Manchester City Council Scheme for Allocation of Social Housing

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Manchester City Council Part VI Scheme for the Allocation of Social Housing

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Part 1: Background, context and legal position

1: Introduction

Manchester's scheme for the allocation of housing (the scheme) is the legal document that describes how the Council thinks social homes should be allocated to people who need them. In simple terms, it is the rules about who gets priority for social homes.

It is the law that all local authorities (local councils) in England have such a scheme (see the Housing Act 1996, Part 6, section 166A). It is also the law that certain categories of applicants for social homes must be given what is called "reasonable preference" on allocations schemes. The term "reasonable preference" is used throughout this scheme. See Part 5 for descriptions of how applications are assessed as being in the reasonable preference categories.

A summary of the scheme must be published and made available free of charge to any person who asks for a copy. A summary of the scheme and general principles is available through Manchester City Council offices, Manchester Move partners' offices and on the council's website. This document is the full version of the scheme and is available for inspection at Manchester Town Hall.

2: Supply and Demand

The demand for social homes in Manchester is substantially greater than the number of homes available and it is unrealistic for most people to think they will get a social home. Therefore, most people need to consider other housing options. The Manchester Move web site has helpful information about housing options. The Manchester Move web site address is www.manchestermove.co.uk

3: Purpose and layout of the scheme

Purpose

The council's Allocations Scheme has been devised to ensure that it meets its legal obligations while also contributing to delivering the Manchester Strategy. The Manchester Strategy can be found on the council's web site www.manchester.gov.uk.

This scheme is intended to ensure that people who need a social home in Manchester are given the appropriate priority. This is so that social homes are allocated to those in greatest need.

Communities and neighbourhoods work better when they are a balanced mix of people with different backgrounds and strengths. Manchester City Council and its social landlord partners (the Manchester Move partners) have to balance providing social housing for those in greatest need against the need to have balanced and cohesive communities.

This scheme is part of the council's Affordable Housing Strategy, which focuses on increasing the amount and range of affordable housing for Manchester residents. 'Affordable housing' means social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met in the market. It aims to meet the needs of eligible households, including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. The council's Affordable Housing Strategy and advice and assistance for homeseekers on a whole range of housing options, including access to the private rented sector and low cost home-ownership opportunities, can be found on Manchester City Council's website at www.manchester.gov.uk.

Layout

The scheme layout is intended to help readers understand all relevant aspects of social housing allocations - the law and statutory guidance, qualification and priority as determined by the council under its statutory, permissive, powers.

By reading the scheme in the order presented, it is possible to understand in increasing detail why and how priority is awarded and allocations are made according to this scheme.

4: Governance

It is important that the people of Manchester understand there is oversight of the scheme by the people they elect to represent them. Manchester City Council provides governance and oversight ultimately by decisions of the Council and the Council Executive.

Below the Council Executive there is the Strategic Housing Board comprised of Councillors, senior council officers and senior officers from the Manchester Move partners.

Below that is the Housing Access Board comprised of senior officers from the Manchester Move partners.

Below that is the Manchester Move Practitioners Group comprised of officers from the Manchester Move partners.

5: Delegation of functions

The council may delegate or contract out functions to registered provider (Manchester Move) partners to enable the operation of its allocations scheme.

6: Equality and diversity

The aim of the council is to implement and maintain services which ensure that no potential or current applicant is treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, nor is disadvantaged by the application of a rule, condition, or requirement, which has a discriminatory effect which cannot be justified by law.

The scheme has been subject to an equalities impact assessment (EIA) which has shown that there are no disproportionate disadvantages arising for applicants with protected characteristics.

The council's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is met by this scheme ensuring that all applicants have equality of access to social homes let via the Manchester Move system.

7: Data protection and information sharing

All information held is subject to the Data Protection Act 2018. The council will seek the express consent of applicants joining the scheme to share personal information about the applicant, and any member of their household. Information will only be shared beyond this to safeguard public funds, including the prevention and detection of fraud, to assist electoral registration officers in maintaining the electoral register, and/or as otherwise permitted or required by law. Information will not be shared with other registered housing providers outside the Manchester Move partnership (see part 2).

Sharing confidential personal information

Personal information obtained from or about an applicant registered on the Manchester Move system and any member of their household will only be used in ways that the applicant and any member of their household could reasonably expect in order to process their application. Privacy and confidentiality will be respected and information normally will be shared only with the implied or express consent of the applicant and any member of their household to deliver the service they are seeking, to verify information in order to assess eligibility and priority and to answer enquiries from elected representatives and/or authorised agents acting on behalf of the applicant and

any member of their household. This will include the sharing of information with members of the Manchester Move partnership.

Where it is necessary for personal information to be shared with third parties for these purposes, it will be transferred in a secure way to ensure it is not compromised or accessed by anyone who is not entitled to it.

Information sharing without consent

Information may be shared about applicants and any member of their household and their history irrespective of whether their consent has been obtained in exceptional circumstances. This will be on a case by case basis, where the law requires or permits, and the disclosure is necessary and proportionate for the purposes of meeting one or more of the following interests:

- national security
- public safety
- safeguarding
- the detection or prevention of disorder or crime
- protection of health or morals
- protection of the rights or freedoms of others (e.g. safeguarding public funds, protecting those at work)

When assessing applications, the council and its Manchester Move partners may use information supplied in connection with an application to contact other agencies such as the police, social services, housing benefit/council tax services, the NHS and the DWP to verify information given and to make sure an applicant or those moving with them will not be a risk to the community. Manchester Move partners will use personal data supplied on in an application to verify content with a Credit Reference Agency.

8: Monitoring of lettings

Lettings will be monitored by the Housing Access Board (see appendix 7). If monitoring shows that outcomes are not in line with the objectives of the allocations scheme the council has the right to use quotas and/or restrictive labelling (see part 3) to ensure that it meets its statutory obligations.

Part 2: Manchester Move, customer choice and the Manchester Housing Register

1: Manchester Move

It is important that people who need social homes can make applications easily and without having to provide information more than once unless really necessary.
Manchester City Council and its partners operate a single point of access for social homes, known as Manchester Move.

Manchester Move is an arrangement between Manchester City Council and most social landlords in Manchester. The Manchester Move system makes it easy and convenient for people to look for social homes in one place. Rather than have to join many different landlords' registers, the Manchester Move system means that people looking for social homes in Manchester join only one register and look for homes in only one place - the Manchester Move website.

"Bidding" is the term used to describe how people express their preference to be considered for a home. Although the term "bid" is used, it is not an auction and there is no money involved. It simply means that an applicant has clicked on the button to say "I would like this home".

"Allocation" is the term used for when someone is offered a social home.

The Manchester Move system provides help for people bidding for homes. There is guidance on the Manchester Move website and all the Manchester Move partners also provide help for people who need it. All Manchester Move partners work to the agreed rules and applicants can expect the same level of service from all partners.

When an application is made to join Manchester Move, it is passed to one of the Manchester Move partners to verify before it can be made live on the system. Applications from current tenants of Manchester Move partners, or from lodgers living in a Manchester Move partner property, will be verified and held by that partner. All other applications will be distributed across all Manchester Move partners. As well as verifying applications, the Manchester Move partner also provides a point of contact for any questions.

Applicants are told which Manchester Move partner is verifying their information and helping them to manage their application. Manchester Move

partners are described as “managing the application”, but it is important to note that applicants are responsible for managing their own applications, and the role of the Manchester Move partner is to provide advice and assistance if needed. Applicants who have questions about the Manchester Move process or how to have the best chance of making a successful bid, should contact the Manchester Move partner who is helping to manage their application.

There is a list of the Manchester Move partners at appendix 1.

2: Choice

The Manchester Move partners believe that all applicants should be able to express a preference over the type of property and the area in which they would like to live. However applicants should be aware that the amount of choice that people have will be limited by the supply and demand situation.

Manchester Move is a choice-based lettings system which means that applicants for social homes in Manchester can choose which homes they are interested in, so long as those homes meet their needs. Once registered on Manchester Move, applicants have to help themselves by being active in looking for new homes and by updating information when their circumstances change, and most importantly, by bidding for suitable homes.

Applicants are asked if there are any areas where they believe they cannot live due to fear of violence, harassment or domestic abuse. The council must be satisfied that such risks are genuine and should be taken into account. This information will also help support workers who may be assisting applicants to bid to know where not to express an interest in properties.

All homes are allocated on the basis of assessed need.

Specific types of homes, for example, adapted or accessible properties, sheltered and extra care homes, are made available only to applicants who are assessed as needing such homes. These types of homes are let via Manchester Move but according to the separate rules outlined in part 3.

Family type accommodation is defined as a house and will only be let to households with children aged up to 18 years. This is unless an applicant requires a move due to medical, welfare or disability needs, the house is able to meet those needs and it is unlikely that a suitable non-family type home will become available within a reasonable timescale.

All other homes are allocated in priority order according to an applicant’s needs. Things like location and type of dwelling (semi-detached, high rise, etc) are aspects of applicants’ own choices and these things are not usually

taken into account as part of assessment except in very rare circumstances where there is strong medical or similar evidence that it is necessary to consider them. Assessment is therefore based on the number of bedrooms a household needs. Applicants' bedroom need is assessed by applying the bedroom standard (see appendix 2).

In exceptional circumstances the council may exercise discretion in deviating from the bedroom standard. Examples are:

- For those applicants who are separated or divorced and sometimes care for their children, the relevant officer will consider how often and for how long the children stay with either/both partner(s). The council may exercise discretion in deviating from the bedroom standard only where the applicant has 50% or more of the custody of the child/children. In general, where custody is split 50:50 and one partner has sufficient bedrooms under the bedroom standard, an application from the other partner will not be assessed as needing bedrooms for the children in family-type accommodation, but the applicant can request larger non-family type accommodation (see also part 5, section 3).
- Where applicants require larger accommodation on health grounds. This will be considered on a case by case basis, taking into account the evidence provided by the applicant.
- 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 by Children's Services, and so will need a larger property than normally required by the 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 another member of the household. An application that includes a bedroom for a carer must be supported by evidence from social care or health professionals of the need for the carer to provide overnight support.
- Where allowing over-occupation results in an improvement to an applicant's housing situation. E.g. an applicant living in a 2 bedroom property who requires 4 bedrooms under the bedroom standard, but is unable to secure 4 bedroom accommodation due to limited supply and high demand, and indicates they are willing to accept a smaller property.

Note that choice may be restricted for certain applicants. Homeless applicants may be subject to automated bidding (see part 4, section 6).

Homeless applicants and applicants ready to move on from supported accommodation may be subject to proxy bidding by their support workers (see part 4, section 6).

3: The Manchester Housing Register

Underpinning the Manchester Move system is the Manchester Housing Register. This is often referred to as “the waiting list”. It is important to note that the register is *not* a waiting list. It is simply the record of all applications made by people who would like a social home in Manchester. Joining the register is only the first step towards finding a social home and being on the register for any length of time does not guarantee an offer of a home.

4: The Rehousing Review List (RRL)

The council and its partners share a Rehousing Review List (the RRL). This is a list of people who may not qualify for rehousing under the council’s and Manchester Move partners’ allocation schemes or who may not have kept to their tenancy conditions at some time and therefore warrant further investigation as to their eligibility and/or priority for rehousing.

