# Trafford Council Housing Allocations Policy

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TRAFFORD COUNCIL

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## Housing Allocations Policy

## 2025

Housing Options Service Trafford

## Contents


**PART 1: Overview ..... 4**

1.1 Introduction ..... 4

1.2 Aims of the Policy ..... 4

1.3 Statement on choice ..... 5

1.4 Equality and diversity ..... 5

1.5 Data protection and information sharing ..... 5

**PART 2: Eligibility and local connection ..... 5**

2.1 Eligibility ..... 5

2.2 Local connection ..... 6

**PART 3: Assessing housing need and additional preference ..... 7**

3.1 Housing need ..... 7

3.2 Deliberately worsened housing circumstances ..... 7

3.3 Reasonable preference ..... 8

3.4 Additional preference ..... 8

3.5 Joint applicants ..... 9

3.6 Definition of a household ..... 9

3.7 Bedroom entitlement ..... 11

3.8 Types of housing ..... 12

3.9 Local lettings policies ..... 12

3.10 Exceptional circumstances and discretion ..... 13

3.11 Non-qualifying criteria ..... 14

3.12 Exclusion from the register ..... 14

3.13 Cancelled applications ..... 19

**PART 4: Administration of the Register ..... 20**

4.1 The registration process ..... 20

4.2 Verification process ..... 20

4.3 Time-based priority ..... 21

4.4 Change of circumstances ..... 21

4.5 Renewal of applications ..... 21

4.6 Disclosures ..... 22

4.7 False or withheld information ..... 22

**PART 5: The Banding Scheme ..... 23**

5.1 BAND 1: Urgent housing need and owed Reasonable Preference ..... 23

5.2 BAND 2: High housing need and owed Reasonable Preference ..... 26

5.3 BAND 3: Housing need and owed Reasonable Preference ..... 28
5.4 BAND 4: Housing need but not owed Reasonable Preference ..... 30
**PART 6: Bidding and Allocation of properties ..... 30**
6.1 Definition of an allocation under this Policy ..... 30
6.2 Allocations not covered by this Policy ..... 30
6.3 Waiting times ..... 31
6.4 Bidding ..... 31
6.5 Allocation of properties ..... 31
6.6 One suitable offer ..... 32
6.7 Specialist and adapted accommodation ..... 33
6.8 Serious offenders ..... 33
6.9 Direct offers ..... 33
6.10 Time-limited choice ..... 34
**PART 7: Complaints and Reviews ..... 34**
7.1 Complaints ..... 34
7.2 Reviews ..... 35
**Appendix 1: Glossary of terms ..... 36**
**Appendix 2: Local Lettings Policies ..... 39**
**Appendix 3: Case Escalation & Decision Making ..... 41**
**Appendix 4: Application Cancellation Timeframes ..... 43**
**Appendix 5: Summary of the Bands ..... 44**
**Appendix 6: Medical and Welfare Consideration ..... 46**

Trafford Council is required by law to publish an Allocations Policy and ensure that a free summary of the Policy is available to any member of the public.

This is the Council's published Allocations Policy which can be viewed online along with the working operational processes that are used to implement the Policy.

The full version of the Policy and summary are also available at both Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford, M32 0TH and Sale Waterside, Sale, M33 7ZF.

The Policy can be viewed and downloaded on Trafford Council's website http://www.trafford.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-advice/Housing-allocations-scheme-summary.aspx.

# PART 1: Overview

## 1.1 Introduction

All Local Authorities are required to have a Housing Allocation Policy which sets out the priorities for, and defines the procedures to be followed when, allocating social/affordable rented housing. Trafford Council operate a choice based letting scheme, known as Trafford Home Choice, where applicants can bid for available social and affordable housing. As Trafford is a non-stockholding authority, all properties made available for allocation are done so by our partner Registered Providers (RPs).

Each of the RPs have agreed under a Nominations Agreement to advertise their available vacant rented properties via Trafford Home Choice and in accordance with this Policy. In certain circumstances, a participating RP may apply their own rules for when a property can be allocated outside of this Policy.

This Policy covers the rules, criteria and procedure that determine how the Council will allocate social and affordable rented homes in the borough.

This revised Housing Allocation Policy will take effect on 2nd January 2026, and the assessment of need and qualifying criteria set out in this Policy will be applied from this date.

Housing Options Service Trafford (HOST) provide the Council's statutory homelessness and housing advice service and will administer the Policy.

## 1.2 Aims of the Policy

Trafford Council will ensure that the borough's available social and affordable housing stock is allocated to households with the greatest need for long-term settled homes.

The aims of the Allocations Policy are to:

- Make best use of the limited social and affordable rented housing provision in the borough.
- Ensure that applicants in need are given the opportunity to access social and affordable rented housing.
- Meet the legal requirements set by relevant Legislation.
- Create sustainable communities where people want to live and feel safe.

- Provide choice to applicants balanced against the shortage of social/affordable rented housing.
- Ensure that no group or individual is discriminated against while promoting equal opportunities.

### 1.3 Statement on choice

The Council will give reasonable preference to those in the most urgent housing need in accordance with s.166A(3) Housing Act 1996. The Policy will also provide applicants the opportunity to express their choice on the type and location of their preferred accommodation.

Applicants will be considered for all social and affordable rented housing vacancies. Advice and assistance will be given to applicants to allow them to make informed and realistic choices about the type of property that best meet their housing needs.

### 1.4 Equality and diversity

The Council aims to ensure that social and affordable rented housing is accessible to all sections of the community and provides for a diverse range of housing needs.

The allocation scheme will be accessible and sensitive to the diverse needs of individuals. It will take measures to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to housing opportunities.

### 1.5 Data protection and information sharing

All information received relating to an applicant's housing application will be held securely and treated as confidential in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Information will only be shared when consent has been given as part of the application process. However, consent will not be required where there is a public safety interest, or for the purpose of the prevention or detection of crime and fraud.

By making an application, the applicant agrees to information sharing with other statutory and voluntary agencies. An applicant's data will only be shared in circumstances where it is lawful under GDPR, as determined on a case-by case basis.

The Council's Primary Privacy Notice can be found on our website - https://www.trafford.gov.uk/about-your-council/data-protection/privacy-notices/Privacy-Notice.aspx

## PART 2: Eligibility and local connection

### 2.1 Eligibility

Housing legislation states that a Local Authority must only allocate accommodation to those who are eligible and qualifying persons.

Under the legislation, the following are not eligible to join Trafford's Housing Register:

- Applicants who come under a government rule which means they cannot lawfully access social/affordable rented housing as they are not eligible to do so.
- Applicants who do not live habitually in the 'Common Travel Area'.

- Applicants who do not have the right to live in the UK.
- Applicants who fall under other categories of people who the government may in the future decide are not eligible for housing assistance.

### 2.1.1 Habitual residence test

Most persons from abroad, who are not subject to immigration control (including British Citizens) must also be habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (CTA) and/or have the right to reside in the CTA to be eligible to join the Scheme. This is known as the 'habitual residence test'.

### 2.1.2 Notice of ineligibility

If the Council decides that an applicant is ineligible, HOST will notify the applicant of the decision and the grounds. The notice will be provided in writing. A copy of the decision will be available at the HOST office for a reasonable period as well as posted and/or emailed directly to the applicant.

## 2.2 Local connection

To ensure the Council meets the needs of the local community, applicants without a local connection will not qualify to join the Housing Register.

Applicants will be assessed under the definition of local connection contained in S199 Housing Act 1996. Applicants without a local connection will not be entitled to join the Register. However, an applicant is entitled to reapply as soon as a local connection is established.

### 2.2.1 Local connection criteria

The following will have a local connection to Trafford for the purpose of this Policy:

- The main or joint applicant has lived in Trafford by choice for six out of the last 12 months.
- The main or joint applicant has close family living in Trafford, who have lived in the borough for at the last five consecutive years. Close family is normally defined as parent/s or adult children.
- The main or joint applicant has current settled employment in the Trafford borough.
- The main or joint applicant has special circumstances that give rise to a local connection.

For the purposes of determining local connection, living in Trafford means living in permanent accommodation. This does not include:

- Living in a mobile home, caravan or motor caravan which is not placed on a residential site, or
- Living in a holiday letting which includes a permanent building, hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation for the purposes of a holiday.

### 2.2.2 Local connection exemptions

Applicants who do not have a local connection but meet one of the following criteria will be eligible to join the Housing Register:

- Those aged 55 or over who require sheltered housing.
- Current and former members of the regular British Armed Forces.
- Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the British Armed Forces leaving military accommodation following the death of their spouse or civil partner.
- Current and former members of the British Reserved Forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.
- Those owed the Main Housing Duty by HOST.
- Those who are or have been a victim of domestic abuse who need to move for reasons connected with that abuse.
- Care experienced young people under the age of 25 who are an eligible child, relevant child, or a former relevant child.
- Those who express their right to move under the 'Right to Move' qualification regulations. The 'Right to Move' qualification applies to those who:
  - Are a social/affordable rented housing tenant living in England.
  - Wish to join the housing register in Trafford due to work-related reasons to avoid hardship and can provide evidence of their hardship that is acceptable to the Council.
  - Satisfy the Council that they need, rather than wish, to move for work related reasons and that if they were unable to do so this would result in hardship.

## PART 3: Assessing housing need and additional preference

### 3.1 Housing need

To determine an applicant's priority on the Housing Register, this Policy will use a banding system in line with government guidance.

The Bands are awarded to reflect the housing need and reasonable preference of the household. Qualifying applicants will be placed into one of four Bands. A household will be placed in the highest Band that any member of that household qualifies for.

Applicants who are already adequately housed, and therefore have no housing need, will be ineligible to join the Register.

As part of the allocation process, the Council may carry out a visit to the applicant's current residence. Visits will include an inspection of the accommodation and facilities. An application may be suspended and/or removed if the applicant refuses such a visit.

### 3.2 Deliberately worsened housing circumstances

Where there is evidence that an applicant has deliberately made their housing situation worse to gain a higher priority on the Housing Register, the assessment of their needs will

be based on the circumstances before their situation changed through the deliberate worsening of their circumstances.

## 3.3 Reasonable preference

The reasonable preference categories are set by the Housing Act 1996. Under this Policy, applicants who fall into one or more of the following categories will be given reasonable preference:

- Those who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996).
- Those occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- Those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to disability.
- Those who need to move to a particular locality within the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or others.

## 3.4 Additional preference

The Council will award additional preference to households who have a housing need and have served in the British Armed Forces as outlined in the Armed Forces qualifying criteria.

Bereaved spouses or civil partners of members of the British Armed Forces leaving military accommodation following the death of their spouse or civil partner are also entitled to additional preference under this Policy.

