
-----------------------------	----

Who is eligible to join the housing register?	11
---	----

The eligibility test	11
----------------------	----

5. HOW NEED IS ASSESSED	
--------------------------------	--

Banding details	13
-----------------	----

Band A – High Priority Need	13
-----------------------------	----

Band B – Multiple Housing Need	15
--------------------------------	----

Band C – Single Housing Need	17
------------------------------	----

Band D – General Housing Need	19
-------------------------------	----

Band E – No Housing Need	19
--------------------------	----

Band F – Reduced Priority	19
---------------------------	----

Change of Circumstances	19
-------------------------	----

6. PROPERTY ENTITLEMENT RULES	
--------------------------------------	--

Property types and size	20
-------------------------	----

Local Lettings Policies	20
-------------------------	----

7. HOW PROPERTIES WILL BE OFFERED

The choice based lettings scheme	21
Advertising	21
Bidding	21
Quota Targets	21
Shortlisting & tiebreakers	22
Making an offer	22
Feedback	22
Direct Offers	22
Refusal of offers	23
Adapted properties	23
Nomination to other Registered Social Landlords	23
Mutual exchanges	23
Lettings Outside of This Policy	24

8. NOTIFICATION AND APPEALS PROCESS

Notification	24
Appeals process	24
Updating applications	25
Removal from the housing register	26

9. MONITORING

Monitoring	26
False Information/failure to provide information	27
Copies of lettings policy	27

APPENDIX 1 – BANDS

APPENDIX 2 - MEDICAL FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX 3 – PROPERTY ENTITLEMENT CHART

1. DEFINITIONS

Application date	The date of application will be the date of receipt of a complete application form by Durham Key Options. Applicants already registered prior to the inception of Durham Key Options will retain their original application date
Bands	The categories of housing need which make up the priority system used to differentiate between and place in order applicants on the housing register
Bidding	Also known as ‘expressing an interest’ in an advertised property. There is no money involved in this form of ‘bidding’
CBL - Choice Based Lettings	A lettings scheme involving advertising available properties and potential tenants expressing an interest (bidding) on those properties offering applicants greater choice
Common Housing Register	<p>A shared housing list of all applicants seeking affordable housing with a variety of landlords working in partnership under one lettings scheme (Durham Key Options)</p> <p>Sometimes known as a housing ‘waiting list’</p>
Common Lettings Policy	A shared set of rules on how properties will be advertised and let providing consistency between all Durham Key Options partner landlords
Direct Offer	Where a property is let to an applicant under exceptional circumstances, which will not require the applicant to bid. The property will still feature in the Durham Key Options weekly cycle in order to maintain an open and transparent scheme, though other applicants will not be able to bid for that property
Durham Key Options	A number of partner organisations committed to providing a single advertising scheme for affordable housing across County Durham
Express an interest	To note an interest in an advertised property. Also known as ‘bidding’
Homebuy	A government scheme that enables social tenants, key workers and first time buyers to buy a share of a home and get a first step on the housing ladder

Housing Solutions Team	Offers advice and assistance on housing options and homelessness with the aim of assisting in homelessness prevention
Local Lettings Policy	A time limited policy which is introduced to take account of local circumstances for example lack of affordable housing in rural areas
Low Cost Home Ownership	Option enabling homeseekers that are unable to afford to buy a property on the open market to get onto the property ladder through a part rent and part buy scheme, usually with a registered social landlord
Nomination Agreement	Nomination agreements set out the way in which local authorities and registered social landlords must co-operate and work in partnership in helping to house those in housing need and to prevent homelessness
Priority date	The date when the applicant was given additional priority, which is a later date than the date on which the application was originally made (application date)
Quota target	A quota system enables reviewable targets to be set that gives the majority of properties to those in greatest housing need, but also a much smaller proportion of properties to those applicants with lower level needs in the lower bands, ensuring that all applicants have the chance of being offered a property
Reasonable Preference Category	The phrase used in the Housing Act to describe those types of housing need that should be given priority in a local authority's lettings policy
Reduced priority	Applicants who have been accepted onto the housing register but whose behaviour warrants a reduced priority under the lettings policy
RSL <input type="checkbox"/> Registered Social Landlord	Social landlords that are registered with the Housing Corporation to provide social housing (most are housing associations, but there are also registered charities, companies, trusts and co-operatives)
Sub region	A geographical area within a region, for the purposes of this policy the sub region is County Durham
Tie-breaker	The method used to decide between two otherwise equally weighted applications in determining which applicant will be offered a property where all else is equal

2. INTRODUCTION

COMMON LETTINGS POLICY

This document is the Durham County Council lettings policy which is delivered through the Durham Key Options choice based lettings scheme.

This policy is used to let properties to those who have applied and are eligible to join the scheme.

Durham Key Options is a partnership between:

- Durham County Council
- East Durham Homes
- Sedgefield Borough Homes
- Derwentside Homes
- Teesdale Housing Association
- Dale and Valley Homes

In addition to the way in which properties will be let in County Durham, this document covers other housing options such as Low Cost Home Ownership and properties to rent in the private sector.

Choice Based Lettings Definition

Choice Based Lettings is an open and transparent way to let properties, which allows applicants to see for themselves the number and type of properties available. Applicants bid for properties they are interested in, and feedback is provided on the number of bids submitted and band of successful applicants.

Statement of Choice

Durham Key Options is fully committed to enabling applicants to play an active role in choosing where to live while also continuing to house those in greatest need.

The choice based lettings scheme will enable applicants to have access to a range of available homes in County Durham. The scheme incorporates alternative housing options such as nominations arrangements with registered social landlords, private sector rented properties, low cost home ownership options, mutual exchange and mobility schemes. This increases choice and availability of accommodation.