An applicant who has been entered onto the Rehousing Review List will remain on the list until such a time as the applicant (or a member of their prospective household) has satisfied the council or an officer from an appropriate organisation that circumstances have changed such that the previous conduct is unlikely to reoccur.

5: Shared systems

The council and its Manchester Move partners share the use of computer technology to operate the Manchester Housing Register and the Rehousing Review List.
Manchester Move partners may also share the use of the Manchester Move system for the purpose of making allocations through their own specific allocation schemes.

6: Advice and assistance

Most people who apply for a social home using the Manchester Move system are expected to manage their own application. The system has been designed so that most applicants can take responsibility for their own search for a new home. Some people, however, due to disability or ill-health or because they don’t have access to the internet, or for other reasons, are not able to manage their own application, and will be supported by the Manchester Move partner managing their application or by a council

department as appropriate.

To make sure that everyone who can manage their own application understands how to do it, the council and the other Manchester Move partners provide advice and assistance. General information is available about these things:

- the procedures for applying to go onto the scheme and how to bid for advertised vacancies,
- how applicants are given priority (the priority bands) under this scheme,
- how successful applicants will be selected,
- the rules on how properties will be advertised including bidding cycles and restrictive labelling (see part 3),
- the Manchester Move partners that have vacancies advertised through Manchester Move

Applicants will also be provided with information about their own application including:

- what priority band they are awarded,
- what properties they are entitled to bid for,
- what their chances are of making a successful bid for the types of homes they want in the areas they want,
- what information they need to provide so that we can verify their application,
- what landlord references they need to provide and when,
- how they can rectify any issues that have resulted in them being awarded reduced priority or being found not to qualify for this scheme

Properties are advertised through Manchester Move. All Manchester Move partners try to ensure that information in advertisements is as complete as possible so that applicants can make informed choices. It is important that applicants take note of the information provided and only bid for properties they can realistically expect to secure. Advertisements will include as many of the following as possible:

- location
- property type, size and floor level
- what type of heating it has
- whether it has a heating charge payable (which will not be covered by housing benefit/Universal Credit)
- whether the property includes a garden or parking space
- the amount of rent and any other charges that are payable
- photographs of the property and links to guides about the local area

Applicants who have any difficulty reading or understanding this allocations scheme can ask for:

- an interpretation service if their first language is not English
- signing if speech or hearing is impaired
- documents in large print if an applicant is visually impaired
- an interview to explain the content of this document and information about where independent advice can be obtained about the council's scheme

As there are likely to be many more applicants than properties available, the council will also provide information about other housing options. This will include:

- advice and help on renting in the private sector if there are few homes available in the areas where they wish to live
- advice on available low cost home ownership options

7: Reviews and appeals

Applicants have the right, if they ask

- to be informed of any decision about the facts of their case which has been or is likely to be taken into account in considering whether to make an allocation to them
- to a review of any decision made about their application, including a decision that they do not qualify to join the scheme, and to be informed of the decision on the review and grounds for it.

Applicants should request a review in writing within 21 days of being notified of a decision. The council will determine the review within 56 days of the request or such longer period as may be agreed with the applicant. The council will notify the applicant of the outcome of the review including the reasons if the original decision is confirmed. Reviews will be carried out by a senior member of staff at Manchester City Council or delegated to an appropriate organisation or officer who was not involved in the original decision.

The council's review decision is final and any challenge to that decision can only be made through judicial review proceedings.

8: Review of suitability (homeless applicants)

Whether or not a homeless applicant accepts an offer of accommodation made under the scheme, they have the right to request a review of the

suitability of the accommodation they have been offered. Homeless applicants are therefore encouraged to accept the offer that has been made to them, even if they intend to request a review of its suitability. If the applicant has been accepted as being owed a homelessness duty by the council, this duty, subject to a right of review, will have ceased if the property is refused. In such circumstances an applicant will no longer be entitled to any duty, may have to leave any temporary accommodation provided and make alternative accommodation arrangements.

9: Complaints

If an applicant believes there are errors in the way an application has been handled, the relevant Manchester Move partner is responsible for checking how the application has been dealt with. If the Manchester Move partner has confirmed an application has been handled properly but an applicant disagrees and believes that the rules have not been followed, it should be raised as a complaint directly with the Manchester Move partner using their own complaints procedure. Each organisation has its own complaints procedure which must be made available on request.

In the circumstances that the complaint relates to the conduct of, or service provided by, the council's Homelessness Team then complaints should be addressed to the Manchester City Council Homelessness Service.

An applicant can ask someone else or an organisation such as Citizen's Advice to make a complaint on their behalf, and can ask an officer of a registered provider or of the council (as appropriate) for help in preparing the complaint. For those whose first language is not English, assistance can be obtained from the council's Translation and Interpretation Service on 0161 234 3193.

All applications will be handled with care and skill, and in accordance with the rules. If there are any complaints, the complaints process described above should resolve them. But if an applicant, having gone through the complaints process, has not had the complaint resolved, it is important that there is someone to turn to. This is either the Housing Ombudsman or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, depending on the nature of the complaint. Applicants will be given advice and guidance about referring a complaint to the relevant Ombudsman, and how to make contact, as part of their initial complaint process.

In the event that a complaint is received that expresses dissatisfaction rather than alleging specific failure to follow the allocations scheme rules (for

example a complaint expressing unhappiness that another applicant has been offered a home that the complainant would have liked) the complainant will be reminded of the allocations scheme rules, signposted to housing options advice and invited to respond with specific details of a perceived failure to follow this allocations scheme. In the absence of a specific allegation of failure to follow this allocations scheme, no further communication will be entered into.

Part 3: Explanations, descriptions and rules

1: Restrictive labelling

Manchester City Council reserves the right to apply restrictive labelling to allocations of properties in particular circumstances. Examples include taking corrective action in order to meet the requirements of the annual lettings plan (see appendix 7), or in the interests of promoting balanced and sustainable communities. Most properties restrictively labelled in this way will be covered by a local lettings policy developed and approved either solely by Manchester City Council or jointly by the council and the relevant Manchester Move partner.

2: Moving group: who can be included in an application

Applications should only include:

- the applicant
- the applicant's spouse, civil partner or partner
- children of the applicant and/or the applicant's partner, as long as they are aged under 21 and normally live with the applicant or the applicant's partner
- grown up children who have continuously remained a member of the moving group household since they reached 21. This includes any grown up children that may have left the household temporarily to study provided they returned to the household outside of term time
- a carer if they need to live with the applicant to provide overnight support. This is every night, not intermittent or occasional overnight support (see appendix 4 for definition of "carer")
- any two people who wish to live together in non-family type accommodation

If an applicant and partner are not currently living together, the application will be assessed as if the two households were currently living together at whichever of their current homes best meets their needs.

Examples:

1. Two single parents with children are moving in together. One household comprises a parent with a 16 yr boy and 12 yr girl currently living in a 3 bed home. The other household comprises a parent with a 6 yr boy currently living in a 2 bed home. The moving group needs 4 bedrooms because the boys can't share being from different families. Therefore the application is assessed as being one bedroom short

(overcrowded by 1) compared with the best fit current home (3 bedrooms).

2. Two single parents with children are moving in together. One household comprises a parent with a 12 yr girl currently living in a 3 bed home. The other household comprises a parent with a 6 yr boy currently living in a 2 bed home. The moving group needs 3 bedrooms. Therefore the application is assessed as being not in housing need compared with the best fit current home (3 bedrooms).
3. Two single parents with children are moving in together. One household comprises a parent with a 16 yr girl and 12 yr girl currently living in a 3 bed home. The other household comprises a parent with a 6 yr boy currently living in a 2 bed home. The moving group needs 3 bedrooms because the girls are expected to share under the bedroom standard. Therefore the application is assessed as being not in housing need compared with the best fit current home (3 bedrooms).

If an applicant does not have children living with them full time, but has caring responsibilities for children some of the time, this scheme will not allocate bedrooms for those children; however, if the applicant is a single person or couple, the council will allocate a one-bedroom property rather than a bedsit.

If an applicant has a child (or children) living with them who is over 21, not in relevant education and who has not lived continuously with them as part of their household, they will not normally be considered part of the moving group (household) and will be required to make their own application to join the housing register.

Applications should not include in the moving group any friends currently living with the applicant unless the applicant is looking for non-family accommodation (this is stated in property advertisements).

Applications should not include in the moving group extended family members, lodgers or sub-tenants currently living with the applicant . An exception to this rule may be made in exceptional circumstances and at managers' discretion.

3: Debt Relief Orders (DROs)

An applicant with housing-related debt included in a debt relief order (DRO) will continue to have that debt taken into account in respect of qualification for, or demotion on, this scheme for the duration of the DRO. If the applicant's financial circumstances change during the period the DRO is in effect such that the DRO is revoked, the debt will continue to be taken into

account.

4: Use of Discretion

The council expects that the vast majority of allocations will be made following the allocations scheme rules according to priority banding and by time in bands. However, there may be reasons why discretion has to be used as follows:

Managers' discretion

There may be exceptional circumstances where the only way urgent housing need can be resolved is through the use of management discretion. It is important, in fairness to all applicants, that these discretionary powers are used rarely, in genuinely exceptional cases.

Examples of such exceptional circumstances can include:

- Threat to life where there is strong police evidence that an immediate move is required to protect the life of an applicant or a member of their household. Such a move is likely to be out of the city or, if within the city, at the maximum distance from the current address consistent with reducing the risk.
- Emergency cases where homes are damaged or destroyed by flood, fire or other disaster and it is not possible to repair the current home or repair will take such a long time that it would seriously disrupt family life.
- Households that, on strong police evidence and advice, need to move because of serious threats made to one or more members of the household, or where the continued occupation would pose a threat to the community. In such circumstances, it is expected that the threat is best addressed by any rehousing within the city being at the maximum possible distance from the original address consistent with reducing the risk.
- Applications which involve a housing need arising from urgent child protection concerns, or, to support child fostering arrangements where the allocations scheme is not able to facilitate a move within policy in a timely way.
- To facilitate best use of housing stock: E.g. to promote rightsizing and facilitate move on from temporary accommodation
- Other exceptional circumstances as authorised by the Director of Housing and Homelessness.

Where such cases are in the reasonable preference categories they will be

awarded additional preference and will be made a direct offer of accommodation if all other housing options have been explored.

Where such cases are not in the reasonable preference categories, director's discretion will be required to authorise the application being placed in band 1 or a direct offer of accommodation being made.

The council recognises that there may be circumstances not foreseen by this scheme where the application of the residency qualification would be inappropriate and therefore manager's discretion can be used not to apply the residency qualification in such special circumstances.

Director's discretion

The council recognises that situations may arise that are exceptional and significant. Where a case is exceptional and significant and the normal application of the allocations scheme is considered not to award the appropriate priority, the Director of Housing and Homelessness reserves the right to override this scheme and award an applicant higher priority than the scheme normally allows. Such cases should be very few in number and will be closely monitored to ensure the duty to award reasonable preference is not compromised.

Director's discretion can be used to block an application in circumstances not foreseen by this scheme but where the council is satisfied that someone has taken unfair advantage of the scheme to the detriment of others. Such cases should be very few in number and will be closely monitored to ensure the duty to award reasonable preference is not compromised.