### 3.4.1 Armed Forces qualifying criteria

To qualify for additional preference under the Armed Forces criteria the main or joint applicant must have a housing need and be a current or former member of the regular British Armed Forces.

Along with those who served as regular personnel and in clinical roles, the following are considered to have served in the British Armed Forces:

- MoD Police Officers.
- Uniformed staff in the Defence Fire Service.
- Full Time Reserve Service (full commitment).
- Ex-regular services personnel who have served in the Armed Forces for a minimum of 4 years and can produce a discharge certificate or similar document.

Applicants who have been dishonourably/administratively discharged will not automatically be awarded additional priority. However, they have the right to request an exception to this.

HOST will consider individual factors, including the reasons for discharge, any service-related disadvantages, and the applicant's specific housing needs. HOST are entitled to consider the context and reason for discharge (including whether it would be viewed differently under civilian standards), any service-related disadvantage or vulnerability, and the applicant's current housing need.

Where an exception is being considered, HOST will consult with Trafford's Armed Forces Lead or Armed Forces Champion prior to reaching a decision.

### 3.4.2 Exemptions under the Armed Forces criteria

Applicants who are entitled to additional preference under the armed forces criteria will be exempt from local connection requirements, and from financial exemptions if they received a lump sum payment for compensation for an injury or disability sustained during active service.

## 3.5 Joint applicants

Provided each applicant is eligible and qualifies to join the Register, the Council will accept joint applications where each person is aged 16 or over and where they are:

- Married or civil partners, or
- Have lived together for at least six months, or
- Have a child of their relationship.

If an applicant is eligible for housing, but their partner is ineligible due to their immigration status, the application will be made solely in the eligible person's name. However, the needs of any ineligible household members will be taken in to account for the purpose of allocating housing under this Policy.

### 3.5.1 Joint tenancies

Joint tenancies will usually be granted where applicants have a long-term commitment. For example, if they are married, civil partners, or cohabiting. However, individuals who are ineligible due to their immigration status cannot be named on a joint tenancy.

Each RP will decide whether to allow a joint tenancy depending on the applicants' circumstances.

## 3.6 Definition of a household

Applicants should only include permanent and established members of their household on their application.

### 3.6.1 Household members

The following will be accepted as permanent household members:

- Spouses, civil partners, and partners where the applicant lives with or intends to live with them.
- Children under the age of 18 who reside with and are dependent on the applicant.
- Adult children studying at university away from home whose primary residence is still with the applicant.
- Permanent, full-time, live-in carers residing with the applicant at the date of application where written confirmation of the applicant's need for such care is received from Adult Social Services.
- Persons over the age of 18 who are reliant on the applicant to provide permanent, full-time, live in care at the date of application where written confirmation of their need for such care is received from Adult Social Services.

- Any other person who is residing with the applicant and has done so for at least 12 months prior to their application, and for who the applicant can demonstrate that this is not a short-term or temporary arrangement.

The following will not be accepted as permanent household members:

- Non-dependant adult relatives
- Non-resident carers
- Lodgers
- Children for whom the applicant or their partner has staying arrangements but who are not permanent members of the household
- People who do not currently reside in the UK

Those who are not considered part of the household will not be included when assessing priority or what size and type of property the applicant can be allocated.

The Council reserves the right to refuse a household member if the person concerned has made a separate housing application.

### 3.6.2 Shared custody of children

Where an application includes a child who is under a shared custody arrangement, the Council will verify the child's permanent and principal home by applying a factual test.

As a general rule, when determining the size of a property that a person is eligible to bid for, children will only be counted as in need of one principal home, even if they spend equal time with both parents and this is agreed by mutual consent.

A shared residence order does not automatically mean the child is reasonably expected to reside with an applicant. Only those which satisfy this test will be included as part of the applicant's household.

This applies to shared custody arrangements agreed by parents whether by consent or by Court Order, including Shared Residency Orders and Child Arrangement Orders.

The factors the Council will consider when applying this test include:

- which parent/guardian receives relevant benefits, such as child benefit; and
- which parent/guardian arranges and pays for any childcare arrangements; and
- the home address and next of kin which the child's school and GP have registered for them; and
- the identity of the parents/guardian shown on the birth certificate(s); and
- where necessary, the outcome of a home visit.

### 3.6.3 Extended families

In cases where a child is to be included in an application, but no parental responsibility exists within the household e.g. grandchildren, nieces, nephews, proof must be provided of legal guardianship or confirmation from Children's Services that this placement is necessary and permanent.

## 3.7 Bedroom entitlement

When deciding the size of property for which applicants will be eligible, the Bedroom Standard will be used. The Bedroom Standard rules allow one bedroom for each of the following:

- every adult couple
- any other adult aged 16 or over
- any two children of the same sex aged under 16
- any two children aged under 10
- any other child

### 3.7.1 Under-occupying and overcrowding

The Bedroom Standard will also be used to assess overcrowding and under-occupation. Overcrowding occurs when a household has fewer bedrooms than required by the Bedroom Standard, and under-occupation occurs when a household has more bedrooms than required by the Bedroom Standard.

To assess overcrowding or under-occupation, living rooms and dining rooms are included in the calculation as available bedrooms.

### 3.7.2 Exemption from the Bedroom Standard

In rare cases, HOST may exercise discretion to allow applicants to bid on properties with more bedrooms than they require as per the Bedroom Standard. Any such decision will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants may be entitled to additional bedrooms in the following situations:

- Due to medical and/or welfare needs, such as sensory processing difficulties, neurodiversity, and mental or physical health conditions.
- Where there is little or no demand for a particular property and it is therefore difficult to let.
- Where no suitable applicants can be identified to make the best use of larger accommodation.
- Where the applicant has been approved as a foster carer and will need a larger property than normally required by their household.
- Where the applicant or a member of the household needs the support of a carer who will need to sleep in the home and cannot reasonably be expected to share a bedroom with any other member of the household.

### 3.7.3 Carers

A carer is someone who, with or without payment, provides help and support to a partner, relative, or friend, who would not be able to manage without their help.

In all cases the carer must have been identified by the applicant as the person who is primarily responsible for providing them with care, and evidence must be provided of the need for the carer to live with them. Being in receipt of Carer's Allowance does not always mean that it is necessary for the carer to reside with the person who is being cared for.

Applications which include a carer as part of the household will only be considered if the applicant has been assessed by Adult Social Servies and they have confirmed the requirement for overnight/live-in care. In these circumstances, the applicant must provide supporting evidence from Adult Social Services or other professional.

#### 3.7.4 Gender transitioning

When assessing overcrowding and bedroom requirements for applicants whose household includes a child who is transitioning their gender, the Council will consider the gender the child is transitioning to for the purpose of the assessment. However, this only applies to children who are over the age of 10 but under the age of 18 who are receiving specific medical treatment for gender dysphoria through the NHS Children and Young People's Gender Services.

When assessing gender-based overcrowding, an adult who has changed their gender from that assigned at birth will be recognised as their acquired gender only from the date they applied for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC), not their self-identified gender.

### 3.8 Types of housing

#### 3.8.1 General needs housing

This type of housing refers to standard, self-contained housing for individuals or families who do not have specific support or accessibility needs.

#### 3.8.2 Sheltered housing

This type of housing is designed for older or disabled people who can live independently but may need occasional support. It often includes emergency alarm systems, communal facilities, and wardens.

Sheltered housing will normally only be available for applicants over the age of 55 unless a different age has been specified on the advertisement by the RP.

#### 3.8.3 Supported housing

This type of housing provides accommodation which incorporates support for individuals who cannot live independently. This may include those with disabilities, mental health conditions, or those that do not have the life skills required to maintain their own tenancy.

Supported housing in Trafford will be available only for applicants who are eligible for that specific scheme, e.g. some supported housing is provided exclusively for people with learning difficulties or for young people leaving care.

Where accommodation is available only for applicants who satisfy such special criteria, this will be clearly stated on the advertisement of the property.

### 3.9 Local lettings policies

Local lettings policies may be applied to meet the specific needs of a local ward or area, or to address sustainability and community issues. This is to ensure the Housing Allocation Policy contributes to building sustainable communities. Appendix 2 details the position on Local lettings policies.

## 3.10 Exceptional circumstances and discretion

HOST recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where the only way an exceptionally urgent housing need can be resolved is with management discretion.

HOST will retain the ability, in exceptional circumstances, to exercise its discretion when applying any of the qualification rules listed, or any other rule adopted under this Policy.

Any person who is not a qualifying person by this Policy may be deemed by HOST to be a qualifying person due to exceptional circumstances. In the interests of fairness, these circumstances are kept to an absolute minimum.

Discretion may be exercised in the following exceptional circumstances:

- In emergency cases where an applicant's existing social or affordable rented housing is damaged by flood, fire or other disaster.
- Households who, on advice from the Police or Adult Social Services, must be moved immediately as a matter of urgency.
- Households from outside the area where Trafford Council owes another Local Authority or RP a nomination on an urgent reciprocal basis, such as where an applicant has had to be rehoused outside the area due to domestic abuse.
- An applicant has an exceptional need that is not covered by the Allocation Policy.

Applicants in such circumstances will either be awarded additional preference and placed into Band 1 or Band 2 and/or may be made a direct offer of social or affordable rented housing.

### 3.10.1 Case Escalation

All applications will be assessed and determined by the appropriate HOST Officer in accordance with this Policy. Where a case is complex, involves exceptional circumstances, or a decision cannot be made within the provisions of the Policy, it will be escalated to the Senior Allocations Officer for consideration.

The Senior Allocations Officer will review the case and determine whether discretion should be exercised in the application of the Policy. Where the Senior Allocations Officer is unable to determine the outcome, or where a decision requires approval outside of their delegated authority, the case will be referred to the Senior Manager for review, authorisation and final decision.

Further details regarding decision-making responsibilities and delegated authority are provided in Appendix 3.

### 3.10.2 Legislation

The Council will fully consider the Equality Act 2010, and the Children Act 2004 where relevant, when reaching any decision in relation to the implementation of this Policy.

In respect of the Equality Act, the Council will consider whether any member of an applicant's household meets the definition of the protected characteristics listed in the

Equality Act 2010. If it is recognised that anyone in the household has a protected characteristic, the Council will fully comply with Section 149 of 2010 Equality Act.

The Council will also consider, where the person with the protected characteristic does not qualify under this Policy, whether this will have an exceptionally detrimental impact on them.

#### 3.10.3 Decisions and monitoring

It is the responsibility of HOST to make evidence-based assessments of exceptional circumstances, and to record these fully to ensure a fair and transparent process. This will ensure that cases can be fully scrutinised by Elected Members of the Council.