Aims & Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Durham Key Options scheme are:

- To provide a transparent housing lettings system, easily understood and accessible to all, which covers all tenure types and provides true choice through the housing options approach
- To increase mobility across all tenures
- To provide real housing options including low cost or shared ownership, Homebuy and tailored advice, along with access to RSLs' and private landlords' properties

- To ensure a more effective use of housing stock across County Durham
- To provide mixed, cohesive and sustainable communities through choice and housing options
- To provide accurate information on lettings, including supply and demand, across the sub region to highlight future priorities for development, investment and better inform the strategic planning process
- To increase the overall supply of properties and therefore assisting authorities in meeting statutory housing duties
- To realise efficiency saving on lettings across the sub region
- To meet the needs of homeless households – preventing homelessness by operating a functioning housing register and by adopting an extensive and robust housing options approach
- To build effective partnerships across all sectors in the region, statutory and voluntary as well as the private sector
- To build community cohesion - enabling housing applicants to have choice in where they live

EQUALITIES STATEMENT

We are committed to including equality and diversity in everything we do. This includes eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and access, and valuing diversity in the delivery of our services and in relation to our employment practices.

When making decisions regarding employment opportunities we will take into account issues regarding equality and diversity, we also recognise the broader impact of access to employment on community cohesion and social inclusion.

An equality impact assessment has been carried out in the preparation of this policy and the assessment will be reviewed on an ongoing basis

3. LEGAL CONTEXT

REASONABLE PREFERENCE

The law states that there are five groups of applicants to whom reasonable preference must be accorded:

- People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII (7) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)
- People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190 (2), 193(2), or 195 (2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985 or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192 (3))

- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet the need would cause hardship (to themselves or others)

ADDITIONAL PREFERENCE

This lettings policy allows additional preference to be given to:

- Applicants owed a homelessness duty as a result of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out and who as a result require urgent rehousing.
- Those who need to move because of urgent medical reasons

This policy has been designed to ensure applicants who fall into the preference groups are awarded priority in the system.

4. APPLYING FOR A HOUSE □ THE HOUSING REGISTER

Durham Key Options operates a common housing register between all partners. An applicant need only make one application to the scheme to be able to bid on all homes advertised by the partners with social rented housing that are suitable for their needs.

The date of application will be the date of receipt of a complete application form by Durham Key Options. Applicants already registered prior to the inception of Durham Key Options will retain their original application date.

HOW TO APPLY AND WHO TO CONTACT

Applications to the Durham Key Options scheme can be made by the submission of a fully completed Durham Key Options application form via the following methods:

- Postal application form
- In a partner organisation's housing office
- Online application
- Home visit (where appropriate)

Assistance

Advice and assistance is available to any applicants when applying to, or using the Durham Key Options scheme.

Further details of where to seek support can be found on the Durham Key Options website www.durhamkeyoptions.co.uk and in the Durham Key Options User Guide, a copy of which can be obtained from Durham County Council or any partner organisation.

Contact details

Contact details for all housing providers within the Durham Key Options scheme can be found on the Durham Key Options website www.durhamkeyoptions.co.uk and in the Durham Key Options User Guide, a copy of which can be obtained from Durham County Council or any partner organisation.

WHO CAN APPLY

Durham Key Options will consider all applications from people aged 16 years and over, once a fully completed Durham Key Options application form has been received.

Schedule 1 of the Housing Act 1996 is designed so that Board Members, Officers and employees of Durham Key Options' partner organisations do not have a conflict of interest while carrying out their duties. Applicants are therefore required to disclose whether they are employed by or have close relatives who are employed by any of the partner organisations on the Durham Key Options housing application form.

VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION

Verification of an applicant's circumstances will be required at application stage, and also at time of offer, and will include the following information:

- Proof of identification to verify identity (for example National Insurance number, passport or drivers licence)
- Provision of a full housing history for the last 5 years, which will be checked for any breaches in tenancy terms for example rent arrears, unacceptable behaviour, eviction etc.
- Proof of residency where possible (for example utility bill, letter from the person who you are staying with etc.) Where not possible each case will be considered on its own merit
- References may be sought from former landlords as deemed necessary to demonstrate suitability to be a tenant.
- Proof of pregnancy
- Proof of joint residency of children is required in order to demonstrate the need for an additional bedroom. An applicant will only qualify for an additional bedroom(s) if joint residency (ie. at least 50% of the time) is confirmed.
- Evidence of an applicant's immigration status (for those not normally resident in the UK or who have come to country from abroad)

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO JOIN THE HOUSING REGISTER?

Anyone over the age of sixteen who would like assistance with finding affordable housing in County Durham can apply to join the register.

Exceptions

The following groups are not allowed by law to be included on the housing register:

Immigration

Applicants on the housing register who wish to join the Durham Key Options scheme need to meet the requirements of section 160A of the Housing Act 1996. This deals with the immigration status of people who have come to the United Kingdom from abroad. Restrictions apply to:

- Those subject to immigration control, unless they have refugee status or those who have exceptional or indefinite leave to remain or where the subject of a sponsorship undertaking, have been in the UK over five years and the sponsor is no longer living
- Anyone not habitually resident in the European common travel area
- EU nationals required to leave the UK by the government

The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 also set out who is eligible for assistance.

People who are not eligible to apply for housing under section 160A of the Housing Act 1996 (and any subsequent legislation) cannot normally be considered for vacancies under this scheme.