5: Customer service standard

If an applicant is found to qualify to join the register their application is assessed for priority on the scheme. This will include checking the Rehousing Review List (see part 2). If an applicant is found to be registered on the Rehousing Review List then the applicant will be placed in band 5 pending further enquiries, and until such a time as the reason for demotion has been rectified.

In the case of an applicant who lives in a council property a pre-transfer inspection may also be required.

Once an application for accommodation under this scheme has been submitted we will:

- Allocate the applicant to a band within 20 working days from either

(a) receiving ALL the information required to process the application, or (b) reaching a decision that the council owes the applicant a homelessness duty. Where there is a need to visit an applicant or make further enquiries to confirm an applicant's circumstances the application will not be made live to enable bidding or receive offers until such a time as the applicant's circumstances have been confirmed. If there is a need to visit an applicant, or for an interview to be arranged to clarify details contained on the form, arrangements will be made and confirmed with the applicant within 7 days.

- Confirm any final allocation to a band in writing within 28 days of any such interview, visit, or the completion of further enquiries. This will normally be by email unless the application is not being managed by the applicant online.

6: Affordability test

The council and housing partners take very seriously the need to ensure applicants are in a position to afford a tenancy. Most applicants will have an affordability test carried out at point of offer by their potential new landlord in order to ensure they can afford the rent and other costs associated with the offer of a property. If a property is deemed unaffordable then the offer will be withdrawn. Applicants will be able to explore other housing options. Any offers that are withdrawn will not be counted as a refusal of a suitable offer, the application will remain live on the register and the applicant will be able to continue to bid on other homes.

7: Information requests

An applicant will, on request, be shown and be given a copy of his/her entry on the Manchester Move system. The Manchester Move partner managing the application will also, on request from the applicant, provide such information that is practicable and reasonable to supply, to explain their banding priority on the allocations scheme in relation to when an offer of suitable accommodation might be made.

8: Lettings to staff, board members, councillors and others

Applications for rehousing must be treated equally and awarded priority in accordance with the scheme. It is important that applications from staff, board members, council members and others who might have connections with Manchester Move partners should not have any preferential treatment or advantage, nor should they be disadvantaged. In order to ensure that such applications are treated in accordance with the scheme, any such

relationships must be declared by the applicant seeking rehousing. These applications must be clearly marked on the housing management system.

The applicant or relative of applicant must have no direct input into any decisions regarding their rehousing, including they must not input the application onto the housing management system, nor make any awards for priority.

When such an application, through the proper application of this scheme, is due to be made an offer, the relevant form must be completed by the Manchester Move partner managing the application and forwarded to senior management for scrutiny and sign off before an offer is made. If the property to be offered is a council property, the relevant form must be forwarded to Manchester City Council for scrutiny and sign off. The form must include screenshots of the relevant information from the Manchester Move system including the prioritised short list for the property to be offered and the reasons for any applicants higher in the short list not being made the offer.

9: Medical assessment and adapted homes

Properties that are adapted may be allocated directly to applicants who need those adaptations and outside of any strict order. This is so that Manchester Move partners can make the best and most efficient use of their available homes.

Occasionally, a non-adapted ground floor property suitable for adaptation may be allocated in this way where there is a high priority applicant in urgent need of such accommodation.

Applicants with a medical need to be rehoused will be required to complete a medical form and provide evidence of their need. Evidence will be assessed by the Medical Team at Manchester Move and the appropriate medical priority banding will be awarded if relevant criteria are met. The assessment is not based on the seriousness of the applicant’s condition but on there being a definite established connection between the applicant’s medical condition and their current home.

Assessment looks at the impact an applicant's current home has on their wellbeing, their access to essential facilities and on their ability to complete daily living activities. For medical priority to be awarded, assessment has to show that rehousing will significantly resolve or alleviate these problems. If their current accommodation is not having a severe or critical impact, medical priority will not be awarded.

Any additional information provided by a G.P., hospital, social worker, medical consultant or similar, will be assessed on the same basis.

10: Housing for older people

There are housing schemes for older people that meet a range of needs and preferences. These schemes offer independent living with security and peace of mind through technology and often on-site support. See appendix 9 for more details of Extra Care housing.

Because of the specialist nature of this accommodation restrictive labelling (see part 3) will be applied to vacancies advertised through Manchester Move.

To be eligible to apply for housing options for older people applicants must be:

- Eligible for housing as defined and described in the Allocations Scheme of Manchester City Council (this scheme)
- Over 60 years of age for Whitebeck Court and 55 or over for all other schemes.
- Assessed for support that is provided by the Scheme Manager during working hours where appropriate. Applicants must be deemed suitable for the scheme and confirm they do not have care and support needs that are unable to be met or would be detrimental to the Scheme itself or other tenants.
- Made aware of the costs of moving into the Scheme before a letting is carried out. This is especially in regard to any support costs where these are not covered by Housing Benefit.
- Prepared to agree to the scheme requirements (for Extra Care schemes) and consider the use of the contracted care provider to meet any care needs either at the letting or if needed in the future.

It may be a condition of the tenancy in sheltered housing schemes that tenants agree to take the Care Line and Scheme Manager service. Separate charges are made for these services on top of the rent.

Property type and size

All applicants for Extra Care housing are eligible for a one or two bedroom property and are invited to express their preference. However, the final decision on the size of property allocated to the applicant will be made by the Extra Care Housing Allocations Panel (see appendix 9), taking into account the applicant's preference.

Part 4: How to make and manage a Manchester Move application

1: Making an application

Applications to join the housing register and receive an allocation under this scheme are made on line at the Manchester Move web site. Anyone who needs support to make an application can be assisted at any Manchester Move organisation housing office - a full list is at appendix 1.

The Manchester Move web site address is www.manchestermove.co.uk

The web site has a lot of information to help applicants and the on-line form leads applicants through the process. Applicants are encouraged to complete the on-line form themselves, but if it is completed at a council or Manchester Move partner office, staff will go through the application with the applicant to ensure the required information is collected. If necessary, staff will give telephone support in completing the form, and translation services will be made available if needed.

It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that the information provided is accurate and up to date.

Any United Kingdom resident 16 years or over can apply for accommodation by completing an application form. However, a Manchester Move partner will not normally grant a tenancy to anyone under 18 unless they have a support worker and are able to provide a Trustee and a guarantor to cover compliance with the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement, including the payment of rent. For people under 18 a Manchester Move partner may grant a tenancy, which is in effect an “Equitable Agreement”.

False statements or withheld information

It is a criminal offence for applicants and/or anyone providing information to this scheme knowingly or recklessly to make false statements or knowingly to withhold reasonably requested information relevant to their application (section 171 Housing Act 1996). This includes, but is not limited to, information requested on the housing registration form, in response to correspondence at the renewal of the application, or relating to any other review of the application. An offence is also committed if a third party provides false information whether or not on the instigation of the applicant.

Where there is suspicion or an allegation that an applicant, or a person acting on behalf of an applicant, has either provided false information or has

withheld information, the application will be investigated. It will be given the status ‘application pending’ and the applicant will be excluded from bidding and allocations via the Manchester Move system until the investigation is concluded and an outcome is reached. If the outcome of the investigation is that false information was not provided or there was no withholding of information or such was not found to be withheld knowingly, then the application will be reinstated to its previous position within the scheme meaning that the relevant applicant should not suffer prejudice. However, where the investigation shows that false information was provided on the application form, or was deliberately withheld, this would mean that the applicant does not qualify to join the scheme and the application would be removed.

Ground 5 in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the 1996 Act, section 146) enables the landlord to seek possession of a property where it has been granted as a result of a false statement by either the tenant or a person acting at the tenant’s instigation.

2: Evidence

The council must verify all statements made as part of applications. Applicants are required to provide evidence in support of statements made. Typically this includes providing official records such as bank statements, court decisions, wage slips, utilities bills, etc.

It is important that evidence is supplied and the expectation is that the vast majority of applicants will provide evidence as required. If an applicant can show beyond reasonable doubt that it is impossible or unreasonable for some evidence to be supplied, manager’s discretion may be applied. This will be on a case by case basis.

3: References

The council seeks assurance that rehousing applicants are likely to conduct a tenancy properly, with respect for the property, their neighbours and communities, and their landlord. That assurance is in the form of a satisfactory reference which will be requested at the time an offer is made. An offer of accommodation will not be final until a satisfactory reference is verified. References must be no more than six months old at the time of an offer being made.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide a satisfactory reference within a reasonable amount of time. Failure to provide a satisfactory reference will mean the application will be placed in band 5 until a satisfactory

reference is received. In such circumstances, any offer of accommodation will be withdrawn.

A satisfactory reference will be sought from all rehousing applicants, excluding applicants who are current social housing tenants, as we already have access to their tenancy history.

- For rehousing applicants living within Manchester, a reference must always be provided by a referee also living in Manchester. Applicants who live outside Manchester should also, wherever possible, provide a reference from a referee living in the Manchester area. Where the applicant lives in rented accommodation, the reference must be provided by their current landlord.
- Applicants who live in accommodation provided by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), and who have been granted exceptional or indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom, (or Discretionary Leave or Humanitarian Protection) and, as a consequence of their leave being granted, have to vacate the accommodation, do not have to provide a reference.
- If an applicant has already left NASS accommodation and lives in a private sector tenancy, a reference is required from their current landlord.
- For asylum seekers or refugees who have indefinite or exceptional leave to remain, and have been resident in the United Kingdom for a while, and are lodging with friends, a reference should be provided. However, the council has discretion in such cases, as it is possible that the applicant has not known anyone in the United Kingdom for 12 months.

For anyone else who is unable to provide a suitable reference, a manager of the Manchester Move partner managing the application will consider each case on its own merits.

Applicants ready to move on from supported accommodation do not need a reference from previous landlords but are required to supply a reference from their supported scheme provider.

Homeless applicants do not need a reference from previous landlords but are required to supply a reference from their temporary accommodation scheme provider if in temporary accommodation.

4: Change of circumstances

All applicants are required to update their application whenever there is a

change of circumstances that might affect their priority for rehousing. This is done by the applicant (or their nominated representative) on the Manchester Move website, using their secure log-in.

Applicants who have had a change of circumstances and have updated their application may have their application status changed to ‘pending’ until they have completed the required online change of circumstances. Examples of significant change of circumstances include:

- a change of address, for themselves or any other person on their application
- any additions to the family or any other person they would wish to join the application (note that it is for the council to decide whether to allow a person or persons to join the application)
- any member of the family or any other person on the application who is no longer wanting to move (such persons should be removed from the application)
- any change in income, assets or savings

The date that an application is placed in a band is called the **award date**. This is the date that is used to determine the priority order between applicants in the same band (see part 5 for more details). If an application is placed in a higher priority band it will have a new award date - the date it was placed in the new, higher, band. If an application is placed in a lower band, it will retain the award date it had previously.

If there are changes to the circumstances of anyone on an application, the application will have to be reassessed and it will then either:

- be found to be entitled to higher priority on the scheme and will be placed in the appropriate higher band with a new award date, or
- be found to be due lower priority on the scheme and will be placed in a lower band but will retain its award date, or
- remain in the same priority band and retain its award date, or
- be removed from the register because one or more people included in the application has been found no longer to qualify for the scheme

If an application is placed back at “application pending” stage during investigations into an applicants’ circumstances but the result of the investigation is that the applicant is assessed as being in the same band they were in prior to investigation they will be reinstated into the band with the award date they had prior to investigation.