HOST will be responsible for the monitoring and recording of the reasons why exceptional circumstances cases have been put authorised and the outcomes of such cases.

### 3.11 Non-qualifying criteria

Those who do not have a housing need will not qualify to join the Housing Register unless the Senior Allocations Officer agree to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances.

### 3.12 Exclusion from the register

An applicant will not be allowed to join the Housing Register if any of the exclusion criteria applies to them or members of their household.

Applicants who are awarded reasonable preference, including those on the grounds of homelessness, will remain subject to the exclusion criteria set out in Section 3.12.1.

In exceptional cases, discretion may be exercised to allow registration where justified.

#### 3.12.1 Exclusion criteria

An applicant will be excluded if they:

- have no local connection
- or a member of their household, has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour
- have housing related debts
- have failed to comply with the terms of a rental agreement
- have adequate financial resources to resolve their housing need
- own a residential property that is reasonable for them to occupy
- refuse a suitable property offered by HOST or RP
- have a social or affordable rented housing tenancy which started within the last 12-months
- fail to bid on suitable properties
- fail to complete their annual renewal
- provide false, or withhold relevant, information in their application for housing.

#### 1. Local connection

Applicants who do not meet the local connection requirements set out in section 2.2 will not be entitled to join the Housing Register.

Once registered, an applicant must continue to meet the local connection requirements. Where local connection is lost, the applicant will be removed from the Housing Register.

## 2. Unacceptable behaviour

Applicants, or household members, who have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour will not be permitted to join the Housing Register.

An applicant's eligibility to remain on the Housing Register will be kept under review and an applicant may be removed at any time should the Council be satisfied that they have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour.

Unacceptable behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Having committed anti-social behaviour in or around the vicinity of their home that has resulted in an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC), Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO), injunction or another legal deterrent being issued.
- Having an unspent conviction for using their current or former home, or allowing it to be used, for illegal or immoral purposes.
- Having been evicted from a rented property for a serious breach of tenancy within the past five years.
- Committing acts which caused or were likely to cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, visitors, or others in the vicinity of their current or previous home.
- Committing assault or harassment against employees of the Council or RPs, or contractors working on behalf of the Council or RPs, regardless of whether an injunction is being sought or has been obtained.
- Being subject to a court order, including an interim order, for breach of tenancy conditions.
- Having a conviction for any criminal offence that the Council deems would pose a threat to neighbours or the community, such as arson, drug dealing, gang related offences, weapon related offences etc.
- Having an unspent conviction for domestic abuse, 'honour-based' crimes, and/or hate crimes.
- Allowing the condition of their current or previous home to deteriorate in avoidable circumstances.
- Serious neglect, damage or abandonment of a previous property.
- Paying money to illegally obtain a tenancy.
- Illegally subletting part or the whole of a current or previous home.
- Having an unspent conviction related to Welfare Benefit fraud.
- Having lost accommodation provided in connection with employment due to conduct making it inappropriate for them to reside there.

An applicant who has been removed, or had an application refused, due to unacceptable behaviour is entitled to re-apply when they can evidence that they are no longer subject to the unacceptable behaviour criteria. It is the applicant's responsibility to re-apply and provide the required evidence, and the final decision is at the discretion of HOST.

### 3. Housing related debt

Applicants with housing-related debts will not normally be entitled to join the Housing Register. This will be assessed at the point of application.

However, applicants who can evidence that they have maintained an agreed repayment plan for a minimum period of six consecutive months may still be considered eligible to join the Housing Register.

To join the Housing Register, applicants with housing related debt must:

- Clear their housing related debt in full, or
- Reduce the outstanding amount by at least 50%, or
- Maintain regular payments under an agreed repayment plan for a minimum of six consecutive months.

Acceptance onto the Housing Register in these circumstances does not guarantee that an offer of accommodation will be made. The allocation of a property will remain at the discretion of the RP, who may apply their own lettings policies when considering applicants.

If an applicant accrues housing related debt after their application has been processed, they must notify HOST immediately as this is a change of circumstances. Failure to do so will be classed as withholding relevant information.

Debt included in a Debt Relief Order (DRO) or Bankruptcy which have been discharged will not be taken into consideration.

Housing related debts apply to both the main applicant and any joint applicant, and includes:

- Arrears relating to rent, or charges for use and occupation, owed to a Council, RP, or private sector landlord.
- Unpaid debts owed to a Council, RP, or private sector landlord, including rechargeable debts and court costs.
- Any unpaid Right to Buy discounts from previously owned property.
- Any tenancy deposit or rent in advance loans provided by the Council that remain unpaid, or tenancy deposit guarantees that have been honoured by the Council and remain unpaid.
- Outstanding Council Tax debts.
- Outstanding re-chargeable repairs.
- Housing related service charge arrears.
- Temporary accommodation charge arrears for a licence or a tenancy where the accommodation was provided by the Council.
- Any court costs incurred by the Council or RP associated with any of the above debts.

An applicant who has been removed, or had an application refused, due to housing related debts is entitled to re-apply when they can evidence the debt has been remedied. It is the applicant's responsibility to re-apply and provide the required evidence.

In exceptional cases, discretion may be exercised by HOST to allow those with housing-related debts to join the Housing Register.

### 4. Non-compliance with rental agreements

This will apply where an applicant has failed to maintain any current or previous property in accordance with the terms of their tenancy or licence agreement.

An applicant who has been excluded under this rule is entitled to re-apply when they can demonstrate to the satisfaction of HOST that their conduct has improved. This may include engagement with support agencies.

In most cases a new application will only be reconsidered were there has been no cause for complaint or concern against the applicant, or relevant member of their household, for a continuous period of 12 months.

### 5. Financial resource

Applicants who are deemed, after assessment, to have the financial resources available to resolve their housing need will not be entitled to join the Housing Register.

The assessment will consider all financial resources, wherever they are located, and includes the resources of all household members.

Applicants will be excluded if their household has:

- An annual income of £55,000 or above.
- Savings of £17,000 or above.

The figures outlined above will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they continue to reflect the local housing market.

**Exemptions**

Applicants who are exempt from the financial resource exclusion criteria include:

- Those aged 55 and over who require sheltered housing.
- Members of the Armed Forces who received a lump sum payment for compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service.
- Those applying for certain low-cost Home Ownership/Shared Equity Schemes at the discretion of HOST.
- Homeowner's whose property has been classified as being unsafe or posing an imminent risk of significant harm where the issues cannot be remedied due to genuine financial hardship and where capital assets, or equity, would fall below 40% or £17,000.

In addition, HOST may award an applicant exceptional circumstances to be exempt from the financial resources criteria where they are unable to safely access their property, assets, or financial resources and are taking legal action to recover their funds/share of the funds. For example, in cases related to domestic abuse.

### 6. Homeownership

Homeowners who are adequately housed or who have sufficient assets, equity, or investments to meet their housing need locally, will not be entitled to join the Housing Register.

Homeowners will be excluded from the Housing Register where:

- They have capital assets or equity of 40% or above.
- They have sold a property within the last three years and disposed of the funds from the sale, and those funds would have enabled them to meet their housing need locally.
- They have transferred ownership of a property to a family member within the last five years, and the proceeds of sale would have enabled them to meet their housing need locally.

Where a homeowner's property is deemed unsuitable for their household due to medical needs, but resources are available to provide necessary adaptations, they will not be entitled to join the Housing Register.

In exceptional cases, discretion may be exercised to allow homeowners to join the Housing Register.

### 7. Refusal of a suitable offer

The Council operates a strict one offer rule. Any offer of accommodation made in accordance with this Policy that is refused by the applicant, without accepted justification, will be treated as a refusal of a suitable offer.

This includes:

- Where a final offer is made to an applicant owed any of the statutory homelessness duties under the Housing Act 1996, whether this be an offer of social or private sector housing.
- Where an applicant refuses, without accepted justification, an offer of social housing made by HOST or a RP.
- Where an applicant refuses, without accepted justification, a direct offer of social or affordable rented housing.
- Any circumstances where an applicant has refused an offer of social or affordable rented housing after refusing to view the property.

Once an application is cancelled under this rule, the applicant will be unable to join the Housing Register for 12 months.

Where a final offer made to a homeless applicant is subject to a review under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996, the final decision will be determined by the outcome of the review. In such circumstances, the Home Choice application will be suspended pending the outcome of the review.

Where a review determines the property offered was unsuitable, the application will be reinstated, and the priority date will be backdated to the original priority date awarded.

### 8. Existing social housing tenant within 1-year of tenancy commencement

Applicants who have a social housing tenancy will not normally be eligible to rejoin the housing register for a period of 12 months from the start date of their tenancy.

Exceptions will be considered by HOST where there has been a significant and material change in the applicant's circumstances during the 12-month period that creates a demonstrable housing need. This includes, but is not limited to, a serious deterioration in

health or disability, risk of harm due to domestic abuse or safeguarding concerns, or where the property has become demonstrably unsuitable or unsafe.

#### 9. Failure to bid

Applicants who fail to bid on suitable properties consistently for 12 months will be removed from the Housing Register. It is assumed that such applicants are unlikely to be in housing need.

Any applicant removed from the Housing Register under this rule can reapply at any time if they have a demonstratable housing need. However, this will be a new application and not a reinstatement of the previous application, which means time priority will not be backdated.

Prior to removal, the Council will monitor all applicant's bidding patterns to identify those who fail to bid and will assess whether their failure to bid is the result of vulnerability. In such circumstances, this rule will not be applied.

#### 10. Failure to complete annual renewal

Any applicants who fail to follow the annual renewals process will have their application cancelled and will be removed from the Housing Register.

Prior to removal, the Council will assess whether an applicant's failure to complete their annual review is the result of vulnerability. In such circumstances, this rule will not be applied.

#### 11. Providing false, or withholding, relevant information

It is a criminal offence for anyone applying for housing from a Local Authority to knowingly or recklessly give false information or to withhold information relevant to their application. An offence is also committed if a person allows a third party to provide false information on their behalf.

Applicants who are found to have given false information, or withheld relevant information, will be removed from the register and will not be able to re-apply for a period of 12 months.

Decisions to remove the person from the register will be made based on the seriousness of the false or withheld information and an assessment of why the information was withheld.

### 3.13 Cancelled applications

Where an application is cancelled, the applicant will be removed from the Housing Register. Applicants will be notified in writing if their application is cancelled. The notification will provide the reason for the cancellation.