Unacceptable behaviour

Under s.160 (7)A of the Housing Act 1996, any applicant (or member of their household) will not be eligible to join the register, if Durham Key Options is satisfied that the applicant, or a member of their household requesting to be housed:

- Has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour and the behaviour is serious enough to make him/her unsuitable to be a tenant and in the circumstances at the time the application is considered, the applicant remains unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of that behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour is defined as:

Behaviour of the person or member of the household concerned which would (if he was a secure tenant of the authority) entitle the authority to a possession order under Section 84 of the Housing Act 1985 or any ground in Part 1 schedule 2 of the Act other than ground 8.

THE ELIGIBILITY TEST

There is a three-stage test to determine eligibility on grounds of unacceptable behaviour:

1. Has the applicant or member of the household requesting housing been guilty of unacceptable behaviour

2. Was that unacceptable behaviour serious enough to have entitled the housing provider to an outright possession order?
3. At the time of application, is the person still unsuitable to be a tenant of the housing provider by reason of their behaviour or the behaviour of a member of their household?

Who will the test be applied to?

The eligibility test will be applied to the applicant, joint applicant or any member of their household when any of the following statements apply (this list is not exhaustive):

- Has been convicted of a drug related offence
- Has been convicted of a criminal offence involving violence which may be considered a threat to the local community
- Has any other conviction, which, in the opinion of Durham Key Options renders the person a threat to the community
- Has been convicted of a sex related offence which may be considered a threat to the local community
- Is the perpetrator of violence, domestic violence, or racial violence or harassment
- Has been abusive to, attacked or threatened staff
- Has a record of significant rent arrears to local authorities or other landlords
- Has a history of anti-social behaviour or is subject to an anti-social behaviour order
- Has previously been evicted on any of the grounds considered in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985 or any statutory amendment of re-enactment of the same
- Has unsatisfactory tenancy reports

The outcome of the eligibility test will dictate whether the applicant is eligible to register or not and whether a reduced priority will be applied until the applicant can demonstrate an improvement in behaviour such that, if the test were reapplied, it would result in the reduced priority being lifted.

Where an applicant has their priority reduced within the scheme, on demonstrating the required improvement in behaviour, their application will be placed into the appropriate Band to reflect housing need.

If Durham Key Options decides that the applicant is not eligible to join the register, or if awarded a reduced priority (see section 5 Band F), the applicant will be notified of the decision and the grounds for making the decision. The applicant will also be advised of their right to review. Details of this process are included in Section 8 of this policy.

5. HOW NEED IS ASSESSED

BANDING DETAILS

To ensure that legal requirements are met as set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) and the Communities and Local Government Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities, applicants will be placed into one of scheme's bands according to their assessed housing need.

The Bands are:

- Band A High priority need
- Band B Multiple housing need
- Band C Single housing need
- Band D General housing need
- Band E No housing need
- Band F Reduced priority

Within Bands A, B and C a 'plus' category confers priority to take account of degrees of severity within these bands.

A summary of the bands and the eligibility criteria of housing need required for each band can be found in Appendix 1.

BAND A – HIGH PRIORITY NEED

All applicants qualifying within Band A will be assessed and placed into either Band A or Band A+ to differentiate level of need within this Band.

Priority for an offer of a property will always go to Band A+ before Band A. The tiebreaker between applicants in the same band is date of application/priority date as appropriate to the applicant.

BAND A

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band A. Within this band, medical cases will always take priority over supply and demand transfers in the event of competing bids.

Urgent medical priority

Durham Key Options acknowledges the priority of applicants with medical conditions who require housing urgently and gives preference to these applicants by awarding Band A priority status where an applicant, or anyone to be rehoused with them, suffers from severe chronic illness (physical or mental) or disability, resulting in the person being unable to occupy their current property in an acceptable manner and where the medical assessment prioritises rehousing to be the most appropriate solution. The advice of an occupational therapist may be required to ensure best use of accommodation to meet the applicant's needs. Where it is necessary to take account of medical advice, Durham Key options may require the applicant to provide evidence from health or social care professionals who have direct knowledge of the applicant's condition.

Further details on the medical framework can be found in appendix 2.

The system of awarding urgent priority where there is a medical problem is closely tied to the suitability of the applicant's present home. There must be a clear link between the two. This means that there may be no priority status awarded even though the applicant has quite a severe medical condition. This does not mean that Durham Key Options does not recognise that the applicant has medical problems, but if their present accommodation meets their needs or a move is unlikely to help with those needs, then the applicant will not qualify for priority on medical grounds.

Supply and demand transfers

Tenants of Durham Key Options partner organisations that are under-occupying their property, may be eligible for Band A placement to assist them to move more quickly. Any property released under supply and demand should be of sufficiently high demand to let to Bands A, B,C or D.

This enables landlords to make best use of housing stock (for example where the property is under-occupied and is considered to be in high demand).

BAND A+

Priority for an offer of a property will always go to Band A+ before Band A. The secondary tiebreaker between applicants in the same band is date of application/priority date as applicable to the applicant.

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band A+:

Regeneration schemes within County Durham

Regeneration priority is awarded to the following groups:

- Applicants from any tenure losing their property on a permanent basis as a result of demolition/disposal within a designated regeneration area

This status is awarded with effect from the date that Durham County Council or other Durham Key Options partner organisation has made a final decision and agreed to demolition/disposal of the property within a designated regeneration area. Applicants must have lived in the property at the time of this decision to qualify.

Each demolition area may need to be managed on a scheme by scheme basis and additional letting criteria may apply in order to effectively manage the process. This information will be available to members of the public.