5: Bids and allocations in accordance with the scheme

The vast majority of Manchester's social homes are allocated using this scheme, in the way described below. Any exceptions to allocations using this scheme are noted in the details of individual properties when they are advertised.

When bidding closes on a property, the bids that have been made will be checked against the advertisement. Any bids that have been made incorrectly (for example, any applicants who need 1 or 2 bedrooms but have placed bids for 3 bedroom homes) will be discarded. The allocation of a property is then made in accordance with the priority banding of this scheme. Band 1 is the highest priority and band 5 the lowest. Allocations are made to eligible bids made by applicants in band 1. If no eligible bids are received from band 1, allocations will be made to eligible bids from band 2, and if no eligible bids are made by applicants in band 2, allocations will be made to eligible bids from applicants in band 3. Within each band, priority is strictly in accordance with the date the application entered that band. Therefore, if there are multiple bids from within a band, the application with the longest date in the band will be offered the property first. If more than one bid is received from applicants with the same award date, priority will be given to the applicant who has been registered the longest.

Because the demand for social homes is very high, it is extremely unlikely that applications from bands 4 and 5 will be offered properties. Therefore applicants in these bands are not able to place bids unless there are no applications from bands 1-3, or unless there are specific properties (for example, sheltered or extra care schemes) that allow bids from all bands.

6: Automated bids and proxy bids made by support workers

Applications from people owed a homelessness duty may be subject to automated bids or may have proxy bids placed by homelessness support workers.

Applications from people assessed as ready to move on from supported accommodation may have automated or proxy bids made by support workers in the applicant's supported accommodation scheme.

Unless revoked following an appeal, refusal of a reasonable offer resulting from such bids will count towards the quota of refusals allowed. In the case of applicants who are homeless or are ready to move on from supported accommodation, a refusal of a single suitable offer will result in reduced priority and the application will be placed in band 5 (see part 4, section 10

“reduced priority”).

7: Deletion of applications

Applications will be deleted for one or more of these reasons:

- an applicant requests the application is removed from the register
- an applicant’s circumstances change such that the application either becomes ineligible or does not qualify to join the scheme
- an applicant fails to respond when contacted after the annual review (see section 8, below)
- an applicant has been housed in suitable accommodation by another local authority or a registered provider in or out of the Manchester area
- an applicant leaves temporary accommodation without a forwarding address

8: Review of applications

Applicants who have not been successfully rehoused within 12 months will be asked to confirm that they wish to remain on the Manchester Housing Register. On the anniversary of them making an application, they will receive a message when logging into the Manchester Move website. Applicants will also be asked to update their application if there have been any changes to their circumstances. If there is no response received from the applicant within 28 days the application will be hibernated and the applicant will no longer be able to make bids. After 90 days, if no response has been received from the applicant, the application will be deleted. If, during the 90 day hibernation period, a good reason can be shown why there was a failure to respond to the review, the application will be reinstated. This review process will enable Manchester Move partners to ensure that those who are included on the Manchester Housing Register are genuinely looking for accommodation.

9: Applications from serious offenders

Manchester City Council will make an assessment of risk to the community of any applicant who has been convicted of a serious offence. This assessment will determine that either:

- the risk is very low and the applicant will be allowed to join the housing register, or
- the risk is low enough or is well managed such that the applicant will be allowed to join the housing register provided the applicant signs an undertaking to cooperate with certain tenancy conditions, or
- the risk is too great because the behaviour of the applicant makes

him or her unsuitable to be a tenant and therefore the applicant does not qualify to join this scheme.

At the time of registration, an applicant is asked if s/he or anyone who will be residing with them has any unspent convictions or is subject to any interim or final anti-social behaviour injunction.

Offences that Manchester Move partners take into account are:

- Aggravated burglary
- Aggravated vehicle taking
- Any offence where a racial motivation has been proved
- Arson
- Any offence resulting in a person's death
- Any firearms offence
- Breach of criminal behavior order or anti social behavior order
- Burglary
- Criminal damage endangering life
- Cultivating, dealing, being concerned in the supply of, or intending to supply any controlled drug
- Indecent assault
- Rape
- Offences against children including sex or violence
- Robbery
- Three or more serious motor vehicle crimes which will include taking without consent, criminal damage to vehicles
- Wounding/GBH with intent (section 18)
- Wounding/GBH without intent (section 20)
- Sexual or Stalking Offences (e.g. voyeurism, internet or social media related crime, exposure, etc)
- False imprisonment or kidnapping
- Homicide and attempted murder

Convictions that have been 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 cannot be taken into account. See appendix 3 for information about spent offences.

In the case of secure council tenants seeking to transfer, the question is only applicable:

- Where it is known that a member of the moving group has only recently joined or re-joined the household and there is a possibility that this person may be a serious offender.
- Where the applicant's tenancy agreement has been supplemented by additional undertakings specified by the Serious Offenders' Panel (see below).

- Where there is legal action against the tenant for antisocial behaviour or giving false information or there are other tenancy management concerns e.g. non--payment of rent.

Otherwise, during the registration process with a secure tenant the applicant will be advised that the question is not applicable.

The question is asked of all introductory tenants and new applicants. If the applicant answers yes, a supplementary questionnaire and declaration is sent to the applicant asking for more details and for permission from the applicant to contact the Police and/or Probation Service in order to verify the statements made.

The Serious Offenders' Panel

Rehousing applications from offenders are assessed for qualification through a multi agency risk assessment panel, called the Serious Offenders' Panel, that comprises of senior representatives from the Probation Services, Greater Manchester Police, the council's Directorate for Adults, Manchester Move Registered Providers and Manchester City Council Officers at a senior level.

For those applicants that pose a lower risk, providing they adhere to a supervised tenancy, additional conditions of tenancy are in place to ensure that there is transparency and consistency in decision-making and a balanced distribution of such tenancies in the city. Offers will only be made to these applicants when the appropriate package of support or supervision is available and when the applicant has agreed to the additional terms of the tenancy. Additionally, for certain individuals, offers will only be made when serious consideration has been given to child protection issues and where accommodation is an integral part of the risk management plan. A central team of staff monitor where such offers are made.

The council and its partners strongly support the rehabilitation of offenders. The Serious Offenders' Panel is not a barrier to rehousing, rather it is an essential part of the risk assessment for serious offenders who want to find a social home. Any tenancy conditions that the panel decides are necessary to allow an applicant to join the housing register are not barriers to getting a home, they are part of the package of support that an ex-offender can benefit from.

Qualifying applications from offenders are assessed for priority in the same way as all other applications.

10: Reduced priority

The council has the right to reduce an applicant's priority under this scheme. Applications with priority reduced in this way will be placed in band 5 either until the relevant circumstances have changed or for the period specified (see also part 2, section 7). Reduced priority will apply in the following circumstances, with exemptions and exceptions noted where applicable.

Where an applicant has housing-related debt of less than £1,000

This includes current or former rent arrears (including temporary accommodation arrears), damage to a former property, including to any furnishings provided, or legal costs arising from court action in connection with a current or former tenancy. Debts of less than £500 are disregarded for the purposes of this scheme. Note that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, applicants with housing-related debt of £1,000 or more will not qualify to join the housing register (see part 5).

Applications awarded reduced priority for reasons of housing-related debt will retain their award date while in band 5 and upon reinstatement to their earlier priority band unless a change in circumstances has occurred necessitating reassessment (see section 4 in this part).

- Applicants who owe £500 or more but less than £1,000, or who qualify due to exceptional circumstances, will be awarded reduced priority and placed in band 5 until they have signed an undertaking to repay the outstanding debt and have made regular payments for at least thirteen weeks since entering band 5. Such payments can be weekly, fortnightly, four weekly or monthly, but none must be missed and they must not include underpayments. Applicants who owe this amount and clear their debt in full will be reinstated to the appropriate band as soon as the relevant account is verified clear.

Exceptions are made for applicants with any housing related debt over £100 if they:

- can demonstrate that their household faces life-threatening circumstances and as a consequence require immediate rehousing, or
- are in need of temporary rehousing (decant) as a consequence of fire or flood damage, or
- have medical needs and their rehousing priority reflects those needs, or
- have been awarded priority for fleeing domestic abuse

These applications will be placed in the band appropriate to their circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, manager's discretion may be exercised.

Where an applicant has deliberately worsened their own housing circumstances or knowingly allowed their circumstances to worsen

An applicant who did, or who failed to do something, that led to a worsening of their housing circumstances such that they could expect to be awarded higher rehousing priority as a consequence will be demoted to band 5. Examples include:

- an applicant requesting or colluding with a landlord or family member to issue them with a notice to quit
- an applicant gives up suitable accommodation to move into less settled or overcrowded accommodation
- an applicant gives up a suitable private rented tenancy that they are able to maintain in order to move in with other relatives, creating overcrowding and sharing of a kitchen or bathroom
- a family with young children moving from a house to an upper floor flat
- an applicant moves others into a household, thereby creating overcrowding, and requests a move to larger accommodation
- an applicant moves into smaller accommodation for any reason, thereby creating overcrowding

This list is not exhaustive, and each case will be assessed on the information available.

The situation will be reviewed every twelve months or upon a material change of circumstances to the household. The application will remain in band 5 unless the applicant has acted to end the worsened circumstances such that the expected higher band would no longer apply.

Where a homeless applicant or an applicant ready to move on from supported accommodation has unreasonably refused a single offer of suitable accommodation

Applicants will be demoted to band 5 for a six month period if they:

- have had a homelessness duty discharged by an offer of suitable accommodation (which can be in the private rented sector) and have refused the offer, or
- have been assessed as ready to move on from supported accommodation and have refused an offer of suitable accommodation under this scheme or under the allocations scheme of a Manchester Move partner

After six months, the application will be reinstated to the previous band with the previous award date unless a change in circumstances has occurred.

Demotion will take effect from the date the offer is refused unless the offer is subject to an appeal or the applicant has requested a review of suitability. If an appeal or a review of suitability finds that the offer was reasonable and suitable, demotion will take effect from the appeal or review decision date.

Where an applicant has unreasonably refused two suitable offers of accommodation

Applicants, other than those who are homeless or ready to move on from supported accommodation, who have refused two reasonable offers of suitable accommodation will be demoted to band 5 for a six month period. Offers of suitable accommodation can be under this scheme or under the allocations scheme of a Manchester Move partner.

After six months, the application will be reinstated to the previous band with the previous award date unless a change in circumstances has occurred.

Where a transfer applicant has failed a pre transfer inspection of their current home

Current tenants in council properties applying for transfer must have a pre transfer inspection (PTI) carried out on their current home at point of application and before a transfer offer can be made. Some other Manchester Move partners also use PTIs. If a property does not pass the PTI at either stage, the application will be placed in band 5 until the applicant has carried out the work necessary to reinstate the property to the required standard. An exception is made for applicants who have been awarded band 1 for under occupying their current home **and** are over 60 **and** have medical or welfare grounds to move which mean they cannot address the outstanding PTI issues, e.g., decorating. These applicants will be treated as though they have passed the PTI.