An application will be cancelled in the following circumstances:

- The applicant is suitably housed through the Allocations Policy.
- The applicant completes a mutual exchange.
- The applicant meets any of the exclusion criteria.
- The applicant becomes ineligible for an allocation.
- The applicant ceases to be a qualifying person for an allocation.

- The applicant fails to respond to a request for further information within 28 calendar days.
- The applicant buys a property either through the open market, Right to Buy, or Right to Acquire, or they inherit a residential property.

If an application is cancelled, the applicant may be entitled to re-apply in certain circumstances. However, in such cases, the applicant's date of registration will not be backdated to the date of the earlier application.

Appendix 4 outlines the timeframes for re-applying after an application has been cancelled.

## PART 4: Administration of the Register

### 4.1 The registration process

To join the Housing Register, applicants must apply through the Trafford Home Choice website: https://www.traffordhomechoice.co.uk/choice.

Applicants are encouraged to complete the form themselves. However, HOST can provide help over the telephone or in person where needed. Those that need help should use the contact details located in the 'Contact Us' section of the Home Choice website, or email homechoice@trafford.gov.uk, or present to the HOST office at Sale Waterside.

Once an application is submitted, HOST will confirm receipt of the application via email.

### 4.2 Verification process

Applicants must provide evidence to support their application. Applicants are encouraged to utilise the document upload feature on their account to provide this. HOST will contact the applicant to request additional information where necessary.

Applicants who have not fully completed their application and/or failed to provide verification evidence will not be able to access the Housing Register. Applicants who fail to complete their application and/or provide the evidence within 28 calendar days will have their application removed. However, where there is a delay due to vulnerability, HOST will exercise discretion to allow an extension to this timeframe.

The Council will make necessary enquiries to verify an application for housing. This may involve contacting previous landlords, support agencies, health professionals, police, probation etc. as well as conducting home visits.

In most cases, HOST will provide a final banding decision within 28 calendar days of receiving all required documentation. However, HOST reserve the right to extend this deadline in circumstances involving complex cases.

In some cases, HOST will be unable to verify an application until:

- An applicant has received a decision relating to a pending homelessness duty.
- A required visit to the property has been undertaken.
- An applicant who has requested rehousing solely based on medical need, welfare need, or exceptional circumstances has provided sufficient evidence.

The applicant will be notified in writing of any decisions made in relation to their application. The notification will be sent via email, or by post where email is not available.

The notification will detail the decisions related to the applicant's eligibility, priority Band, bedroom requirements, and the type of property they are entitled to bid on. In cases of suspensions, the notification will also detail the documentation required to lift the suspension.

All notifications will set out which decisions the applicant is entitled to review and provide details of the internal review procedure.

### 4.3 Time-based priority

An applicant's priority within each Band will be determined by the length of time they have been in that Band. For example, an applicant who has been in Band 2 for three months will have higher priority than an applicant who has been in Band 2 for one month.

Where an applicant is moved into a higher priority Band due to a change of circumstances, their time-based priority will be reset to the date they entered the new Band. However, where an applicant is moved to a lower priority Band, they will retain their time-based priority from the higher Band.

### 4.4 Change of circumstances

It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform HOST of any change of circumstances and provide evidence of that change. To do so, applicants should complete the online change of circumstances form.

Examples of a change in circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- A change of address or contact details, for themselves or household members.
- A change to their physical or mental health, or welfare needs.
- Any change to the household makeup e.g. if a household is no longer to be rehoused with the applicant or if a new household member needs adding.
- Any significant changes in income, savings, or assets.

Upon receipt of a change of circumstances form, HOST will update the application and adjust the Band accordingly. Applicants who have failed to notify HOST of a change of circumstances may have their application suspended while an investigation takes place.

An applicant will have 28 calendar days to provide any requested information or evidence in relation to their change of circumstances. Applicants who fail to do so may be removed from the Housing Register. Prior to removal, the Council will assess whether an applicant's failure to provide information/evidence is the result of a vulnerability. In such circumstances, this rule will not be applied.

Applicants that are removed will not have their application reinstated, meaning their priority date will not be backdated if they re-apply.

### 4.5 Renewal of applications

All applicants are required to renew their application every 12 months from the date they registered. When the renewal is due, the applicant will receive a prompt when they log on

to the Trafford Home Choice website, and notification will be sent by email or letter depending on their communication preferences.

Applicants have 28 calendar days from the date of their renewal notification to complete the renewal.

Applicants who do not complete the renewal within this timeframe will be removed from the Housing Register. However, prior to removal, the Council will assess whether an applicant's failure to complete the renewal is the result of vulnerability. In such circumstances, this rule will not be applied.

Applicants that are removed will not have their application reinstated, meaning their priority date will not be backdated if they re-apply. HOST may exercise discretion to reinstate an application removed under this rule if exceptional circumstances apply.

### 4.6 Disclosures

To ensure that HOST treats all applicants fairly, any application for housing from the following must be disclosed on the application form:

- Elected Members, Councillors, and MPs of Trafford Council or their immediate families.
- Employees and their immediate families of Trafford Council and any RPs operating in the Trafford area.

These applications will be assessed in line with the Policy. However, the registration, eligibility, assessment of housing need and any nomination will require approval by a Senior Allocations Officer.

### 4.7 False or withheld information

It is a criminal offence for an applicant to knowingly or recklessly give false information or to withhold information relevant to their application. The circumstances in which an offence is committed include, but is not limited to:

- any false information given on an application form for social or affordable rented housing.
- any false information given during an interview in relation to accessing social or affordable rented housing.
- any false information given in response to subsequent review letters or other updating mechanisms.
- any false information given or submitted by applicants during the proceedings of a review.
- if the applicant allows a third party to provide false information on his or her behalf, or at his or her instigation. This would apply whether the false information was provided at the time of application or at renewal stage.

A person found guilty of any such offence is liable to a fine of up to £5,000. In addition, social landlords are entitled to evict a tenant where their tenancy was obtained by false statement. Where there is suspicion that an applicant has provided false information and/or withheld relevant information, their application will be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation.

## PART 5: The Banding Scheme

This Policy is designed to ensure that households in certain types of housing need have a degree of priority over others. This is achieved by operating a Banding system based on the level of urgency of an applicant's housing need. A summary of the Bands can be found in Appendix 4.

### 5.1 BAND 1: Urgent housing need and owed Reasonable Preference

Band 1 will be awarded based on the following criteria:

1. Main Housing Duty
2. Emergency welfare
3. Emergency medical or disability
4. Exceptional circumstances
5. Release of adapted property
6. Statutory overcrowding
7. Insanitary or unfit private property
8. Move-on from supported accommodation
9. Care experienced young people
10. Foster carers and adopters'
11. Armed forces

**1. Main Housing Duty**

This will apply to applicants who are owed the Main Housing Duty by HOST following a homelessness assessment under Part 7 Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

**2. Emergency welfare**

Any offer of accommodation made to those in Band 1 under these criteria will have restrictions on their eligible areas to minimise any risk to the applicant as far as is reasonably practical.

- Domestic abuse

This will apply to applicants experiencing domestic abuse that have been assessed as needing to move urgently due to being in immediate danger.

In most cases, HOST will require confirmation from supporting agencies such as the police, victim support, domestic abuse charities/services, solicitors etc. and evidence of multi-agency approaches.

- Extreme violence, harassment or discrimination

This will apply to applicants who are experiencing extreme violence, harassment or discrimination where there is a significant risk for them to remain in their current home/locality.

HOST will require written confirmation and supporting evidence from police. In addition, information from local anti-social behaviour team, supporting agencies including victim support, Adult Social Services and solicitors will also be considered.

**3. Emergency medical or disability**

This will apply to applicants who have an immediate need to move due to suffering sudden or severe progressive life-threatening medical conditions or disabilities, where their current home is unsuitable. This includes where their current home does not meet their medical needs and/or cannot be adapted and where the home poses immediate and severe danger to the individual.

The assessment is not based on the seriousness of an applicant's condition. Rather, Band 1 will only be given under this criterion where it is evidenced that the applicants current home or location is having a significant detrimental impact on their health condition, and where this would improve significantly through a move to alternative housing.

Applicants with a medical need will be asked to complete a medical assessment and provide supporting evidence.

In some cases, HOST may request further information from an Occupational Therapist or the applicants GP, hospital, or consultant.

Appendix 6 sets out examples of cases where Band 1 may be accepted due to emergency medical or disability criteria.

**4. Exceptional circumstances**

This will apply to applicants who raise an exceptional need to move that is not covered by the other criteria set out in this Policy. This includes welfare cases that do not fall within the routine welfare groups listed in the Policy but need to be assessed to determine if they are owed reasonable preference.

Band 1 for exceptional circumstances will be applicable for up to 12 months only.

**5. Release of adapted property**

This will apply to applicants who are currently living in social or affordable rented housing in Trafford in a specially adapted property and where the move will free up this accommodation for a high need disabled household.

**6. Statutory overcrowding**

This will apply to applicants who are statutorily overcrowded as defined by the Housing Act 2004.

However, if such overcrowding has been caused intentionally, the priority will not apply. This includes where the applicant has knowingly and willingly allowed additional people to move into their home despite knowing the property did not have an adequate number of bedrooms available.

**7. Insanitary or unfit private property**

This applies to applicants who:

- are living in a private sector property within Trafford, either owned or rented, that has been issued with an Emergency Prohibition Order or a Demolition Order by the Local Authority.

The assessment of all cases under the above criteria will be carried out by HOST taking advice from the relevant Council's Environmental Health Team.

**8. Move-on from supported accommodation**

This will apply to applicants who are moving on from specific supported housing schemes, as agreed by Trafford Council's Adult Social Services and HOST, in accordance with protocols agreed between Trafford Council and the voluntary sector body.

To qualify, the applicant must:

- be ready to maintain a tenancy independently; or
- need only a maximum of six weeks resettlement support to sustain a tenancy.

The Council wants to ensure that vulnerable people with support needs are helped to access secure, suitable and affordable long-term housing. To prevent tenancy failures, applicants under this criterion will only be made an offer of social housing when it can be evidenced that they meet the qualifying criteria as outlined above.

**9. Care experienced young people**

This will apply to applicants in accordance with protocols between Trafford Council's Children's Services and HOST.

Applicants who have been placed in Trafford by another local authority and wish to remain in the borough will be treated with the same priority as Trafford's own care experienced young people. Applicants must remain in contact with their responsible authority, who retains corporate parenting duties and must continue to provide support.

To qualify, applicants must:

- be a former 'Relevant Child' as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2002; and,
- have not previously held their own tenancy in a social housing property; and,
- have an urgent housing need that is best met by the provision of social housing; and,
- possess the life skills to manage a tenancy, including managing a rent account; and,
- be ready for independent living or need only short-term tenancy support; and
- have a support package in place.

