

Appendix 7 - Summary of consultation responses and Council's response

Subject	Comments	Response
Existing council tenants with rent arrears resulting from the under-occupancy charge	The allocations scheme excludes applicants with rent arrears. What will this mean for existing council tenants affected by the under-occupancy charge who would like to move to a smaller property where the benefit will cover the eligible rent and prevent further arrears from building up?	<p>Exclusions under "CLASSES OF PERSON THAT DO NOT QUALIFY" can be waived in exceptional circumstances but it is appropriate to make a slight change to category K to read as follows:</p> <p>"Existing council tenants with rent arrears because they have been affected by the under-occupancy charge will not normally be excluded where a move will prevent further arrears building up".</p>
Proximity to support organisations	Concerns about placements policy moving applicants away from essential services and support organisations	<p>Each case will be considered on its merits. The placements policy will include the following key tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Ensuring that a property meets the standards set out in the Suitability regulations + Ensuring that the circumstances (e.g.: access to work or medical facilities) have been considered in terms of location + Ensuring that the applicant can afford to live in the property taking into account their income after they have paid their rent <p>Where a property is located in another borough, the receiving local authority will be advised of an applicant's requirements for support services.</p>
Bad landlords	What will happen if an out of borough landlord is a bad landlord?	<p>Barnet Homes is continuing to promote and subsidise membership of London Landlord Accreditation Scheme for landlords accessing Let2Barnet services. Barnet Homes can also provide support for tenants in terms of tenancy sustainment.</p> <p>Where Barnet Homes finds evidence of bad landlord or managing agent practice in other boroughs, it will report this to the relevant local authority. Tenants can be re-housed in alternative properties where this is appropriate.</p>
Affordability of private rented sector in Barnet	Barnet's private rented sector is unaffordable for many applicants and they will be forced out of the borough	This is why the placements policy is being introduced- to assess the affordability of private sector accommodation as well as ensure that the accommodation is good quality and provides

Appendix 7 - Summary of consultation responses and Council's response

Subject	Comments	Response
	into unsuitable properties. This might increase appeals on suitability grounds	access to essential services. Consideration will also be given to the disruption caused to the household by the location of a property. The policy will ensure that private sector offers are suitable for applicants.
Care leavers	The council has a duty of care as a corporate parent for care leavers until they reach 25. Is shared housing an appropriate housing choice for these young people?	<p>Each case will be considered on its merits on an assessment of risk and also in terms of the types of accommodation that is available at the time the young person leaves care.</p> <p>Shared housing might be a positive choice for some young people to obtain some level of independence while learning how to manage a tenancy. It is also likely to be affordable for them given the fact that under 35s are only entitled to a shared room rate under Local Housing Allowance regulations. Depending on their housing needs, some young people will also be allocated self-contained council housing on a flexible tenancy.</p>
Condition of properties	How will the condition of properties located outside of the borough be checked? What happens if a tenant is placed into a property in poor condition?	<p>Suitability assessments will have to be undertaken on offers of private sector accommodation that discharge homeless duty. This includes property conditions.</p> <p>It is not always possible to pre-check the condition of emergency accommodation that is made available on a nightly basis but a programme of occupancy checks includes checking conditions. Where conditions are poor applicants will be found alternative accommodation subject to its availability and affordability.</p>
One offer only	Concerns about the restriction of choice by making only one offer. What if this offer is not suitable?	<p>There is a limited supply of properties and this is why the Council has decided to implement one offer only. Applicants will receive a further offer if upon review the first offer is found to be unsuitable.</p> <p>The placements policy will ensure that offers in the private sector are suitable and take account of personal circumstances.</p>
Prospective tenants not accepting properties	Housing associations agree with the one-offer-only policy because it will reduce void times resulting from applicants not accepting properties. This also means that as many as 12	If the one-offer-only policy is implemented, housing associations agree that Barnet Homes can reduce the number of applicants invited to a viewing to 3 as long as the applicants have been well assessed and are likely to accept the property.

Appendix 7 - Summary of consultation responses and Council's response

Subject	Comments	Response
	applicants are "shortlisted" for a property and invited to a viewing.	
Transparency of current system	How do applicants or their representatives know that they have been considered for a property? Have properties been allocated to applicants in the greatest housing need?	These issues are not currently up for consultation. The system works as follows- applicants are placed into a band if they have a housing need. Properties are allocated by highest band first (band 1) and then by date into band.
Allocations on regeneration estates	Does the scheme recognise that regeneration estates may operate some rules outside of the overall housing allocations scheme, for example in West Hendon tenants have been promised like for like replacement properties?.	Paragraph 3.22 covers this: "Under this allocations policy, existing secure tenants whose homes are being demolished will have priority for the new replacement homes being provided on their estate in accordance with the provisions agreed for each estate, before they are made available for to any other applicants"
Tenants placed in private rented sector	Concerns about applicants being placed in private sector and being good neighbours to other residents.	Applicants will be supported through tenant training to enable them to effectively manage and maintain their tenancy.
Classes of person that do not qualify	A homeless application is not opened for some applicants voluntarily surrendering a tenancy and they cannot therefore be excluded under class 'e' homelessness (intentionality)	Include in classes of person that do not qualify: m. Applicants that have in the 12 months prior to making an application, voluntarily surrendered any tenancy that would have been reasonable for them to continue to occupy Applicants who gave up tenancies in good faith will not be affected as there is discretion to waive the rule in these circumstances.
Classes of person that do not qualify	Applicants may be disqualified under section 214 of the Housing Act 1996 because of withholding of information, false statements and failure to inform of change of circumstances. This should be included as a separate class.	Include in classes of person that do not qualify: n. Applicants in breach of Section 214 of the Housing Act 1996.