The following reasons exempt an applicant from the PTI procedures:

- Fleeing domestic abuse
- Threat to life or fear of violence where the applicant is awarded band 1
- Where band 1 is awarded for medical reasons

Where an applicant is not complying with their tenancy agreement

Where, having considered all the available evidence, the council is satisfied that an applicant or a member of their household has failed to adhere to the terms of any current or previous social or private rented tenancy agreement, the application will be demoted to band 5. This will apply until the applicant or

the relevant member of their household has, to the satisfaction of the council, demonstrated that their situation has changed and specifically that the previous unacceptable conduct is unlikely to recur. In some cases this will include demonstrating cooperation with support agencies leading to substantial improvement in behaviour.

Where an applicant has reduced priority in this way, they will be included on the Rehousing Review List (see part 2).

When there has been no reasonable cause for concern or complaint for a continuous period of not less than twelve months, the applicant can request that the application status is reconsidered.

Where an applicant is assessed as not ready to move on from care or from supported accommodation

Where Our Children (Looked After Children) are assessed as not ready to live independently, applications from them will be placed in band 5 until they are assessed as ready to live independently, when they will be awarded band 1.

Applications from people living in supported accommodation, rehabilitation facility or in hospital or hospital type placement (including step down accommodation) or receiving care linked to their tenancy, will be placed in band 5 until such time as the support providers (including occupational therapists, clinicians, healthcare professionals) assess that the applicant is ready to live independently when they will be placed in the appropriate band.

Part 5: Eligibility, qualification and the priority bands

1: Eligibility

It is the law that the council must only allocate housing to people who are eligible to be rehoused. The following are not eligible:

- People who are “subject to immigration control” (unless they fall within a class prescribed by regulations as eligible).
- People who are not subject to immigration control, but are nevertheless prescribed by regulation as being “persons from abroad” (this may include British citizens).
- Any other person as prescribed by the Secretary of State.

“Subject to immigration control” and “persons from abroad”

Access to housing for foreign nationals is governed by Housing and Immigration legislation. Persons from abroad can apply to be rehoused, but their eligibility must be verified before they can be allowed to join the housing register. At the point of applying all applicants are asked for information about their housing history and legal status, including whether they are persons from abroad or subject to immigration control. Manchester City Council then carries out checks to establish eligibility to the scheme under the relevant legislation.

The majority of foreign nationals arriving in Manchester will not immediately qualify for social housing and are therefore more likely to rent in the private sector.

2: Qualification, exemptions and exceptions

Not everyone who is eligible to apply for rehousing will qualify to join the scheme. A person applying to join the scheme can be found not to qualify for any of these reasons:

- They do not have at least two years’ continuous residency in Manchester
- They have available financial resources and/or household income above the limits
- They own a home anywhere in the world
- Their behaviour makes them unsuitable to be a tenant, or because an applicant may need a more supported accommodation than the council or partners can provide

Each of these reasons is described in greater detail below.

Certain applicants are exempt from some of the qualification criteria, see “exemptions and exceptions” at the end of this section.

Two years' continuous residency

The government believes that a minimum of two years' continuous residency is an appropriate qualification criterion for allocations schemes. Applicants who do not have two years' continuous residency by choice in the Manchester City Council area at the time of application will not qualify to join this scheme. The minimum two years can be at more than one address, but it must be continuous.

Residency does not arise from:

- occupation of a mobile home, caravan or motor caravan which is not placed on a residential site
- occupation of a holiday letting of any sort for the purposes of a holiday
- residency of HMP Manchester, bail hostels or other such accommodation
- being an in-patient of a hospital or specialist centre

Qualifying applicants who subsequently move out of the Manchester City Council area will be reassessed and if found no longer to qualify their application will be suspended or removed, unless they have been placed out of area by the council's Adults and/or Children's Services departments due to lack of suitable accommodation in the council area, in which case such periods will be treated as though "in area" for as long as they relate to the provision of support or the undertaking of a statutory duty.

Qualifying applicants whose continuous residency is interrupted due to them having to serve a prison sentence will be regarded as retaining residency qualification if they immediately return to live continuously in Manchester on their release from prison or approved premises (including bail accommodation and CAS accommodation) if there has been no intervening non-qualifying period.

Financial resources and household income limits

The council considers that people

- with available financial resources in the form of savings or assets of £30,000 or more, or
- with a gross household income, including all allowances such as child benefit, of £60,000 or more

have the means to secure their own accommodation by paying market rent or by buying their own home. Therefore, to ensure that scarce social homes are allocated to those in greatest need, anyone with available financial resources of £30,000 or more or with a gross household income of £60,000 or more per annum does not qualify to join this scheme.

Home owners

The Government recommends that people who own a home should not normally qualify to join the housing register. Applications from households that include someone who owns a home, which can be anywhere in the world, will not qualify to join this scheme.

Behaviour that makes an applicant unsuitable to be a tenant

Applicants who are unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of their behaviour or the behaviour of a member of their household do not qualify under this scheme. Such behaviours include:

- Owing significant housing-related debt of £1000 or more
- Failing to comply with a current or past tenancy agreement with a council, social or private landlord.
- Failing to adhere to the terms of an agreed payment plan in relation to rent arrears or housing debt.
- Having a homelessness duty discharged for reasons of non-engagement or for failing to adhere to the actions in a Personal Housing Plan or for behaviour that resulted in eviction from homelessness temporary accommodation.
- Having been assessed as intentionally homeless and not owed a homelessness duty under Part 7.
- Conviction for illegal or immoral purposes.
- Causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors.
- Committing certain criminal offences in or near the home and still posing a threat to neighbours or the community.
- Being violent towards a partner or members of the family.
- Allowing the condition of the property to deteriorate.
- Allowing any furniture provided by the landlord to deteriorate due to ill treatment.
- Obtaining a tenancy by deception, for example by giving false or misleading information or by omitting relevant information.
- Paying money to obtain a tenancy illegally.
- Having lost accommodation provided in connection with employment due to conduct making it inappropriate for the person to reside there.
- Having unspent convictions where the Serious Offenders Panel considers an applicant to be unsuitable to be a tenant due to them being a significant risk to potential neighbours and/or communities (see part 4, section 9).
- An applicant giving false information on their housing application. This includes information that may be missing from the application. This will be material information that would potentially lead to the

applicant being offered a property that they otherwise would not be entitled to.

In determining whether an applicant does not qualify due to their behaviour, the council will consider:

- Has the applicant or a member of the applicant's household been guilty of behaviour that makes them unsuitable to be a tenant?
- At the time of the application, is the applicant still unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of that behaviour?

An applicant's qualification to join the allocations scheme will be kept under review during the application process. An applicant may be rendered as non-qualifying at any time during the process should the council become satisfied that they do not qualify. Applicants classified as being non-qualifying by reason of their behaviour can make a new application for accommodation in the future if they can demonstrate changed behaviour such that they are now suitable to become a tenant. It is for the council to determine whether the changed behaviour claimed makes the applicant qualifying under the scheme. This is carried out at the point of re-application to the scheme.

Each application will be assessed on its own merits and a decision regarding qualification will be made accordingly. Anyone subsequently made non-qualifying for the scheme will be provided with a full written explanation for the decision and will have a right of review of the decision. See part 2, section 7 which deals with the right to review.

Exemptions and exceptions

Applicants in receipt of a homelessness duty from Manchester City Council are exempt from the two years' continuous residency requirements. If homelessness duties are discharged no homeless duty is owed and the exemption from the requirement to have two years' continuous residency ceases to have effect.

Applicants are then required to have two years' continuous residency in Manchester to be able to qualify under this scheme. Where the prevention or relief duty was voluntarily discharged into a private rented sector tenancy (including outside of the Manchester City Council area) between 6th February 2023 and 30th April 2026 then the applicant is still exempt from the two years continuous residency requirement until a material change of circumstances takes place. At this point the application will be reassessed and an applicant may then not qualify to join the scheme.

Applicants in receipt of a homeless duty from Manchester City Council and

living in a refuge, or other form of temporary accommodation recognised by the council's homelessness service, for reasons of domestic abuse are exempt from the two years' continuous residency requirement. These applicants are also exempt from disqualification as homeowners. These applicants may, by exception, have the income and financial resources limits rescinded by use of manager's discretion if assessment shows that to be appropriate.

Applicants ready to move on from Manchester City Council commissioned supported accommodation schemes are exempt from the two years' residency requirement.

Applicants confirmed by the council's outreach workers as homeless and sleeping outdoors are exempt from the two years' continuous residency requirement.

Applicants who are :

- An eligible child as set out in paragraph 19B of schedule 2 of the Children Act 1989
- A relevant child as set out by S.23A(2) of the Children Act 1989
- A former relevant child under 25 as set out by S.23C(1) of the Children Act 1989

Are exempt from the two years' continuous residency requirement.

Applicants who qualify under the Right to Move Regulations (DCLG, 2015) are exempt from the two years' continuous residency requirement.

Applicants who are serving or former members of the regular forces are exempt from the two year's continuous residency requirement.

This exemption also applies to divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of serving members of the regular forces who are assessed as having reasonable preference on this scheme and who, as a result of their divorce or separation, have to leave accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence, or have left such accommodation within the last year.

Applicants who need to move for reasons of Domestic Abuse, or who have moved due to Domestic Abuse but who consequently have no settled accommodation, are exempt from the two years' residency requirement.

Applicants in significant mortgage arrears who, after they have followed the recommended actions of advisors who specialise in the prevention of homelessness through mortgage arrears, have then been assessed as

entitled to reasonable preference on this scheme, will have the home ownership, income and financial resources qualifications rescinded.

Applicants who are home owners and have experienced relationship breakdown and for whom the share of any potential capital gain from the sale of his or her home does not reach the financial resources threshold will have the home ownership and financial resources qualifications rescinded.

Applicants who are seeking a move to older people's, sheltered or extra care housing, or who are assessed as being in the reasonable preference bands (1-3) for reasons of medical need, disability or age-related disability, will have the home ownership, income and financial resources qualifications rescinded if either:

- the applicant is over 55 and wishes to move to older people's, sheltered or extra care housing, or
- the applicant, or a member of their family, has a disability and requires a suitably adapted property and their current home cannot meet their needs in the long term and the household does not have the financial means to pay for suitable alternative accommodation. All technical and financial decisions will be made following a thorough options assessment undertaken by the Manchester Services for Independent Living or Manchester Move.

Applicants who are already tenants of Manchester Move partners living in the city are exempt from the two years' continuous residency requirement.

3: Reasonable preference

Part 1 of this scheme notes that the law requires "reasonable preference" to be given to certain categories of applicants.

The reasonable preference categories in section 166A(3) (a) to (e) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) are:

a) People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the Act).
b) People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3).
c) People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability).
e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to

themselves or others.

The reasonable preference categories are described in more detail below, with examples of applicants who would be assessed as entitled to reasonable preference on this scheme.

It is important to note that the law requires that anyone applying for social housing who is believed to be homeless or threatened with homelessness must be regarded as making an application for assistance under homelessness legislation (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996). Such applicants will therefore be referred for homelessness assistance.

See appendix 8 for details of homelessness duties.

a) Reasonable Preference category section 166A (3) (a) - applicants who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

This group comprises all applicants who are homeless under the definition of homelessness contained in sections 175 -177 of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. This is people who do not have accommodation that is legally and physically available to them or that it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy.

b) Reasonable Preference category section 166A(3) (b) – applicants who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3).