To demonstrate that the applicant meets the above criteria, the following must be provided:

- Evidence of their current and up-to-date Pathway Plan.
- Evidence of their current and up-to-date Risk Assessment.
- Evidence that all other housing options will be explored to meet their needs alongside social housing.

Applicants who qualify for Band 1 under this criterion will be entitled to join the Housing Register from the age of 16. However, the allocation of a property to anyone under the age of 18 will be at the discretion of RPs.

Care experienced young people who do not meet all the above criteria can apply for consideration where exceptional circumstances apply. For example, where the applicant

has previously held a social housing tenancy, but lost the accommodation through no fault of their own.

All other care experienced young people will not be owed reasonable preference under this category and will be expected to be assisted by Children's Services with support from HOST.

**10. Foster carers and adopters'**

This will apply to applicants who have been approved as foster carers or adopters and require an extra bedroom to accommodate a foster or adopted child.

Applicants will only be awarded Band 1 once they have provided sufficient evidence of their approval to foster and/or adopt.

**11. Armed forces**

This will apply to current and former members of the Armed Forces, and bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces, as defined in section 3.2.1

Those that meet the Armed Forces Qualifying Criteria will be awarded Band 1 if they meet any of the criteria for Band 2 and:

- have a serious injury or illness, mental ill health, or disability which is attributable to their service; or
- are no longer entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the MOD following the death of their spouse or civil partner who served in the Armed Forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.

## 5.2 BAND 2: High housing need and owed Reasonable Preference

Band 2 will be awarded based on the following criteria:

1. Relief Duty
2. Overcrowding
3. Under-occupying
4. Medical or disability
5. Hazardous private property
6. Welfare
7. Armed forces

**1. Relief Duty**

This will apply to applicants who are owed a Relief Duty by HOST under Part 7 Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

**2. Overcrowding**

This will apply to applicants who are overcrowded by two or more bedrooms but who are not statutorily overcrowded as per the Bedroom Standard.

However, if such overcrowding has been caused intentionally, the priority will not apply. This includes where the applicant has knowingly and willingly allowed additional people to move into their home despite knowing the property did not have an adequate number of bedrooms available.

**3. Under-occupying**

This will apply to applicants who are under-occupying a social/affordable rented housing property in Trafford by two or more bedrooms. This is regardless of whether the applicant is in receipt of Universal Credit.

**4. Medical or disability**

This will apply to applicants where they, or any member of their household, have a severe long-term medical condition (chronic or progressive), or severe disability, which means they urgently need to move because their home is assessed as being highly unsuitable and is directly detrimental to their physical or mental health.

This includes where the applicant, or member of their household, is not housebound, but their current housing is exacerbating their health conditions or disabilities.

**5. Hazardous private property**

This applies to applicants who:

- are living in a private property in Trafford, either owned or rented, that contains a category 1 hazard as outlined in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, and there is no prospect of the hazard being remedied within a six-month period.

In exceptional cases where the hazard can be rectified within six months, but the impact on the applicant of remaining would be considerable, HOST will decide if reasonable preference will be granted.

The assessment of all cases under the above criteria will be carried out by HOST taking advice from the Council's Housing Standards Team.

**6. Welfare**

This will apply to applicants due to:

- Domestic abuse or other abuse/harassment

Where the applicant or member of their household has an urgent need to move due to domestic abuse or other abuse/harassment but who can remain in their home temporarily without significant risk.

Any offer of accommodation made to applicants awarded Band 2 under this criterion will have restrictions attached in terms of eligible areas to minimise any risk as far as is reasonably practical.

- The need to give or receive care

Where the applicant or a member of their household needs to give or receive essential care and support that is substantial and ongoing and that cannot be provided in their current home.

The relevant person must evidence that the care and/or support is substantial and essential. The Council will consider whether:

- The applicant is in receipt of Carers Allowance
- Their carer is in receipt of Carers Allowance

- Adult Social Services have carried out an assessment and the outcome of any such assessment.

- Infirmity

Where the applicant or member of their household needs to move due to infirmity caused by old age.

For Band 2 to be awarded on this basis, the applicant must be supported by one or more of the following professionals:

- Medical professional such as GP or consultant.
- Adult Social Services.
- Occupational Therapist.
- A relevant voluntary sector organisation.

**7. Armed forces**

This will apply to current and former members of the Armed Forces as defined in section 3.2.1. It will also apply to the bereaved spouses or civil partners of members of the British Armed Forces, regardless of whether their death was attributable to their military service.

Those that meet the Armed Forces Qualifying Criteria will be awarded Band 2 if they meet any of the criteria required for Band 3.

## 5.3 BAND 3: Housing need and owed Reasonable Preference

Band 3 will be awarded based on the following criteria:

1. Statutory homelessness
2. Prevention Duty
3. Overcrowding
4. Aged 55+
5. Under-occupying
6. Employment
7. Armed forces

Each criterion has been explained in detail below.

**1. Statutory homelessness**

This will apply to applicants who are homeless as per the definition within the Housing Act 1996. This includes those who:

- Have no accommodation available to occupy.
- Have accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy it, or they cannot secure entry to it.
- Have no legal right to occupy their accommodation.
- Live in a mobile home or houseboat but have no place to put it or live in it.

There is no requirement for the applicant to have made a homeless application or to be in priority need.

This criterion will also apply to applicants who have been found to be in priority need but intentionally homeless by HOST as part of a statutory homelessness application.

**2. Prevention Duty**

This will apply to applicants who are owed a Prevention Duty by HOST under Part 7 Housing Act 1996 (as amended). To qualify under this criterion, the applicant must be adhering to their Personal Housing Plan.

**3. Overcrowding**

This will apply to applicants who are overcrowded by one bedroom who are not statutorily overcrowded as per the Bedroom Standard.

However, if such overcrowding has been caused intentionally, the priority will not apply. This includes where the applicant has knowingly and willingly allowed additional people to move into their home despite knowing the property did not have an adequate number of bedrooms available.

**4. Aged 55+**

This will apply to applicants aged 55 years and over who are seeking age-related properties for over 55s. Those who meet this criterion will be exempt from local connection and financial resources rules.

Applicants awarded Band 3 for age related preference will not be entitled to bid on general needs properties.

**5. Under-occupying**

This will apply to applicants who are under-occupying social or affordable rented housing in Trafford by one bedroom, regardless of whether they are in receipt of Universal Credit.

**6. Employment**

This will apply where the applicant has current permanent or long-term employment in Trafford and must move closer to their place of work to avoid hardship. Band 3 will only be awarded where HOST are satisfied that the applicant has a genuine need to move due to hardship, rather than a preference.

HOST will consider the following when deciding whether to award Band 3 under the employment criteria:

- The distance and/or time taken to travel between work and current home
- The availability and affordability of transport
- Whether similar opportunities are available closer to home
- Other personal factors, such as medical conditions and childcare
- The length of the employment contract
- Whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve their employment circumstances or prospects, for example, by taking up a better job, a promotion, or an apprenticeship

**7. Armed forces**

- This will apply to current and former members of the Armed Forces as defined in section 3.2.1. Those that meet the Armed Forces Qualifying Criteria will be awarded Band 3 if they meet any of the criteria required for Band 4.

### 5.4 BAND 4: Housing need but not owed Reasonable Preference

Band 4 will be awarded based on the following criteria:

1. Living with family or friends
2. Children under 10 years living above ground floor level
3. Low-level medical and disability

Each criterion has been explained in detail below.

**1. Living with family or friends**

This will apply to applicants who are currently living with family or friends in Trafford on a permanent basis, and who:

- Meet the definition of an excluded occupier, and
- Have lived in the property as their only or principal home for the last 12 months, and
- Are not currently being asked to leave.

**2. Children under 10 years living above ground floor level**

This will apply to applicants who have children, under the age of 10, as part of their household and who are currently living above ground floor level with no lift access.

**3. Low-level medical and disability**

This will apply to applicants whose home is having a negative impact on their health and wellbeing because of a low-level medical condition or disability.

Examples of circumstances that would give rise to Band 4 priority under this criterion are outlined in appendix 6.

## PART 6: Bidding and Allocation of properties

### 6.1 Definition of an allocation under this Policy

An allocation under this Policy is defined as:

- The nomination of a person to be a tenant of social or affordable housing owned and managed by a RP in Trafford.

### 6.2 Allocations not covered by this Policy

The following are examples of allocations not covered by this Policy:

- Conversion of a Starter Tenancy into an Assured Tenancy.
- Nominations to a RP for a property which is to be used as temporary accommodation to house homeless households owed a duty under homelessness legislation.
- Assignments and successions.
- Mutual exchanges.
- Nominations not under Part 6 for offers of Assured tenancies, Assured Shorthold tenancies, or other tenancies or licences, from private landlords or housing charities who are not RPs.

## 6.3 Waiting times

The length of time it takes an applicant to receive an offer of social or affordable rented housing will vary depending on their circumstances. Waiting times are impacted by several factors, including:

- An applicant's priority banding
- The length of time an applicant has been registered
- The size and type of home an applicant requires
- The number of areas the applicant will consider
- The number of applicants on the Trafford Home Choice register
- The number of properties nominated by an RP

To improve waiting times, applicants can consider more areas and be flexible in terms of the type of property they bid on. For example, an applicant who bids on flats in any area of Trafford is likely to be offered a property quicker than those only bidding on houses in one specific area.

## 6.4 Bidding

HOST will receive nomination requests from RPs and will allocate to those nominations via this Policy. However, each RP may operate their own policy and eligibility criteria, which they will apply. An RP may reject a nomination where the applicant fails to meet the RP's own policy or criteria.

The Council advertises nominated properties through Trafford Home Choice on a weekly basis. The bidding cycle runs from Wednesday at 10:00am until Sunday at midnight.

An applicant may place no more than three bids per bidding cycle.

Applicants may place bids at any point during the cycle, and the timing of the bid will not influence the applicant's priority or the outcome.

Applicants can place bids on properties via the Trafford Home Choice website, by text, at a Library, at the HOST office, or by calling HOST. When a bid is placed, the applicant will be advised of their position in the bidding list at that time.

The eligibility of applicants will be checked against the criteria set out in the property advertisement. Any bids made by ineligible applicants will be disregarded.

HOST reserves the right to use auto-bidding for homeless applicants and those in Band 1.

## 6.5 Allocation of properties

The allocation of a property will be based on the priority of bids received, with Band 1 applicants having the highest priority and Band 4 applicants having the lowest. Where a property is advertised as only available to a specific band or cohort, the letting will be made to the bidder with the highest priority and earliest registration date in that band or cohort.