BAND B – MULTIPLE HOUSING NEED

All applications qualifying within Band B will be assessed and placed into either Band B or Band B+ to differentiate level of need within this Band.

Priority for an offer of a property will always go to Band B+ before Band B. The secondary tiebreaker between applicants in the same band is date of application/priority date.

BAND B

Applicants with **two or more** housing needs from the following preference groups:

Homeless applicants

Those applicants accepted as statutorily homeless with a full duty to be housed under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) where multiple housing needs categories are applicable will be awarded band B status for an initial three month period.

Unsanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing

Applicants occupying unsanitary, overcrowded (one bedroom short of requirements) or otherwise unsatisfactory housing.

Applicants will appear in this band if their property is in a poor condition. This is where the property is in poor condition as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Ratings System covered by the Housing Act 2004.

In order to determine whether an applicant is considered to be overcrowded, a separate bedroom is required for the following:

- Single person in the household over the age of 18
- Single person in the household over 16, if it is not the family home
- Couples (or a bedroom each where required on medical evidence)
- Two children under the age of 10 (gender immaterial)
- Families with children of opposite sexes over the age of 10 are not expected to share

This priority will only be valid for bids on property sizes that would alleviate the overcrowding.

Medical/welfare

- Applicants who need to move due to medical or welfare grounds in accordance with the medical framework for medical priority, and welfare criteria found in Appendix 2 of this policy.

The system of awarding priority where there is a medical problem is closely tied to the suitability of the applicant's present home. There must be a clear link between the two.

Where an applicant indicates that there is a medical condition an assessment may be carried out to determine how the applicant is managing in their current accommodation. The advice of an occupational therapist may be required to ensure the best use of accommodation to meet a person's needs. Where it is necessary to take account of medical advice, Durham Key Options may require the applicant to provide evidence from health or social care professionals who have direct knowledge of the applicant's condition.

Welfare grounds could include the need to be near family or friends for support reasons; people who have a learning disability and people who need to give or receive care.

Hardship

- Applicants who cannot afford their current accommodation costs. This priority will be awarded only where an applicant has had their financial circumstances assessed in accordance with Durham Key Options financial assessment criteria.
- Applicants who need to move to a different locality within County Durham in order to take up employment, education, or training and where failure to relocate creates hardship.

BAND B+

Priority for an offer of a property will always go to Band B+ before Band B. The secondary tiebreaker between applicants in the same band is date of application/priority date as applicable to the applicant.

Applicants with **two or more** housing needs (detailed in Band B) where **at least one** is in the following preference groups:

Homeless applicants (as result of violence)

Those applicants accepted as statutorily homeless with a full duty to be housed under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) as result of violence or threats of violence and who, as a result, need urgent rehousing will be given Band B+ for an initial three month period.

High overcrowding/high medical

Applicants with multiple housing need who are overcrowded by two bedrooms or more, **or** are assessed as having high medical need (as outlined in appendix 2 of this policy).

BAND C – SINGLE HOUSING NEED

All applicants qualifying within Band C will be assessed and placed into either Band C or Band C+ to differentiate level of need within this Band.

Priority for an offer of a property will always go to Band C+ before Band C. The tiebreaker between applicants in the same band is date of application/priority date as applicable to the applicant.

BAND C

Applicants qualifying for this band fall into **any one of the following reasonable preference groups:**

Unsanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing

Applicants occupying unsanitary, overcrowded (one bedroom short of requirements) or otherwise unsatisfactory housing.

Applicants will appear in this band if their property is in a poor condition. This is where the property falls below the minimum standard for housing as defined by the Housing Act 2004.

In order to determine whether an applicant is considered to be overcrowded, a separate bedroom is required for the following:

- Single person in the household over the age of 18
- Single person in the household over 16, if it is not the family home
- Couples (or a bedroom each where required on medical evidence)
- Two children under the age of 10 (gender immaterial)
- Families with children of opposite sexes over the age of 10 are not expected to share

This priority will only be awarded where rehousing would resolve the overcrowding.

Medical/welfare

Applicants who need to move due to medical or welfare grounds in accordance with the medical framework for medical priority found in appendix 2 of this policy

The system of awarding priority where there is a medical problem is closely tied to the suitability of the applicant's present home. There must be a clear link between the two.

Where an applicant indicates that there is a medical condition an assessment may be carried out to determine how the applicant is managing in their current accommodation. The advice of an occupational therapist may be required to ensure the best use of accommodation to meet a person's needs. Where it is necessary to take account of medical advice, Durham Key Options may require the applicant to provide evidence from health or social care professionals who have direct knowledge of the applicant's condition.

Welfare grounds could include the need to be near family or friends for support reasons; people who have a learning disability and people who need to give or receive care.

Hardship

Applicants who cannot afford their current accommodation costs. This priority will be awarded only where an applicant has had their financial circumstances assessed in accordance with Durham Key Options financial assessment criteria.

Applicants who need to move to a different locality within County Durham in order to take up a particular employment, education, or training and where failure to relocate is causing hardship.

Homeless people *not* owed the duty to be housed under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)

Homeless applicants who do not qualify to be placed into Band B because they have no priority need or are intentionally homeless (i.e. are not owed a full duty to be housed under the Housing Act 1996)

BAND C+

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band C+:

Priority for an offer of a property will always go to Band C+ before Band C. The tiebreaker between applicants in the same band is date of application/priority date as applicable to the applicant.

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band C+:

High overcrowding/high medical

Applicants who are overcrowded by two bedrooms or more **or** are assessed as having high medical need (as outlined in appendix 2 of this policy).