The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2018) clarified that section 166A of the 1996 Act includes “providing reasonable preference to people who are owed the prevention (section 195(2)) or relief (section 189B) duty”.

This group comprises all applicants who are owed any of the Part 7 homelessness duties listed. Everyone who is assessed as being homeless and owed one of these duties has to be told so in writing, and this is the evidence needed to award reasonable preference to the applicant.

c) Reasonable Preference category section 166A (3) (c) – People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.

This group comprises:

Applicants living in insanitary or unsatisfactory housing conditions because they:

- lack a bathroom, or
- lack a kitchen, or
- lack an inside WC, or
- lack hot or cold water supplies, or
- lack electricity, gas or adequate heating, or
- occupy a property which is in disrepair or is unfit for occupation

Note that applicants who only have access to shared facilities in shared accommodation do not qualify under these criteria unless their access to shared facilities is restricted to limited times of the day.

Applicants living in unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private sector where there is one or more Category 1 Hazards (excluding overcrowding) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Applicants overcrowded according to the bedroom standard (see appendix 2). Note that, for the purposes of this scheme, Manchester City Council considers that persons sharing a room must be family members. Therefore two people who are not in the same family and are not in a relationship should be considered as requiring their own bedroom.

In exceptional circumstances the council may exercise discretion in deviating from the bedroom standard.

Anyone with 'access' rights to children may request larger non-family type accommodation but will not be entitled to request family type accommodation.

d) Reasonable Preference category section 166A (3) (d) – Medical, Disability and Welfare.

Medical, welfare and disability grounds

Reasonable preference is awarded under this category when an applicant's housing directly contributes to causing serious ill-health or presents serious barriers to completing daily living activities.

An application will be referred for assessment if the applicant has indicated that there is a medical, welfare or disability problem that is made substantially worse by their current housing. The Council will consider an award under reasonable preference D for any of the reasons listed in Annex 1 of the Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local authorities. Assessment will be carried out by the Manchester Move Medical Team. The assessment is

not of the applicant's health but of how their accommodation directly affects their health or welfare. Note that any insecurity that applicants may feel as a result of welfare reforms and/or other financial pressures will not be considered sufficient reason to award reasonable preference on medical, welfare and disability grounds.

Examples of when this award will be made include where an applicant or a member of their moving group:

- is living in accommodation that is directly contributing to the deterioration of their health such as suffering from a severe chest condition requiring intermittent hospitalisation as a result of chronic dampness in the accommodation. Before medical priority is awarded, assessment of such conditions will consider if other things can be done to address issues with the applicant's current accommodation (because landlords have a legal responsibility to ensure that homes are maintained in good condition)
- has a terminal illness and rehousing is required to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care
- is suffering from mental illness or disorder where the medical condition would be significantly improved by a move to alternative accommodation. Note that this would not normally include consideration of an applicant's preference for, or dislike of, a particular location, nor would it include addressing insecurity arising from welfare reforms and/or other financial pressures
- is a child with a severe condition such as autism, or cerebral palsy, where their long term needs cannot be met in their current accommodation. Note that this will not normally include provision of sensory or quiet rooms or rooms to accommodate equipment
- is a disabled person with restricted mobility experiencing barriers to completing daily living activities which requires substantial adaptations and the necessary adaptations cannot be provided in their current accommodation

In considering whether to make an award, the council will require evidence from any of the following: The applicant's GP or specialist, Social Services, occupational therapist, Age Concern or any other professional with knowledge of the applicant's case. The council may require a home visit to be undertaken to view living conditions.

e) Reasonable Preference category section 166A (3) (e) – people who need to move to a particular locality in the local authority's district, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or to others.

This category applies to:

- people resident in the Manchester City Council district who need to move to a particular area within the Manchester City Council boundary, and
- current social housing tenants in other local authority areas in England who need to move to Manchester because the tenant works or has been offered work in the district of the City Council and has a genuine intention to take up the offer.

i. Manchester residents seeking to move within the city

Examples of need to move on hardship grounds include:

- to give or receive care that is substantial and ongoing
- to access social services facilities where the applicant is unable to travel across the city
- to take up (or continue) employment, education or a training opportunity that is not available elsewhere and where the applicant does not live within reasonable commuting distance

Given that the city is geographically compact, with good transport links, an award will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Reasonable preference will not normally be awarded to applicants who state that they require ongoing support from relatives or friends, unless there is severe mental health, medical or welfare issues relating to the applicant or a member of the applicant's household and exceptional reasons why this support cannot be made available through a reliance on public transport or the applicant's own transport.

ii. Current social tenants seeking to transfer to Manchester from another local authority district in England

Where an applicant needs to move to Manchester to take up an offer of work and the council is satisfied that the applicant has a genuine intention to take up the offer. Work that is short term or marginal in nature, is ancillary to work in another district, or is voluntary work, is not included in this definition of work. The council must be satisfied that the tenant needs, rather than wishes, to move. Factors that will be taken into account include:

- The distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home
- The availability and affordability of transport, taking into account the level of earnings
- The nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to homeOther personal factors such as medical conditions and childcare, which would be affected if the tenant could not move.

- The length of the work contract
- Whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve employment circumstances or prospects, for example, by taking up a better job, a promotion, or an apprenticeship

Other applicants given reasonable preference on this scheme

The council is permitted to award priority to categories of applicants other than the reasonable preference categories included in the 1996 Act. The council awards reasonable preference to the following additional categories of applicants.

Current tenants under occupying a social home

Tenants of Manchester Move partners who, according to the bedroom standard, are under-occupying a family home of 3 or more bedrooms and are seeking to move to non-family type accommodation with fewer bedrooms and who will not be under occupying by more than one bedroom.

Tenants of Manchester Move partners living in family-type homes who are under occupying their current home according to the bedroom standard and who are looking to move to a new home where they will not be under occupying according to the bedroom standard.

Tenants of Manchester Move partners who are under-occupying a property according to the bedroom standard, and are subject to removal of the spare room subsidy from benefits paid to them in accordance with the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and are seeking to move to the appropriate size of property according to the bedroom standard where consequently there is no spare room subsidy.

Children living at height

Applicants who occupy a flat or maisonette above ground floor and live with children who are 10 years old or younger, if the property does not include access to a garden.

Move on from Care

Applicants assessed as ready to move on from council accredited support or care schemes.

Move on from Supported Accommodation

Applicants occupying supported accommodation and who are assessed as ready to move on. Assessment must confirm:

- the applicant is ready to move to independent settled housing on the recommendation of the support service manager, and

- the applicant's need for any continuing support has been assessed and, where required, a support package is in place

Child Protection

Applications from parents or carers of children subject to a Child Protection Plan where the household's accommodation is a contributory factor to the risk to the child or children and the Child Protection Conference recommends rehousing as an essential contribution to safeguarding the welfare of the child/ren.

4: The priority bands

This scheme does not use points to award priority and priority is not cumulative. Applications are placed in the appropriate priority band according to assessed need. An applicant who qualifies under more than one element of the scheme will be awarded the highest priority that any one of their assessed needs is entitled to. For example, an applicant with a need that is awarded band 3 and another need that is awarded band 2 will be awarded band 2. An applicant with two or more needs all of which would be awarded band 2 will be awarded band 2.

5: Band 1: reasonable preference and additional preference

A band 1 award is valid for a period of 6 months unless there has been a change of circumstances in which case the application will be reassessed. The award is reviewed every 6 months so that Manchester Move partners can be confident it remains appropriate.

An award of band 1 for any reason will only be made where all other reasonable housing options have been explored. Examples of other reasonable housing options can include, but are not limited to:

- Making a discretionary (i.e. out of policy) offer of rehousing to adult non-dependent household member(s) to alleviate severe overcrowding
- Making an offer of interim or suitable temporary accommodation where the council believes a Part VII duty is or may be owed, particularly where a move is required urgently
- Target hardening at the current home in cases involving violence or harassment
- An offer of assistance into suitable private rented sector housing
- Where an applicant requires or would benefit from a more supported living environment, such as housing in commissioned

supported accommodation

Manchester Move partners may decide to not make an award of Band 1 (or to remove an award of Band 1) if it is felt the applicant has unreasonably failed to take up alternative options which are available.

Applicants assessed as being in the reasonable preference categories who have **additional** exceptional or urgent housing needs are awarded additional preference and placed in band 1 in the following circumstances.

Hospital discharge

Applicants ready to be discharged from hospital who:

- have somewhere to live but their accommodation is unsuitable due to their medical needs and cannot be made suitable through adaptations because of cost effectiveness or structural difficulties or the property cannot be adapted within a reasonable amount of time. Each case is assessed individually and where the applicant's life is severely affected by their unsuitable accommodation, additional preference will be awarded.
- have nowhere at all to live when they leave hospital will be awarded additional preference if their need to move is urgent and all other reasonable housing options have been explored.

Emergency medical, welfare or disability related needs

Applicants who have an urgent need to move due to them having medical problems or disabilities *that are being exacerbated by their current housing situation*. This is where an applicant's current accommodation directly contributes to causing critical ill-health or presents critical barriers to completing daily living activities and is not suitable for equipment and/or adaptations.

This includes applicants:

- whose life is at risk, or whose carer is at risk of injury, due to their current accommodation, or who are housebound and cannot safely access the essential facilities in their home and there are critical concerns about their safety
- whose health is so severely affected by their accommodation that, in the opinion of expert medical professionals, it is likely to become life threatening, for example where an applicant has significant mental health problems which are exacerbated by their accommodation
- who are at risk of admission to hospital or residential care

because there are critical safety concerns arising from their current accommodation

- with complex physical needs who are unable to access essential facilities or complete daily living activities in their current accommodation and their current accommodation cannot feasibly be adapted to meet their long-term needs and therefore these applicants require urgent rehousing into adapted or adaptable accommodation that meets their long-term needs.

Acute overcrowding

Where an applicant household is severely overcrowded requiring 3 or more additional bedrooms according to the bedroom standard.

Domestic abuse

Applicants fleeing domestic violence and abuse who have been assessed by Manchester MARAC (or any subsequent multi agency arrangement) as needing to move urgently for the safety and security of themselves and any dependent children.

Applicants living in a refuge or similar safe house (this does not include people who are lodging or living with relatives).

Note that this will be as part of an overall plan to protect and safeguard victims. Due to the nature of the need to move, any offer will be in a suitable and safe location, considering support networks and distance to the perpetrator, and safeguarding factors. Offers of suitable accommodation may be some considerable distance from the applicant's current or former home.

Threat to life, extreme violence or extreme harassment

Applicants who are suffering extreme violence or harassment where there is strong police evidence that an urgent move is required to protect the life of an applicant or a member of their household and can demonstrate to the satisfaction of Manchester City Council and Manchester Move partners that it is not safe for the applicant / household to remain in their present home.

Note that this will be as part of an overall plan to protect and safeguard victims. Due to the nature of the need to move, any offer will be in a suitable and safe location, considering support networks and distance to the perpetrator, and safeguarding factors. Offers of suitable accommodation may be some considerable distance from the applicant's current or former home.

Under occupation of social housing

While recognising the rights of secure tenants, the council wishes to facilitate

the most efficient use of social homes in Manchester by helping current tenants of Manchester Move organisations move to smaller properties where possible. Tenants of Manchester Move partners who are currently under occupying their homes according to the bedroom standard will be awarded additional preference if:

- they will release a family-type home of 2 or more bedrooms by moving to a non- family type home where they will not under occupy by more than 1 bedroom, or
- they are subject to removal of the spare room subsidy from benefits paid to them in accordance with the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and they move to accommodation of the appropriate size where consequently there is no spare room subsidy.