If more than one bid is received from applicants with the same priority, then the person who has been in the Band for the longest period of time will be offered the property. If two or more applicants have the same priority and length of time in the Band, the CBL system will decide who would be the first choice by considering the date of registration.

The applicant to be offered the property will be contacted by the RP and checks will be made to ensure their housing circumstances remain as they were when the application was submitted. As long as the circumstances are the same, an offer of the property will be made and a viewing arranged. Applicants will normally have three calendar days to decide whether to accept an offer.

If the applicant refuses the offer, the property will be offered to the applicant with the next highest priority.

Where a property is adapted for use by a disabled person, the property will be offered to the applicant with the highest priority whose needs best match the facilities of the property. In some circumstances, this may mean the property is not offered to the bidder with highest priority. Where a property has been specially adapted, HOST may make a direct offer or bid on behalf of applicants whose needs can be best met by the property in question.

If an applicant who has been assessed as needing support to sustain a tenancy does not have support is not in place, the bid will be rejected until the necessary support is in place. In such circumstances, the applicant will be entitled to receive another offer.

## 6.6 One suitable offer

There is a high demand for social and affordable rented housing in Trafford. Therefore, all applicants will only be entitled to one suitable offer.

Applicants should therefore think carefully about the type and location of properties that they wish to be considered for before placing a bid. Applicants should only place bids on properties that they intend to move to.

If an applicant refuses a suitable offer, their application will be cancelled, and they will not qualify to join the Housing Register for a minimum period of 12 months from the date of cancellation.

Applicants can make a fresh application at the end of the 12-month period. The new application will be assessed on the information provided and will be registered from the date that the new application is verified.

Applicants who are subject to the auto-bid function should be mindful that offers made because of an auto-bid are considered in the same way as normal bids.

### 6.6.1 Suitability assessments

To determine whether an offer is suitable, the Council will assess if the property is appropriate for the applicant and their household in respect of its size, condition, accessibility, and affordability. The household's circumstances will be given due regard in line with the assessment.

The location of a property will also be considered. However, only in exceptional circumstances will an offer be considered unsuitable based on its location.

### 6.7 Specialist and adapted accommodation

Some homes have been specially adapted, or have the potential to be adapted, to meet specific needs. This includes homes for disabled, neurodivergent, and older people.

To allow the Council to make the best use of the available stock, properties may be flagged as being currently adapted or suitable for adaptation. The Council reserves the right to allocate such a property outside of the band and date priority order system to best match that property to an applicant who requires an adapted property and is in urgent housing need.

Applicants for sheltered housing must be aged 55 or over unless otherwise stated by the RP or have a need for sheltered accommodation due to vulnerability or disability. It is a condition of all tenancies in sheltered housing schemes that tenants agree to take any warden service if applicable. The property advertisement will specifically state whether a property is part of a sheltered housing scheme.

### 6.8 Serious offenders

It is sometimes necessary to provide housing to serious offenders to minimise the risk to the community and to allow supervision of the individual to be maintained. This may also apply to individuals currently living in the community who are considered to pose a risk to themselves and/or others.

The Council will work with the Police, Probation Services and One Trafford to assess and manage risk and will apply special arrangements where cases are referred through the Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel, Integrated Offender Management cases or any protocol with Probation Services. HOST Officers will attend case conferences with the Police, Probation, Adult Social Services and Health professionals and a planned and managed relocation pathway will be agreed. This should include a full discussion of a range of housing options which are most appropriate to the customer's circumstances and supervision needs.

This may result in restrictions being placed on the choice of property or area that is open to an applicant or may result in a direct offer being made to an applicant whenever they have sufficient priority under the Policy to receive such an offer.

### 6.9 Direct offers

There may be some circumstances where HOST must make a direct allocation rather than allowing the applicant to bid. This includes:

- Where an applicant has an urgent and immediate need to move due to a risk to the household or where there would be a risk to the applicant by being required to take part in the bidding process.
- Where there is a need to move a household on from temporary accommodation.
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, Integrated Offender Management cases or other high-risk offenders.

- To fulfil HOST's duties in line with homelessness legislation.
- Homes that have been significantly adapted for a disabled person.
- New-build wheelchair accessible homes.
- Homes that are suitable for adaptation for an identified customer with a disability.
- Extra care housing.
- Where applicants in hospital cannot return home and discharge is delayed as a result.

In addition, vacant properties which are adapted, or which are suitable for adaptation, or can meet the needs of an applicant with a disability or other special reasons may be directly allocated. This may be through a direct offer or via bypassing applicants who have bid, but where the nature of the property or its current adaptations match the specific needs of that applicant requiring an adapted property. Specially adapted properties will be labelled so that only applicants who meet specific criteria may successfully bid.

Direct allocations may be made where information is available which would compromise the safety of the applicant or others e.g. where a high-risk offender is not allowed to live in a certain area or where a person previously guilty of harassment or domestic abuse should not reside in the same area as the victim of that harassment or abuse.

It is expected that 20% of all nominations will go to those who are placed into temporary accommodation by HOST under a homelessness duty. This may be achieved by making direct offers to such applicants.

### 6.10 Time-limited choice

Applicants who are owed a Main Housing Duty by HOST, and applicants who have been awarded Band 1 or Band 2, will only be entitled to exercise choice for four weeks and will have to consider a minimum of three areas.

HOST can place bids on suitable properties on behalf of the applicant in their preferred areas during the four-week period.

After this timeframe, regardless of whether any suitable properties have been advertised, HOST is entitled to make a direct offer of a suitable property in either the social or private rented sector to resolve the applicants housing need.

## PART 7: Complaints and Reviews

### 7.1 Complaints

Any person who is not satisfied with the administration of this Housing Allocations Policy can register a complaint. Complaints are separate to the circumstances in which an applicant is entitled to seek a review of a decision made on their housing application.

Where an applicant wishes to make a complaint, this should be made in line with the Council's Complaints Policy.

Information about how to make a complaint and how the Council will deal with it can be found at https://www.trafford.gov.uk/about-your-council/complaints/general-council-complaints

Where an applicant has exhausted the Council's complaints process, and remains unsatisfied, they are entitled to escalate their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman Service via www.lgo.org.uk.

### 7.2 Reviews

An applicant has a legal right to request an internal review of any of the following decisions:

- That they are ineligible or do not qualify to join the Housing Register.
- The Band they are awarded.
- The priority date granted for the Band awarded.
- The decision to remove them from the Housing Register.
- Any decision about the facts of the case that have been used to assess their application.
- Where an applicant considers that a decision has been reached based on incorrect information.
- Whether the property offered was suitable for the applicant and their household.

Any applicant wishing to request a review must do so by contacting HOST within 21 calendar days of being notified of a decision. The request should be made in writing by letter or email and should state the applicants Home Choice reference as well as the reasons for the review request.

Review requests should be emailed to thcreviews@trafford.gov.uk.

Any requests received outside of the 21-day timeframe will not be considered unless exceptional circumstances apply.

All reviews will be dealt with by a Senior Officer who was not involved in the original decision. A decision will be issued within 56 calendar days the request. However, this is a target timescale and may be extended depending on operational pressures.

All review decisions will be provided to the applicant via written notification and will specify the reasons for the decision.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

**Adaptations** – changes to a home, usually funded by the Council or a RP, that make it accessible or suitable for a tenant with physical challenges or disability.

**Anti-social behaviour** – behaviour which causes nuisance, alarm, or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.

**Assignment** – within the context of this Policy, assignment refers to a tenant transferring their tenancy to another person.

**Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)** – a common type of tenancy agreement granting a tenant the right to occupy a property for a fixed-term of between six months and five years, with the landlord retaining the right to repossess it at the end of that term.

**Banding** – the method used to award priority to applicants under this Policy. There are four Bands which reflect the comparative urgency of an applicant's need for re-housing.

**Bidding** – the process by which applicants register their interest in being considered for a particular property, for which they are eligible. No money is exchanged in this process.

**Bankruptcy** – a legal process that allows individuals to discharge debts they cannot repay.

**Category 1 hazard** – a hazard which poses a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety, as per the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

**Choice Based Lettings (CBL)** – a system of letting properties by which vacant properties are advertised, and applicants have a right to express their interest.

**Code of Guidance –** issued by the Department for Housing, Communities, and Local Government. Gives guidance on how a local authority should register applicants, allocate social housing, and carry out its statutory duties and responsibilities towards the homeless.

**Co-habiting** – a couple that live together in an intimate and committed relationship, who are not married or in a civil partnership.

**Common Travel Area** – a long-standing agreement between the UK, Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands that allows British and Irish citizens to travel, live, work, and access services in each other's territories without needing a passport or visa.

**Debt Relief Order** – a formal, legally binding, process that helps individuals with low incomes and few assets to clear their debts by freezing repayments for 12 months and potentially writing off qualifying debts.

**Domestic abuse** – any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse includes, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and/or emotional.

**Former relevant child** - young person aged 18 to 25 who was in the care of the local authority for more than 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, including time on or after their 16th birthday, and who is now no longer in care.

**Hate crime** – any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.

**Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** – an amendment to the Housing Act 1996 which includes a 56-day prevention and a 56-day relief duty along with the formulation of an agreed personal housing plan.

**Honour-based crime** – any criminal offence committed to protect or defend the 'honour' of a family or community.

**Housing Act 1996 (Part 7)** – primary legislation regarding homelessness in England, which outlines the duties of local authorities to prevent homelessness and help those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

**Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)** - The HHSRS is a risk-based assessment tool which is used by environmental health officers to assess the risk (the likelihood and severity) of a hazard in residential housing to the health and safety of occupants or visitors.

**Housing related debt** – debt relating to housing costs such as rent arrears, mortgage arrears, Council Tax arrears, service charge arrears, use and occupation charge arrears etc.

**Immigration status** – the legal permission a person has to live, work, or study in a country, as granted by the relevant government agency such as the UK's Home Office.

**Infirmity** – physical or mental weakness

**Joint Tenancy** – a tenancy agreement where two or more individuals hold equal rights and obligations to a property.

**Main Housing Duty** – a local authority's legal obligation to secure suitable housing for individuals who are homeless, in priority need, and not intentionally homeless as per Part 7 Housing Act 1996.

**Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA)** – the statutory framework for inter-agency co-operation in assessing and managing violent and sex offenders in England and Wales.

**Mutual exchange** – the process by which a social/affordable rented housing tenant legally swaps their home with another social/affordable rented housing tenant, with the permission of both landlords.

**Nominations agreement** – an agreement under which RP's offer a percentage of their available properties to be allocated to those in housing need by the Council.