Homeless applicants

Those applicants accepted as statutorily homeless with a full duty to be housed under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) where this is the only single housing need will be awarded band C+ status for an initial three month period.

Supported housing/move on from a supported scheme

Applicants who are currently living in intensive supported housing where their support plan identifies that they are ready to move on towards independence. This priority is awarded in order to release the supported accommodation for others in need.

Care Leavers

Where a duty is owed under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.

BAND D – GENERAL HOUSING NEED

Applicants who have a housing need which is not one of the statutory preference groups, or other identified housing need groups as set out within Bands A, B and C above. For example:

- Applicants leaving the armed forces who do not fall within the criteria of the homelessness legislation and have served three years or longer or who have been medically discharged
- Applicants living in and wishing to live independently with no other housing need
- Applicants needing larger accommodation (outside of the overcrowding criteria as detailed in Band B above) with no other housing need
- Relationship breakdown with no other housing need
- Applicants threatened with homelessness within three months, in order to prevent actual homelessness

BAND E – NO HOUSING NEED

Applicants who are currently adequately housed and so do not have any housing need as defined by the criteria laid out for Bands A, B, C or D above, but are eligible to join the Durham Key Options housing register.

BAND F – REDUCED PRIORITY

Applicants who have been allowed to join the housing register but had their priority within scheme reduced as a consequence of outstanding rent arrears (not caused by exceptional hardship) or unacceptable behavior will be placed into Band F from their original date of application, until such time that Durham Key Options is satisfied that the applicant's behaviour has sufficiently improved.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to evidence the required improvement in behaviour in behaviour, for example by sufficiently reducing rent arrears.

The applicant will then be placed into the appropriate Band within this scheme according to their housing need, with a priority date effective from the date of the decision.

CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

The applicant is required to advise Durham Key Options of any change in household circumstances that may affect banding placement, type of property required, or need for additional advice or support on housing options.

This could include:

- Change of address
- A member of the household no longer wishing be included on the application
- Additional member(s) of the household
- Relationship breakdown
- A new physical or mental health problem/disability that affects housing need
- Worsening/improvement of an existing physical or mental health problem/disability that affects housing need

This information must be provided in writing, which could be on a change of circumstances form, by visiting a partner organisation direct, by letter, by email, or on the web based change of circumstances form found on www.durhamkeyoptions.co.uk

Where a change of circumstances means a change in band, the following rule will apply. If the application is given higher priority and moves up the system, this will be from the date that Durham Key Options is notified of this change. This is called 'priority date'. If the application goes down in priority, the original application date will remain.

An offer of a property may be withdrawn if it is found that an applicant's circumstances have changed and would have resulted in a reduction of priority within the banding scheme. The applicant's new circumstances will be assessed and appropriate revised banding awarded. The applicant will be notified in writing.

6. PROPERTY ENTITLEMENT RULES

PROPERTY TYPE & SIZE

Information on property entitlement can be found in Appendix 3

There are cases where flexibility in the application of the policy will be used to ensure good management of the stock- For example:

- In areas where there is a surplus of a particular types of housing accommodation
- The age limit on elderly persons flats and bungalows will be lowered if a property is not successfully let after one advertising cycle, or if supply exceeds the level of demand
- The qualifying household size can be adjusted if a property is not successfully let after one advertising cycle, to ensure best use of stock

LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES

In some cases in County Durham the social housing provider may introduce a time limited local lettings policy, normally of 12 months. This is necessary:

- In areas where a specific type of housing accommodation is in short supply
- To ensure a balanced community and prevent anti-social behaviour, for example to prevent an over-predominance of young people within an area or type of property
- To take into account rural or city centre related issues with regard to demand and affordability

Details on these local lettings policies will be published on the Durham Key Options website, and are available on request from partner organisations. Please see the Durham Key Options User Guide for contact details. Property adverts will make it clear when a local lettings policy is being applied.

7. HOW PROPERTIES WILL BE OFFERED

THE CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME

Advertising

Durham Key Options will advertise all available properties through the choice based lettings scheme.

Adverts will state which of the bands will be given preference for each property.

Properties will be advertised on a weekly cycle with a banding 'label' attached indicating which Bands will receive priority for which properties.

Details on the banding system can be found in full within section 5 and the summary at appendix 1

Applicants can express an interest or 'bid' for properties in accordance with the entitlement rules. After the close of advertising applicants are shortlisted in accordance with this policy.

Bidding

Applicants can bid on properties using a variety of methods including:

- On the Durham Key Options website
- Contacting a partner organisation housing office in person or by telephone
- Using the automated telephone bidding line
- By text message
- Through automatic bidding in the case of particularly vulnerable applicants
- Through an advocate via one of these listed methods

Quota Target

A quota system enables reviewable targets to be set that gives the majority of properties to those in greatest housing need, but also a much smaller proportion of properties to those applicants with lower level needs. As these targets are not rigid, this ensures that they do not dominate the scheme. Properties adapted to meet medical needs are not included in this quota system in order that properties are let appropriately.

This quota-based lettings system will be applied to Bands B, C and D to ensure that applicants registered within these Bands have a greater opportunity to secure a property. The computer system automatically determines which properties go to which of these bands to ensure fairness and transparency.

Those applicants within Band A and A+ will be eligible to bid for all properties and will always be considered in the first instance.

The property advert will clearly identify which Band (in addition to Band A) will be given preference for that property.

Details of the quota targets will be published on the Durham Key Options website www.durhamkeyoptions.co.uk

Shortlisting & Tiebreakers

At the close of the weekly advertising cycle, the computer generates a shortlist of applicants in accordance with this policy.