Transfer applicants releasing adapted properties

Where a tenant of a Manchester Move organisation is living in a substantially adapted property and either does not need the adaptations in their home, or needs substantially different adaptations, they will be awarded additional preference in order to release the adapted home if the adaptations are assessed as useable by a subsequent tenant, or if it is assessed as reasonable to repair or replace the adaptations.

Applicants who are or were in the armed forces

- Serving members of the regular forces suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to the person's service
- Former members of the armed forces
- Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the armed forces who have ceased to be entitled to accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or partner and whose death was wholly or partly attributable to their service
- Serving or former members of the reserve forces who need to move because of a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to service
- Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of serving members of the regular forces who, as a result of their divorce or separation, have to leave accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence, or who have left such accommodation within the last year.

Applicants in private rented property where there is one or more Category 1 Hazard (excluding overcrowding), where the council has served a Prohibition

Order and where the relevant conditions present an immediate threat of serious injury or is life threatening

Additional preference is awarded to applicants who currently occupy a private sector property which has at least one Category 1 Hazard (excluding overcrowding) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and where a Prohibition Order has been served under the Housing Act 2004 and the effect of the Prohibition Order is likely to mean that the applicant(s) will lose the use of their home on a permanent basis. The relevant conditions at the property must be life-threatening or present an immediate threat of serious injury to the occupant(s).

In cases where the applicant(s) will not lose the use of their home on a permanent basis the council may facilitate the household to move to a suitable alternative property until remedial repair works have been carried out and then the household will be assisted to return to the original property. While resident in the alternative decant property the applicants will not be eligible for reasonable preference for a relevant Category 1 hazard under this scheme.

Child Protection

For applications in circumstances where there is a serious threat to the well-being of a child and their accommodation is a contributory factor to the risk the council and Manchester Move partners would want to act swiftly to mitigate the risk and so will award additional preference. This will be in circumstances where the relevant manager in Children's Services or equivalent assesses the level of risk exposure in relation to the child or children remaining in the current property as being so critical that no other reasonable options in relation to accommodation are available to protect the child.

Move on from Care

This is in accordance with protocols between the Housing Service and Manchester City Council's Children's Services Department. Applicants must be a former "Relevant Child" as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 and be a young person at risk of homelessness. The evidence to support this award will be provided by the council's leaving care service and will consist of confirmation that:

- The care leaver is ready to move to independent settled housing and is genuinely prepared for a move to independent living.
- The care leaver possesses the life skills to manage a tenancy including managing a rent account.

- The care leaver has either long term or medium term tenancy support arranged, as required.
- Ongoing support needs have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan is in place.

In addition, care leavers who have been placed into the city by another authority who can evidence the above criteria is met will also be made an award of Band 1. The council will require evidence from their Personal Advisor or other relevant officer in the referring authority's Children's Services department that the criteria is met.

Applicants who are foster carers or adoptive parents or who provide care under a Special Guardianship Order

Potential foster carers and/or adopters who meet the eligibility and qualification criteria of this scheme and do not have reduced priority (band 5), and who receive a deferred recommendation as suitable foster carers or adopters by the Manchester Family Placement Panel, subject only to their finding accommodation that meets the property size and health and safety conditions required by the Family Placement Panel.

Applicants who met the eligibility and qualification criteria of this scheme and who provide care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and whose accommodation does not satisfy the bedroom standard.

Management discretion

Where management discretion is applied due to exceptional and significant circumstances the applicant may be placed in band 1 as described in part 3.

6: Band 2: reasonable preference and urgent need to move

Applicants assessed as being in the reasonable preference categories who have urgent housing needs are placed in band 2 in the following circumstances.

- the applicant is homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, and is owed a homelessness duty by Manchester City Council under section 189B(2), or section 195(2) section 192(3) or section 193(2) of the Housing Act 1996, or under section 65(2) or section 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985 (see appendix 8)

- Households to whom the Council owed a prevention or relief duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and this duty was discharged between 6 February 2023 and 30 April 2026 by the applicant voluntarily agreeing to the duty being ended by the provision of private rented accommodation. The award applies until the applicant has a material change in circumstances.
- the applicant household is overcrowded in its current accommodation and requires 2 additional bedrooms according to the bedroom standard
- the applicant household includes one or more children, is living in 1 bedroom accommodation and is overcrowded, requiring 1 additional bedroom according to the bedroom standard
- the applicant household is living within another household and is overcrowded requiring 1 additional bedroom according to the bedroom standard
- the applicant is living in unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private sector where there is one or more Category 1 Hazards (excluding overcrowding) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and a Suspended Prohibition Order has been served in relation to the property the applicant is under occupying their current family-type home according to the bedroom standard and is looking to move to a new home where they will not be under occupying according to the bedroom standard
- the applicant needs to move on medical grounds
- the applicant needs to move on welfare grounds
- the applicant needs to move on hardship grounds
- the applicant household includes children living at height
- the applicant needs to move for child protection purposes
- the applicant is assessed as ready to move on from supported accommodation
- the applicant needs to move due to domestic abuse
- the applicant needs to move due to abuse, violence or harassment

7: Band 3: reasonable preference

- Applications are placed in band 3 if they have been assessed as being in reasonable preference for these reasons:
- the applicant is owed a homelessness duty by Manchester City Council under section 190(2) (see appendix 8) because they are intentionally homeless and in priority need
- the applicant is homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and, following main duty inquiries, a decision has been made that they are not in priority need
- the applicant household is overcrowded in its current accommodation and requires 1 bedroom more than it currently has according to the bedroom

standard

8: Band 4: not in reasonable preference - not in housing need

All qualifying applications assessed as not being in the reasonable preference categories will be placed in band 4 unless they have reduced priority and are placed in band 5.

Because of the levels of demand for all social homes and the numbers of applicants in the reasonable preference bands 1-3, applicants in band 4 will not be allowed to bid on homes unless the individual advertisement for a property specifies that bids are invited from applicants in bands 4 and 5.

9: Band 5: reduced priority

Applications with reduced priority for the reasons outlined in part 4 are placed in band 5. Because of the levels of demand for all social homes and the numbers of applicants in the reasonable preference bands 1-3, applicants in band 5 will not be allowed to bid on homes unless the individual advertisement for a property specifies that bids are invited from bands 4 and 5.

Review of applications in band 5

An applicant may request that their application be removed from the reduced priority band at any time where there has been a material change in circumstances. The request for removal of the reduced priority must be made in writing and must set out why the applicant believes that the removal of the reduced priority is now justified. Evidence will be required in support of statements.

Applications placed in band 5 as a consequence of refusing 2 suitable offers (or 1 suitable offer if owed a homelessness duty or if moving on from supported accommodation) normally will remain in band 5 for the prescribed 6 months. Any exception can arise only from unavoidable significant change in circumstances where assessment shows a higher banding is essential for safeguarding purposes or to prevent significant hardship. Clear and strong evidence must be provided and manager's discretion will be used to place the application in a higher band if appropriate and necessary to do so.

Review of any serious offenders (see part 4, section 9) placed in band 5 must be carried out by the Serious Offenders' Panel.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Manchester Move partners

Name	Address	Tel number	Web Address
Arcon Housing Association	17 Trafford Wharf Road, Trafford Park, Stretford, M17 1HH	0161 214 4120	www.arcon.org.uk
Clarion Housing	17 Harefield West, LS15 0ES	0300 500 8000	www.myclarionhousing.com
Great Places Housing Group	2a Derwent Avenue, M21 7QP	0300 123 1966	www.greatplaces.org.uk
Guinness Partnership	Bower House, 1 Stable Street, Hollinwood, OL9 7LH	0303 123 1890	www.guinnesspartnership.com
Irwell Valley Homes	Soapworks, first floor, Colgate Lane, M5 3LZ	0300 561 1111	www.irwellvalley.co.uk
Jigsaw Homes Group	249 Cavendish Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 7AT	0300 111 1212	www.jigsawhomes.org.uk
Manchester City Council	Town Hall Extension, Mount Street, M60 2LA	0161 234 5000	www.manchester.gov.uk
Mosscare St Vincent's Housing	Trafford House, Chester Road, Stretford, M32 0RS	0161 226 4211	www.msvhousing.co.uk
Northwards Housing	White Moss Road, Blackley, Manchester, M9 6NZ	0300 012 3123	www.northwardshousing.co.uk
One Manchester	Lovell House, 6 Archway,	0330 355 1000	www.onemanchester.co.uk

Name	Address	Tel number	Web Address
	Hulme, M15 5RN		
Onward Homes	2 Christie Way, M21 7QP	0300 555 0600	www.onward.co.uk
People First Housing Association	1 City Road East, M15 4PN	0161 235 6900	www.pfha.co.uk
Places for People	179 Royce Road, M15 5TJ	01772 667 002	www.placesforpeople.co.uk
Southway Housing Trust	729 Princess Road, M20 2LT	0161 448 4200	www.southwayhousing.co.uk
Wythenshawe Community Housing Group	8 Poundswick Lane, M22 9TA	0300 111 0000	www.wchg.org.uk
Your Housing Group	1 Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe, M23 2RW	0161 437 8786	www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk

Appendix 2: The Bedroom Standard

The statutory guidance "Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England" (DCLG, 2012) recommends using the bedroom standard to assess the number of bedrooms needed by applicants for social housing.

The bedroom standard in the guidance states that a separate bedroom should be allocated to:

a) a married or cohabiting couple
b) an adult aged 21 years or more
c) a pair of adolescents aged 10 to 20 years of the same sex
d) a pair of children aged under 10 regardless of sex

In addition, the council will allocate a separate bedroom to:

e) a pair of children/adolescents of the same sex where one is aged 10 to 20 and the other is under 10
f) any person under 21 in any case where she or he cannot be paired with another occupier of the dwelling so as to fall within (c), (d) or (e) above

The council will treat an application with someone who is pregnant by 28 weeks or more as though having another child and allocate an additional bedroom if required under this standard.

Appendix 3: Spent Convictions

Convictions that have been "spent" as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 cannot be taken into account when assessing an application under this scheme.

If anyone included on an application has been convicted of an offence and the sentence was for 4 years or more, or was a life sentence, it is never spent and must be declared.

This table shows when convictions are spent:

Sentence (sentence length includes time spent on licence)	Time it takes to become spent if Adult (18+) at conviction / disposal	Time it takes to become spent if Young person (<18) at conviction /disposal
Prison (including suspended prison sentences) of over 4 years or a public protection order	Never spent	Never spent
Prison (including suspended prison sentences) of more than 30 months and less than or equal to 4 years	Full sentence + 7 years	Full sentence + 3 ½ years
Prison (including suspended prison sentences) of more than 6 months and less than or equal to 30 months	Full sentence + 4 years	Full sentence + 2 years
Prison (including suspended prison sentences) of less than or equal to 6 months	Full sentence + 2 years	Full sentence + 18 months
Community Order or Youth Rehabilitation Order	Full length of order + 1 year	Full length of order + 6 months

The Manchester Move partners encourage applicants with spent convictions to take care not to declare them.