**Nomination request** – a vacant property provided by a RP to be advertised by the Council.

**Prevention Duty** – a local authority's legal obligation to take reasonable steps to help eligible individuals who are threatened with homelessness to avoid becoming homeless as per the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**Priority need** – the groups defined as being in priority for homelessness assistance under Section 189(1) Housing Act 1996.

**Reasonable Preference –** categories of applicants that must be prioritised for an allocation of social//affordable rented housing as per Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

**Registered Provider (RP)** – a social/affordable housing provider registered with the Regulator of Social Housing, often referred to as Housing Associations.

**Relief Duty** – a local authority's legal obligation to take reasonable steps to help a homeless and eligible person secure accommodation that is available for at least six months, as per the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**Short-term support** – in the context of this Policy, short-term support refers to support that is required to up to six months.

**Social housing** – housing provided by local authorities or RPs to those on low-incomes or in housing need at a lower cost than the market rate.

**Social Services** – a public or government-led organisation that provide support and assistance to vulnerable individuals, including children and adults, to ensure their safety, well-being, and access to necessary resources.

**Subletting** – whereby a tenant leases the whole or part of their rented property to another person.

**Succession** – the process whereby someone can inherit a tenancy after the original tenant's death.

**Suitable offer** – an offer of accommodation that the Council deems appropriate for a household in respect of its type, size, condition, location, and affordability.

**Temporary accommodation** – emergency housing provided by the Council for homeless households who are owed an accommodation duty under S188, S198, or S204 Housing Act 1996.

**Under occupying** – where a tenant has more bedrooms available to them than is needed for their household size, as per the Bedroom Standard.

**Uninhabitable** – a property or place unsuitable for living in, for example because it is dangerous or unhealthy.

**Vulnerable** – a person who is susceptible to harm, attack, or being easily hurt either physically or emotionally. This can be due to age, illness, health conditions, disability, addiction, or circumstances.

**Unspent conviction** – a criminal conviction that is still within its rehabilitation period, meaning it will appear on criminal record checks.

## Appendix 2: Local Lettings Policies

The Council may, in agreement with HOST and participating RPs, develop local lettings plans for specific areas, estates, or blocks to develop and promote balanced and sustainable communities.

Local lettings policies (LLPs) may be applied to meet the needs of a local ward or area or to address sustainability and community issues to ensure the housing allocation scheme is able to contribute to building sustainable communities. They will be tailored to fit local situations in well-defined communities (such as a particular block of flats, an individual street, or new housing development) or may be applied to a village in a rural area.

Examples of LLPS include, but is not limited to:

- Age restrictions.
- Prioritising applicants who are key workers, as defined by the Council.
- Restrictions on lettings to vulnerable households where there are already a concentration of supported tenants/residents in a street or block.
- Lettings to childless households where there are high concentrations of children and young people living on a specific estate, street or block.
- Disregarding household type or property matching rules to allow, for example, under-occupation to reduce child density or to account for future family growth.
- Ensuring that there is a balance of working and non-working households allocated to a scheme.

### New developments

New developments will normally have LLPs regardless of whether the new development is subject to a Section 106 agreement or affordable housing statement.

Where a new development is subject to a Section 106 planning agreement, the criteria as per the S106 agreement will be followed. To ensure a reasonable mix of household sizes and types, and families with children of different ages, an LLP will normally be used for new developments larger than four properties.

This may set restrictions on the number of lettings which can be made to families with young children or the number of families who are not working.

### Evidence requirements

Each LLP will be based on a detailed analysis of relevant information gathered from a variety of sources. Evidence may include information such as tenant profiling, the incidence of anti-social behaviour, and stock turnover in a particular block, street or area, a neighbourhood plan or the need to provide housing for local people in rural villages.

RPs are responsible for collating such evidence to apply to the Council for an LLP and must ensure that an Equality Impact Assessment forms part of the evidence.

### Decisions

The decision to implement a LLP will be approved by the Senior Officer at the Council and agreed by a Senior Manager of the relevant RP for whom Trafford Council has nomination rights.

Any decision to implement a LLP will always consider the implications for equal opportunities and the need for the Allocations Policy to meet the needs of those owed a Reasonable Preference.

LLPs will be subject to a review agreed by the Council and RP. For example, as and when changes to an estate, area or block, necessitate such a review.

There must be a clear evidence base for adopting a LLP. Council agreement as to whether a LLP is appropriate will be based on the following test:

- That there is a clear definition of the objective to be achieved by that LLP.
- That there is a clear evidence base to back up the need for a LLP.
- That any potential equality impact has been considered.
- How long the LLP is intended to operate.
- When the LLP should be reviewed.

A written record of each LLP adopted or rejected will be kept. All live LLPs will be published online so the public can see which polices are in operation at any point in time.

## Appendix 3: Case Escalation & Delegated Decision Making

The Housing Allocations Policy is designed to ensure that housing applications are assessed fairly, consistently, and in accordance with published eligibility, qualification, and banding criteria. The majority of applications will be assessed and determined by the appropriate HOST Officer through the standard assessment process, without the need for escalation.

Officers must consider all available evidence, housing circumstances, medical and welfare information, bedroom requirements, and any other relevant factors before reaching a decision. Where a case can be appropriately resolved through the application of the Housing Allocations Policy, the decision must be made at officer level and clearly recorded.

In some circumstances, a case may present issues that cannot be resolved through the standard application of the Policy. This may occur where there are exceptional circumstances, significant safeguarding concerns, complex medical or welfare considerations, policy exceptions, or where the available evidence indicates that the applicant's circumstances fall outside the normal policy provisions. In such cases, and only where the escalation criteria have been met, the case may be referred to a Senior Allocations Officer for consideration.

The role of the Senior Allocations Officer is to review escalated cases, consider the evidence available, and determine whether discretion should be exercised within the framework of the Housing Allocations Policy. This is to ensure that evidenced based assessments are made and such awards are kept to a minimum in the interest of fairness.

The Senior Allocations Officer may consider cases involving:

- Exceptional circumstances.
- Requests for policy deviations.
- Bedroom Standard exceptions.
- Complex medical, disability or welfare cases.
- Safeguarding, Serious Offender Management, and other high-risk cases.
- Specialist housing requirements.
- Other matters requiring the exercise of discretion under this Policy.

The Senior Allocations Officer will consider all relevant evidence before reaching a decision and is expected to determine the outcome of escalated cases wherever possible within their delegated authority. Decisions must be evidence-based, proportionate, and consistent with the principles of fairness, transparency, and the effective use of housing stock.

Where a case falls outside the Senior Allocations Officer's delegated authority, or involves significant complexity, risk, or potential precedent, it will be escalated to the Senior Manager for review and input. Following consideration of the Senior Manager's views, the Senior Allocations Officer will make or authorise the final decision and communicate the outcome, together with any required actions, to the HOST Officer

responsible for the case. Escalation to Senior Manager level should only occur where necessary and must be supported by a clear rationale.

### Administration

All Senior Allocations Officer requests must be made in writing and input into a dedicated form by HOST for the purposes of decision making and monitoring outcomes.

Decisions must be fully recorded to ensure a fair and transparent process has been followed and to allow them to be scrutinised by members of Trafford Council to ensure that they meet the relevant criteria.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of any escalated decision. Where discretion has been exercised, the notification will explain the decision reached, the reasons for the decision, and any resulting impact on the applicant's housing application.

## Appendix 4: Application Cancellation Timeframes

| Reason for cancellation | Time limit on re-application |
|---|---|
| The applicant is suitably housed through the Allocations Policy. | Applicant can reapply 12-months from the date of cancellation, unless exceptional circumstances apply. |
| The applicant completes a mutual exchange. | |
| The applicant is found to have made false or deliberately misleading statements in connection with their application. | |
| The applicant refuses an offer of suitable accommodation. | |
| The applicant becomes ineligible for an allocation. | Applicants can reapply at any time if they can evidence that they have become eligible. |
| The applicant ceases to be a qualifying person for an allocation. | Unless otherwise specified in the exclusion criteria, applicants can only reapply where there is proof that they have become a qualifying person and should no longer be excluded. |
| An applicant fails to respond to a request for further information within 28 calendar days. | Applicants can reapply at any time. However, they will be required to provide all information and evidence necessary to process their application.<br><br>This will be considered a new application unless otherwise determined by the Senior Allocations Officer. |
| Where the applicant buys a residential property either through the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire or through the open market or inherits a residential property. | Applicants will not be entitled to reapply unless their situation changes, and they have an identifiable housing need. |

## Appendix 5: Summary of the Bands

The descriptions used below are a summary of the criteria for qualification under each Band. This is not a substitute for the full detailed Policy on when priority will be awarded which is contained in the relevant section of the Policy itself.

| **BAND 1: Urgent housing need and owed Reasonable Preference** | |
|---|---|
| Main Housing Duty | Those owed the Main Housing Duty by HOST under the Housing Act 1996 as amended. |
| Emergency welfare | Those who are unable to remain in the home due to risk of domestic abuse, extreme violence, harassment, or discrimination and are assessed as being in immediate danger. |
| Emergency medical or disability | Includes when an applicant or a member of their household has a life-threatening condition, which is seriously affected by their current housing, or their home cannot be accessed due to their ill health or disability. |
| Exceptional circumstances | Includes exceptional need to move that is not covered by the other criteria set out in this Policy. |
| Release of adapted property | Those who are occupying a specially adapted social/affordable rented housing property in Trafford but have no need for such a property. |
| Statutory overcrowding | Those who are statutorily overcrowded as defined by the Housing Act 2004. |
| Insanitary or unfit private property | Those living in a private sector property in Trafford that has been issued with an Emergency Prohibition Order or a Demolition Order by the Local Authority. |
| Move-on from supported accommodation | Those who are ready to move-on from Trafford's supported housing schemes in accordance with protocols agreed between Trafford Council, HOST, service providers and the voluntary sector body. |
| Care experienced young people | Those who have not previously held their own social housing tenancy and meet the relevant criteria as set out in this Policy, including being a former 'Relevant Child', having an urgent housing need that is best met by the provision of social housing, be ready to maintain a tenancy independently or with a maximum of six-weeks resettlement support. |
| Foster carers and adopters' | Those who are approved Foster Carers and/or Adopters with a need to move to larger accommodation. |
| Armed Forces | Those who meet any of the criteria under Band 2 and:<br>▪ Are serving or have served in the regular or reserved Armed Forces and have a serious injury or illness, mental ill health, or disability which is attributable to their service; or<br>▪ Are no longer entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the MOD following the death of their spouse or civil partner who served in the Armed Forces and whose death was attributable to that service. |