The 'plus' category (as outlined in section 5 of this policy) takes preference within the shortlisting process over the rest of that respective band. Therefore A+ takes preference over Band A, Band B+ takes preference over Band B, and Band C+ takes preference over Band C.

Applicants in Bands E and F will only be considered if there are no bids received from applicants registered in Bands A to D.

The tiebreaker between applicants in the same band is date of application/priority date as applicable to the applicant.

Where a local lettings policy is applied shortlisting criteria will be determined by the specific criteria of that policy.

Making an offer

The successful applicant will be contacted and given details of the offer. If an applicant is successful for multiple properties in one advertising cycle, the applicant will be required to identify their preferred choice of one property. At this point, the applicant's circumstances will be verified in accordance with this policy to ensure that there has been no material change in circumstances. If it is found that there has been a change which would have resulted in a move to lower band, the offer may be withdrawn and the application reviewed.

Feedback

Feedback is published on the number of bids, banding of successful applicants and date of application/priority date to ensure that all lettings made are open and transparent. This enables applicants to assess their likely success and inform decision making on realistic housing options.

DIRECT OFFERS

In certain exceptional circumstances a property may be let directly to an applicant. The property identified will still be advertised alongside other available properties. This is to ensure transparency within the scheme, but it should be noted that applicants will not be able to bid.

Such cases will be agreed by the partner organisation. Examples of when this will occur include:

- direct lets in homelessness cases in accordance this policy (see below for more information on these cases)
- the letting of a significantly adapted property
- letting of a property to Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPOs) and Schedule 1 Offenders etc.
- cases of succession to a tenancy where the property is inappropriate to the successors needs
- any other cases where the need is specialist or particularly urgent

REFUSAL OF OFFERS

A suitable offer is an offer of a property that meets the applicants' assessed need within the framework of this policy. There are no penalties for refusing offers of accommodation, with the exception of direct offers and homeless applicants in some cases.

For direct offers, the partner organisation will consider the appropriate action on a case by case basis.

If a homeless applicant refuses a suitable offer of accommodation the duty to house will be discharged and their priority will be lost. Their application is re-assessed and placed into the appropriate band with no further statutory duty to house. The applicant will have a right of appeal against this decision under S202 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

ADAPTED PROPERTIES

There are many properties within County Durham that have been specially adapted for the benefit of disabled people. Examples of adaptations include ramps, stairlifts, through-floor lifts, walk-in showers or adapted kitchens.

Adapted properties will be let to ensure the most appropriate applicant is rehoused.

These properties will be advertised through Durham Key Options and open for bids from any applicants in Bands A-F. The quota system does not apply to adapted properties. The property will be let to the applicants with the highest and most suitably matched needs according to the medical framework. In these cases advice from an occupational therapist or other appropriate medical specialist may be required.

Significantly adapted properties may be let on a direct let to ensure best use of housing stock to meet severe medical need.

NOMINATIONS TO OTHER REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS

Durham Key Options is committed to working in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to create sustainable communities within the strategic framework set out in the sub-regional Housing Strategy. This helps to maximise the pool of social housing advertised through the Durham Key Options scheme.

Durham Key Options operates a common nominations agreement which sets out how Registered Social Landlords engage with the scheme.

MUTUAL EXCHANGES

Mutual Exchange opportunities will be featured on the Durham Key Options website. A tenant wishing to participate in the mutual exchange scheme will need to be registered on the Durham Key Options scheme in order to take full advantage of the features of the mutual exchange facility.

Tenants with secure or assured tenancies have the right to exchange their property as long as they comply with their tenancy obligations and meet the relevant statutory conditions. This can be with another secure or assured tenant. Introductory/starter tenants do not have an automatic right to exchange.

LETTINGS OUTSIDE OF THIS POLICY

Some housing providers may advertise their properties through the Durham Key Options scheme, but let those properties using criteria outside of this policy.

Properties to which this applies are:

- Private rented properties
- RSL properties let outside of the nominations agreement
- Some Low Cost Home Ownership schemes

8. NOTIFICATION AND APPEALS PROCESS

NOTIFICATION

Every applicant for housing has the right to ask for information, which will enable them to assess how their application is likely to be treated.

On applying for housing each applicant will be notified if they are eligible to join the housing register and be advised which Band they will be placed into.

Every applicant also has the right to information about the availability of housing which will meet their needs and the likely waiting time for a suitable property to become available.

APPEALS PROCESS

Applicants are entitled to an appeal in the following circumstances:

- If it is decided that a person is ineligible to join the register due to their unacceptable behaviour
- Where applicants feel they have been unfairly treated in the letting process. This could include an appeal against an offer of accommodation, or against the Band awarded
- Where applicants have been removed from the register other than at their own request (see section 8 of this policy)

The appeal process

In all cases the applicant will be given 21 days to request an appeal from the date that they receive notification in writing. In cases of non-receipt by the applicant, the notification is also deemed as having been delivered if it is made available at the offices for a reasonable period for collection in accordance with section 160A of the Housing Act 1996.

Durham Key Options operates a two-stage appeal process. Whilst the appeal is ongoing, the applicant will retain their assessed status until the outcome of the appeal. No property will be held, pending the outcome of an appeal.

The appeal process is structured as follows:

STAGE ONE

Where an applicant requests an appeal of a decision, they will be invited to submit any further written representations or new information which could have a bearing on the appeal. This should be submitted to the original decision making body. 14 days will be given to supply this information.

In exceptional circumstances an oral hearing may be required to attempt to resolve more complex cases. An applicant would be invited to an oral hearing and will be advised whether and by whom they may be represented at such a hearing.