Appendix 4: Definition of Carer

A carer is anyone who looks after a family member or friend who needs help because of illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid. Carers in this scheme include both adult and young carers.

Appendix 5: Definition of Allocations

The following are “allocations” of accommodation under this scheme:

- The selection of a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of the council (including notifying an existing tenant or licensee that his tenancy or licence is to be a secure tenancy). This includes properties that are owned by the council and managed by agents. This also includes the granting of a new tenancy to an existing tenant by way of “transfer” upon the tenant’s request or the granting of a new tenancy under the council’s contractual or discretionary succession policies (see part 3).
- The nomination of a person to be an assured or an assured shorthold tenant of housing accommodation held by a registered provider (social landlord) via the council’s Nomination Rights Agreement with the registered provider. Often the nomination will be that of a ‘starter tenant’ of a registered provider whereby the registered provider will grant an assured short hold tenancy for a probationary period (usually 12 months) and provided the tenant successfully completes the probationary period the registered provider will grant an assured tenancy.

The following are not “allocations” under this scheme:

- Succession to a tenancy on a tenant’s death in accordance with the Housing Act 1985
- Assignment of a tenancy by way of mutual exchange
- Assignment of a tenancy to a person qualified to succeed to the tenancy on the tenant’s death
- Transfer of the tenancy by a court order under family law provisions or under the Civil Partnership Act 2004
- An introductory tenancy becoming a secure tenancy
- Council initiated transfers (e.g. decant to alternative accommodation to allow for major works)
- Rehousing due to being displaced from previous accommodation by the Council or being rehoused by the council pursuant to the Land Compensation Act 1973
- An allocation to a person who lawfully occupies accommodation let on a family intervention tenancy
- Provision of non-secure temporary accommodation in discharge of any homelessness duty or power

Appendix 6: Tenancies

Tenancies are not part of allocations schemes. Manchester Move partners have different tenancy agreements and rules and anyone wishing to understand their tenancy rights is advised to contact their landlord directly.

Appendix 7: Monitoring of lettings

By monitoring allocations it will be possible to examine whether the intended outcomes of the scheme are being achieved, and to make operational adjustments where necessary. The Housing Access Board (HAB) will review allocations quarterly. Any operational adjustments that the HAB determines to be necessary will be implemented by the Manchester Move partners and their effectiveness will be monitored by the HAB.

The allocations scheme allows the council to restrictively label properties or to invoke a quota system should it need to do so in order to meet its statutory obligations or the objectives of the allocations scheme.

The allocations scheme requires that the majority of lettings should be made to applicants in housing need on the housing register. The council expects that a minimum of 82% of all lettings will be made to applicants from the reasonable preference bands (1-3).

Monitoring

The following monitoring will be carried out to assess progress in delivering the objectives of this scheme:

- proportion of lettings against different categories, by bed size and location
- outcomes for quota nominees (i.e. proportion of nominations that result in a successful letting and reasons for a quota nomination to fail)
- outcomes for homeless people, including time waiting before housed and bidding activity
- lettings by category, area and property size (number of bedrooms)
- quota lettings by location and property size (number of bedrooms)
- overall demand from the Manchester Housing Register, including number of applicants by location, bed-size requirement and reasonable preference group
- proportion of lettings made across reasonable preference groups
- bidding activity by property type, size and location

In order to allow for accurate monitoring, the council will ask Manchester Move partners to report quarterly on direct lets made outside of the Manchester Move choice-based lettings system. This is to ensure that as far as possible every partner is playing an equitable role.

Appendix 8: Reasonable preference and homelessness duties under Part VII

In simple terms, reasonable preference on allocations schemes results from being owed different Part 7 duties. If an applicant is homeless within the meaning of Part 7 but no Part 7 duty is owed, that application is given reasonable preference on this scheme.

This table shows the relevant Part 7 duties and the Part 6 implication (subject to applicants qualifying to join the housing register).

Part 7 duty	Description	Part 6 implication (subject to applicants qualifying for the scheme)
179	Provide advisory services.	None
188(1)	Interim duty to accommodate in case of possible priority need (i.e., pending assessment).	None
189B(2)	The Relief Duty Initial duty owed to all eligible persons who are homeless. Duty is to help the applicant secure that suitable accommodation is available for 6 months. Duty normally ends after 56 days.	Reasonable preference
190(2)	Intentionally homeless, priority need. Duty is 1) to secure that accommodation is available for such period as will give the applicant reasonable opportunity to secure accommodation, and 2) to provide advice and assistance. Duty ends after the period when, if no change, the applicant then does not qualify (because no longer owed a part 7 duty).	Arises because duty under 189B(2) has come to an end Reasonable preference
192(3)	This section was repealed by the Homelessness Reduction Act but reference is retained in section 166A for applicants still owed this duty. Unintentionally homeless, not in priority need. Duty is (was) that the local authority may secure that accommodation is available.	Reasonable preference

Part 7 duty	Description	Part 6 implication (subject to applicants qualifying for the scheme)
193(2)	The “Full” Duty Unintentionally homeless, priority need. Duty is to secure that accommodation is available for occupation. Duty ends with a minimum 12 month private rented sector tenancy, a Part 6 social tenancy, or because the applicant fails to engage (including refuses a suitable offer).	Arises because duty under 189B(2) has come to an end Reasonable preference
195(2)	The Prevention Duty Duty in cases of threatened homelessness. Duty is to take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available.	Reasonable preference
None	Homeless within the meaning of Part 7 No duty owed	Reasonable preference

Appendix 9: Extra Care Housing

Appendix 9

Manchester City Council provides Extra Care housing schemes often in partnership with Registered Housing Providers. The purpose of Extra Care housing is to provide older people with their own home and tenancy within a care and support environment with access to flexible and responsive personal and housing support services if needed.

Tenants do not need to have a formal care need to move into an extra care scheme; however, they must have some level of care or support need. They can start with little or no care and access additional care and support as their needs increase over time.

Extra Care housing can support citizens to maximise their independence living in their own homes for longer, reducing the need to move to a 24 hour care setting.

People who have assessed care and support needs will generally have their needs met by a Care Provider who will be based on site 24 hours a day and will be able to provide care to tenants when this is required in line with their support plan. The team will be able to adapt a person's care plan to suit their changing needs to provide a flexible and responsive service. . There is an expectation that tenants who require care will receive this from the onsite care team, however, other choices can be made available where necessary.

An Extra Care scheme should maintain a balance of needs – it is not a residential care home and therefore new applications are reviewed to consider the ongoing need to have a balanced community of residents. All schemes need to have a vibrant and active feel to it – and therefore the balance of care and support needs is key to a successful Extra Care environment. There is no exact formula to create this environment, however, it generally is a mixture of people with no care and support needs, people with low/medium needs and the remainder with high needs. The allocations process will have to take a number of things into consideration when offering a property. These factors include individual circumstances of applicants, available care hours, existing needs, as well as the current balance of needs within each scheme.

Applicants should be registered on Manchester Move according to the requirements of each Housing Provider and assessed for rehousing in line with Manchester City Council's allocations scheme (this scheme). The Housing Provider is responsible for maintaining a waiting list of all people considered suitable for the scheme who may require a care and support plan. The Housing Manager's role is to ensure that they are registered and all eligibility housing checks are made along with a joint assessment with the contracted care provider at the scheme should care hours be required. The

Commissioner for Extra Care will oversee the allocations process ensuring a fair, independent and transparent approach is adhered to.

Priority for qualification is determined through assessments by both the housing and care provider and in discussion with the Council's extra care commissioner. Priority is awarded for certain presenting issues such as homelessness, hospital discharge or to prevent admission to residential care.

Note that where there are care hours available within the scheme, priority will be given to applicants that need these hours over other applicants that may have a higher priority for housing need.

Tenants in the Scheme will be offered the opportunity to have their care provided by the contracted care provider.

It should be noted that couples where one partner is below the minimum age requirement for the scheme may be granted a tenancy, but it will be a sole tenancy only in the name of the person who is over the qualifying age and therefore meets the criteria above. The younger partner would not be granted succession to the tenancy unless the partner meets the criteria detailed above at the point at which an application for succession is made. This needs to be clarified with housing providers as related to the tenancy.

Extra Care Housing Allocations Panel

The Extra Care Housing Allocations Panel will require a completed application form and a recent social care assessment (where one is available) or housing needs assessment in an appropriate format outlining the prospective tenant's housing and social care needs and a medical/social history to enable the panel to arrive at an informed decision as regards whether their needs can be met within the scheme.

The Allocations Panel should generally comprise of:

• A nominated Manchester Local Care Organisation Social Work or Primary Assessment Team Manager, preferably from the relevant Integrated Neighbourhood Team

• A Housing and/or lettings and tenancy Manager

• A further representative of the registered housing provider.

• The relevant Housing Options for Older People officer (where possible)

- • The Care Provider Team Leader or Manager A representative from Adult Social Care Living Well at Home Commissioning team (MLCO)

• A representative from the Directorate's Performance, Quality and Improvement Team (MLCO) (as necessary)

• A representative of the Housing and Residential Growth team (as necessary).

• A representative of the Manchester Move team (as necessary).

All allocations will be made via this team whether or not there are care hours to be allocated. The panel will meet at least monthly to ensure that timely decisions are made.

A potential tenant must also undertake a pre-offer interview with the Housing Manager and be shown the facilities at the scheme to ensure that all parties are comfortable with the responsibilities and expectations of a tenancy within an Extra Care Housing scheme. This also gives the prospective tenants an opportunity to find out more about the scheme and to make an informed decision about moving.

When considering a referral for an applicant with care needs the panel will take into account as a minimum:

- The age of the applicant, i.e. do they meet the minimum age requirement?
• The housing, care and support needs of the applicant.

• Any other factors that might influence the allocations process, for example do they have informal care that could be at risk of breakdown, care hours available in the care contract and the balance of needs within the scheme.

- The applicant's individual scheme preference(s)
• Which property size is most appropriate for the applicant, taking into account the size of property in which the applicant has expressed a preference

• Whether the applicant is a resident of the city (priority is given to Manchester residents).

A provisional decision will be reached at the Panel meeting, subject to a Scheme (or hospital) visit with the Care Provider Team Leader and the Housing Manager. It is appropriate that the applicant visits the Scheme to decide if they would like to live there. This is the opportunity to meet the Housing Manager and maybe other tenants. This visit should take place as early as convenient once an application has been received or in preparation of a vacancy becoming ready to let.

On completion of a successful Scheme visit a tenancy is offered and paperwork completed by the Housing or Lettings and Tenancy Manager.

If this visit raises issues as to the suitability of a tenancy, every step will be taken to resolve the situation in discussion with all parties. A further assessment or Panel discussion may be requested or further housing related support may be necessary.

If identified issues cannot be resolved (or resolved within an agreed timescale), the tenancy will be offered to the next suitable person identified by the panel or rehousing officer – again subject to a successful home or scheme visit.

The Housing Manager or representative of the Housing Provider will inform all

applicants refused the offer of a tenancy and will give reasons for the decision.

An appeals process can be invoked where any party wishes to dispute the decision reached by the allocation panel or rehousing team. This will be in line with Allocations scheme standards and procedures.

Review of applications for Extra Care accommodation

An appeals process can be invoked where any party wishes to dispute the decision reached by the allocation panel or rehousing team.