| BAND 2: High housing need and owned Reasonable Preference | |
|---|---|
| Relief Duty | Those owed the Relief Duty by HOST under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. |
| Overcrowding | Those who are overcrowded by two bedrooms or more as per the Bedroom Standard. |
| Under-occupying | Those who are living in social or affordable rented housing in Trafford and are under-occupying their property by two or more bedrooms. |
| Medical or disability | Those who need to be urgently re-housed as they have a severe and long-term medical condition or severe disability, and their property is highly unsuitable and is significantly impacting on their health. |
| Hazardous private property | Those living in a private property in Trafford where a category 1 hazard has been identified following a HHSRS inspection by the local authority, and there is no prospect of the hazard being remedied within a six-month period. |
| Welfare | Those who have an urgent need to move due to domestic abuse, or other abuse and/or harassment, but who can remain in their home temporarily without significant risk.<br>Applicants who need to give or receive care and those who are infirm due to old age. |
| Armed Forces | Those who meet any of the criteria for Band 3 and the Armed Forces Qualifying Criteria. |

| BAND 3: Housing need and owed Reasonable Preference | |
|---|---|
| Statutory Homelessness | Those who are homeless as defined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended, regardless of whether a homeless application has been made. |
| Prevention Duty | Those owed the Prevention Duty by HOST under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended. |
| Overcrowding | Those who are overcrowded by one bedroom as per the Bedroom Standard. |
| Aged 55+ | Those aged 55+ who are seeking aged-related housing such as sheltered housing. Does not apply to those aged 55+ who are seeking general needs housing or wanting to move with their family. |
| Under-occupying | Social/affordable rented housing tenants in Trafford who are under-occupying their property by one bedroom. |
| Armed Forces | Those who meet any of the criteria for Band 4 and the Armed Forces Qualifying Criteria. |
| Employment | Those who have employment in Trafford and need to move closer to their workplace to prevent hardship. |

| BAND 4: Housing need but not owed Reasonable Preference | |
|---|---|
| Living with family or friends | Those who live permanently with family or friends but are seeking their own home. |
| Children under the age of 10 living above ground floor level | Those who have dependent children, under the age of 10, who are currently living in a flat above ground floor level with no lift access. |
| Low-level medical and disability | Those whose home is having a negative impact on their health and wellbeing because of a low-level medical condition or disability. |

## Appendix 6: Medical and Welfare Consideration

### HOST will accept supporting evidence from the following:

- Occupational Therapists
- Specialist medical advisors
- Community / mental health nurses
- Hospital / discharge liaisons
- Social Workers
- GPs
- Health visitors
- Applicant (self-certify)
- Carers
- Family / Friends
- Support Workers

### Applicants requesting medical or welfare priority should aim to provide the following:

- Letters from medical professionals
- Occupational Therapist recommendation
- Housing needs assessment
- Letter from health professional confirming diagnosis
- Full PIP award letter
- Letters from medical professionals detailing current medication and treatment
- GP Care Summary
- Prescriptions showing date, applicants name, medication, and dosage
- Statement from applicant
- Proof of Disability Benefit
- Signed letter from carer

### General Practitioners

Whilst GPs provide the most likely source of medical opinion for most housing applicants, it is not uncommon for GP surgeries to refuse a request from a patient for supporting medical information. This is due to GP surgeries facing increasing demand on their services.

If an applicant is unable to gain supporting information from their GP, it is advisable to try other medical professionals who may be involved. In the absence of any medical professional being able to verify and support an applicant's health needs, HOST will consider all other supporting information including the applicants own self-assessment of their needs.

Trafford Council will not pay for the release of medical information from a GP or other medical profession or reimburse applicants for any costs incurred in gathering such evidence.

### Refusal of medical priority

Medical priority will not normally be awarded in the following circumstances:

- Where the applicant's health is not impacted by their current property.
- Where the applicant's health will not be improved by moving.
- Where a move would only make a marginal improvement to the applicant's medical condition/health.
- Where the impact on the applicant's health is caused by housing defect that is likely to be rectified within a reasonable timeframe.
- Where another reasonable course of action is available to the applicant to resolve their medical or welfare needs.
- Time-limited medical problems e.g. health conditions which will improve over time such as those relating to pregnancy.
- Disrepair problems not impacting significantly on the applicant's medical condition.
- Overcrowding not impacting significantly on the applicant's medical condition.
- Where the situation can be resolved by equipment or minor adaptations which can be implemented within a reasonable timeframe.

Medical assessments are not just related to Banding. The Council will also consider recommendations for future housing, for example regarding the floor level a household may need and whether an extra bedroom is required.

### Band 1 medical or disability award examples

The following examples are intended to guide the Assessing Officer on the threshold set for a Band 1 award. They can also serve to help an applicant understand the threshold for a priority award to be granted.

Circumstances where Band 1 will be awarded may include, but is not limited to:

- The applicant's health condition is expected to be terminal within a period of 12 months and rehousing is required for the provision of suitable care.
- The applicant's health condition is life threatening, and their accommodation is a major contributory factor.
- The applicant has severe mobility issues / is housebound and is unable to leave their home without assistance that is likely to result in high-risk to themselves or their carer.
- The applicant is unable to walk and is unable to use their wheelchair within their current accommodation.
- The applicant's home is directly contributing to the deterioration of their health. For example, severe chest condition requiring intermittent hospitalisation because of chronic dampness in the home and the condition of the property cannot be remedied within six months.
- The applicant is at risk of life-threatening infection due to overcrowding in the property.
- The applicant has a progressive, chronic or life-threatening medical condition and cannot be discharged from hospital because they do not have any suitable housing available to them.

- The applicant has evidenced that their property poses a significant risk of serious and permanent injury or disability.
- The applicant has a progressive, chronic or life-threatening medical condition and urgently needs to move to accommodation with significant disabled adaptations, such as accommodation suitable for a wheelchair user.
- The applicant is receiving palliative care for a serious illness and urgently requires rehousing to facilitate the ongoing provision of that care.
- The applicant's health is so severely affected by their property that it is likely to become life threatening.
- An applicant is an ex-member of the Armed Forces and needs to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability that they sustained during their service.
- The applicant is unable to access essential parts of their property, such as bathroom/toilet, due to limited mobility and no adaptation is possible.
- A member of the household is elderly or disabled or has a progressive illness and is likely to require admission to hospital or residential/nursing care in the immediate future if not re-housed.
- The applicant is prevented from having access to kidney dialysis, respiratory, or other similar essential equipment. This will normally apply where these circumstances are likely to prevent someone from remaining in their home for all or most of the time. Such a condition would be likely to be ongoing, rather than a temporary condition

### Band 2 medical or disability award examples

The following examples are intended to guide the Assessing Officer on the threshold set for a Band 2 award. They can also serve to help an applicant understand the threshold for a priority award to be granted.

Circumstances where Band 2 will be awarded may include, but is not limited to:

- The applicant has a life-threatening condition which is seriously affected by their property and where re-housing would make that condition significantly easier to manage.
- The applicant has a life-limiting condition, and their property is affecting their ability to retain independence or receive adequate care, where rehousing would enable this.
- The applicant has a new and life-changing condition that severely impairs their mobility, meaning they are unable to carry out day-to-day activities, or have difficulty accessing facilities inside and outside of their home.
- An applicant has a chronic condition, such as a respiratory condition, severe asthma or emphysema, and that condition is being made worse by the current home.
- An applicant's current property leaves them at risk of infection. For example, where an applicant is suffering from late-stage or advanced AIDs.
- An applicant has a severe mental health or learning disability which significantly affects their ability to lead a normal life, and which puts them at risk of admission to hospital or residential care. Evidence would need to be provided from a specialist Consultant Psychiatrist or a certified Paediatric Nurse that their current home is having a significant detrimental impact on their mental health and that rehousing would improve their health and wellbeing.

- An applicant is living in a mobile home, caravan or converted vehicle, which does not meet their essential needs due to their medical conditions.
- An applicant has a health condition or disability and is rendered housebound in their current home, where rehousing would resolve this.
- An applicant has a medical condition or disability, and rehousing would prevent the need for another service, such as Adult Social Services, from having to provide a significant level of support. This might include residential care, overnight care provision, or other support with similar resource implications.
- An applicant has epilepsy or other conditions that cause frequent and unpredictable falls and all medical interventions to prevent them have been exhausted. This will involve an assessment of the layout of their current accommodation, for example the number and nature of steps, stairs or other hazards that may increase the risk of serious injury.
- An applicant requires significant disabled adaptations to meet their needs, and this is not possible in their current home.
- Veterans who have actively served in the Armed Forces and are suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder or serious illness directly related to service in the forces, where rehousing would alleviate the impact of this condition.
- An occupational therapist has identified the current home is partially suitable but:
  - the applicant needs a major adaptation; or access to a lift, ramped access, or ground floor living is recommended.
  - the applicant has a significant mobility issue and would benefit from a move to ground floor or level access accommodation.
  - the applicant has a significant mobility issue and would benefit from a move to accommodation that has level access showering facilities.
- The applicant has a child that has been diagnosed with severe health conditions or neurodiversity where their needs cannot be met without long-term settled housing.
- The applicant has a severe disability requiring adaptations to their property that cannot be provided in their current home.
- The applicant can access their home but struggles to make use of the essential facilities without experiencing significant difficulty, pain or other discomfort. This must be evidenced by a healthcare professional. This would include cases where an adaptation is possible but cannot be undertaken in a reasonable period. Any priority would be removed if an adaptation is completed, or work started.

Whether the award would be granted is for the Council's Assessing Officer or Senior Allocations Officer to determine.

### Band 4 medical or disability award examples

The following examples are intended to guide the Assessing Officer on the threshold set for a Band 4 award. They can also serve to help an applicant understand the threshold for a priority award to be granted.

Circumstances where Band 4 will be awarded may include, but is not limited to:

- The applicant has a medical condition which does not severely impact their day-to-day life but is affected by their property and where re-housing would make that condition easier to manage.

- The applicant needs to move to a different area within Trafford to have better access to their non-resident carer, support network, or medical services.
- The applicant, or member of their household, has a learning disability or neurodiversity that would be easier to manage in a different property.
- The applicant would prefer a specific feature in their home which is not present in their current property, e.g. a garden, quiet surroundings etc, where this preference is directly linked to the management of a low-level medical, disability, neurodivergence, or learning disability.
- The applicant has low-level mobility issues that are manageable and do not require adaptations, OT assessment, or aids, but would be better managed in a different type of property e.g. ground floor, closer to public transport locations etc.
- The applicant can access their home but struggles to make use of the essential facilities without experiencing low-level difficulty, pain or other discomfort.