The appeal will be considered by an Officer not involved in the original decision. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision and of the reasons for this decision within eight weeks of the original request for appeal.

STAGE TWO

Where the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One, the applicant must make further written representation to the Head of Housing at Durham County Council within 21 days.

In exceptional circumstances an oral hearing may be required to attempt to resolve more complex cases. An applicant would be invited to an oral hearing and will be advised whether and by whom they may be represented at such a hearing.

Applicants will be notified of the decision in writing and of the reasons for this decision within eight weeks of the stage one request for appeal.

This decision will be final and no further appeal will be heard except where applicants have the right to appeal to County Court on a point of law within 21 days. The applicant will be advised if this is the case.

UPDATING APPLICATIONS

Durham Key Options will write to each applicant 12 months after registration and every 12 months thereafter, to ensure that details on housing circumstances are up to date, and that the applicant still wishes to participate in the scheme. This will ask whether:

- The applicant still wishes to, and is still eligible to apply for housing
- There has been any change of circumstances

The letter gives 28 days from receipt to supply the information required, and indicates that applications will be cancelled if applicants:

- Fail to respond in the specified period
- No longer wish to apply for housing

REMOVAL FROM THE HOUSING REGISTER

Applicants will be removed from the register if any of the following occur:

- They request to be removed
- They accept an offer of accommodation
- They fail to reply to a request for further information or to confirm that they are still interested in rehousing after 28 days
- They illegally occupy a property owned by a social housing provider without express permission
- They or a member of the household to be rehoused with the applicant becomes ineligible in accordance with this policy
- It is found that false information has been given on the application form or in any supporting information

A decision as to whether an applicant is removed from the register will be made based only on the known facts.

Before deciding to remove an applicant from the register, other than at their own request or on accepting an offer of accommodation, the partner organisation must advise the applicant in writing why it is considering removing them. The partner organisation must also ask if there are any reasons why the applicant should not be removed and allow the applicant 28 days to reply.

When a decision is made to remove an applicant from the register, Durham Key Options must advise the applicant in writing as to why they have been removed and of the Right to Appeal.

The applicant may continue to bid on properties advertised throughout this process, though an offer of a property will be subject to the outcome of the appeal. Where removal from the register is held following appeal, information on when an applicant may re-apply to the housing register must also be provided.

9. MONITORING

MONITORING

Durham Key Options will monitor the scheme to assess:

- whether the scheme is meeting its aims and objectives and working well
- whether changes need to be made
- whether the policy complies with the duty to give reasonable preference
- whether the scheme is satisfying equality and diversity issues

Durham Key Options will monitor more closely the bidding behaviour of applicants within Bands A and B in order to ensure that applicants in the greatest housing need are effectively engaging with the scheme. Band F will also be monitored regularly to assist the applicant to improve their behavior in order that they can be placed into the higher category band to reflect their housing need.

Durham Key Options will also monitor closely the quota targets as outlined in section 7 above.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be the responsibility of Durham County Council's Head of Housing.

FALSE INFORMATION/FAILURE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence for anyone seeking assistance from the landlord to:

- knowingly or recklessly give false information,
- knowingly withhold information, which the social housing provider reasonably requires in connection with an application for housing.

Such offences can be committed in providing false information:

- on or about an application form,
- in connection with re-registration or a change in circumstances,
- during the proceedings of a review, or any other circumstances which affect an application for housing.

A person guilty of an offence under Section 171 is liable to a fine of up to £5,000. The social housing provider can seek possession of a tenancy, which has been granted as the result of a false statement by the tenant or anyone acting on the tenant's instigation.

COPIES OF THE LETTINGS POLICY

This policy is available for inspection by members of the public from any Durham Key Options partner organisation, and is also available on the Durham Key Options website www.durhamkeyoptions.co.uk

The policy is available in a variety of languages and formats on request.

APPENDIX 1

BANDS

Within Bands A, B and C below, the '+' category is given priority. For example, Band A+ is given priority over Band A.

BAND	QUALIFYING CRITERIA
Band A+ High priority need	<p>Applicants within this band are eligible for all properties via the choice based lettings scheme in the first instance in cases of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regeneration schemes within County Durham
Band A High priority need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urgent medical reasons• Supply and demand transfers <p>Urgent medical cases are given priority over supply and demand transfers.</p>
Band B+ Multiple housing need	<p>Applicants with two or more housing needs (detailed in Band B) where at least one is in the following preference groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homeless applicants accepted as statutorily homeless with a full duty to be housed under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) due to violence or threat of violence.• Applicants who need to move due to high medical need (outlined in appendix 2 of this policy)• Applicants overcrowded by at least two bedrooms

Band B
Multiple housing need

Applicants with **two or more** housing needs from the following preference groups:

- Homeless applicants accepted as statutorily homeless with a full duty to be housed under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)
- Applicants occupying unsanitary, overcrowded (one bedroom short of requirements) or otherwise unsatisfactory housing
- Applicants who need to move due to medical or welfare grounds in accordance with the medical framework for medical priority found in appendix 2 of this policy
- Applicants who need to move to a particular locality to avoid hardship

Band C+
Single housing need

Applicants who fall into **one** of the following preference groups:

- Applicants who need to move due to high medical need (outlined in appendix 2 of this policy)
 - Applicants overcrowded by at least two bedrooms
 - Homeless applicants accepted as statutorily homeless with a full duty to be housed under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) who *do not* have multiple housing needs
 - Applicants living in intensive supported housing their support plan identifies ability to successfully move into an independent tenancy
 - Care leavers
-

Band C
Single housing need

Applicants who fall into **one** of the following preference groups:

- Applicants occupying unsanitary, overcrowded (one bedroom short of requirements) or otherwise unsatisfactory housing
- Applicants who need to move due to medical or welfare grounds in accordance with the medical framework for medical priority found in appendix 2 of this policy
- Applicants who need to move to a particular locality to avoid hardship
- Non-statutory homeless (who *do not* have multiple housing needs)

Band D
General housing need

Applicants who have a housing need which is not one of the statutory preference groups and therefore do not meet the criteria for Bands A, B or C as follows:

- Applicants leaving the armed forces who do not fall within the criteria of the homelessness legislation and have served three years or longer or who have been medically discharged
 - Applicants wishing to live independently with no other housing need.
 - Applicants needing larger accommodation (outside of the overcrowding criteria) with no other housing need.
 - Relationship breakdown with no other housing need.
 - Applicants threatened with homelessness within three months, in order to prevent actual homelessness
-

Band E No housing need	Applicants who are adequately housed and have no housing need.
Band F Reduced Priority	Applicants with a reduced priority within the scheme as a consequence of outstanding rent arrears (not caused by exceptional hardship) or unacceptable behaviour

APPENDIX 2

MEDICAL FRAMEWORK

Applicants are awarded medical priority to reduce the detrimental effect of current housing on the health of the applicant or a member of their household. The priority will only be awarded where rehousing will alleviate this detrimental effect.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

URGENT MEDICAL PRIORITY

- The applicant (or member of the household) cannot be discharged from hospital because of the unsuitability of their current home
- The applicant (or member of the household) does not have access to toilet and/or bathing facilities
- The applicant (or member of the household) cannot manage the stairs in the current property, resulting in sleeping in a downstairs room, which is unsuitable because it has a gas appliance
- The current home cannot be adapted to enable the applicant or member of the household to access the property safely, provide wheelchair mobility within the home, or to receive the necessary care and support
- The current home has a severe detrimental effect on the mental health of the applicant (or member of the household). Evidence would need to be provided by a consultant psychiatrist or appropriate health professional
- Features of, or the condition of the current home has a severe detrimental effect on the physical health of the applicant (or member of the household). Evidence would need to be provided by a health professional

Severe detrimental effect = hospitalised and cannot be regulated by medication.

HIGH MEDICAL PRIORITY

- The applicant (or member of the household) has significant difficulty managing the stairs in their current property (even with adaptations) resulting in difficulty accessing toilet and/or bathing facilities
- The applicant (or member of the household) cannot manage the stairs in their current property, resulting in sleeping in an unsuitable downstairs room
- The current home has a significant detrimental effect on the mental health of the applicant (or member of the household). Evidence would need to be provided by a consultant psychiatrist
- Features of, or the condition of, the current home has a significant detrimental effect on the physical health of the applicant (or member of the household). Evidence would need to be provided by a health professional
- The applicant is currently living in suitable accommodation but needs to move nearer relative/friends in order to receive care/support, and this care/support will enable them to continue to live independently and failure to do so may result in an applicant going into care.

MEDICAL PRIORITY

- The applicant (or member of the household) has difficulty managing the stairs in their current property (even with adaptations) resulting in difficulty accessing toilet facilities
- The applicant (or member of their household) has difficulty using bathing facilities in their current home which cannot be adapted to overcome the problem
- The current home has a detrimental effect on the mental health of the applicant (or member of the household)
- Features of or the condition of the current home has detrimental effect on the physical health of the applicant (or member of their household)
- The applicant has difficulty managing the upkeep of their current property and does not have other members of the household who are able to assist
- The applicant is currently living in suitable accommodation but needs to move nearer to relatives/friends in order to receive support to alleviate the effects of their medical condition

WELFARE

Welfare is defined as any reason that reduces a persons' quality of life. Welfare status can be awarded to take account of an applicant's circumstances, or the circumstances of a person to whom they are providing care/support. Occupying the current property must have a significant detrimental effect on the applicant or care receiver and moving to alternative accommodation is likely to alleviate that effect.

APPENDIX 3

PROPERTY ENTITLEMENT CHART

	BEDSIT	1 BED FLAT	1 BED FLAT (age criteria)	1 BED FLAT (SHELTERED)	1 BED BUNGALOW	2 BED FLAT	2 BED FLAT (age criteria)	2 BED BUNGALOW	2 BED HOUSE	2 BED MAISONETTE	3 BED FLAT	3 BED BUNGALOW	3 BED HOUSE	3 BED MAISONETTE	4 BED HOUSE	5 BED HOUSE	6 BED HOUSE	SHELTERED UNIT
SINGLE*	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
SINGLE OVER 60 YEARS	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green
SINGLE UNDER 60* (at least one with medical)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green
SINGLE + 1 CHILD/PREGNANT/ACCESS*	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
COUPLE*	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
COUPLE OVER 60 (at least one must be over 60 years)	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green
COUPLE UNDER 60 (at least one with medical)*	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Yellow
2 ADULTS OVER 60 (non-couple)	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
2 ADULTS under 60 (non-couple)*	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
HOUSEHOLD + 1 CHILD/PREGNANT/ACCESS*	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
HOUSEHOLD + 2 CHILDREN*	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
HOUSEHOLD + 3 CHILDREN*	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
HOUSEHOLD + 4 CHILDREN*	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
HOUSEHOLD + 5 CHILDREN*	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red

* Pregnancy of an applicant or a member of their household/joint residency of children may affect entitlement to property type/size.

Please seek further advice from a Durham Key Options partner landlord.

Automatic entitlement

Entitlement subject to individual circumstance and availability of properties

No entitlement



