

Appendix - Homechoice Policy review 2023

Area for review	Reason	Suggested revision	Policy Wording																
Houses to children under 16	Children are now expected to remain in education until 18. There aren't many 3 bed flats etc	Increase the eligibility to 18 years old.	<p>Amend the policy wording on page 19: Houses will be prioritised to households with children under 18 and bedrooms allocated as a minimum to the criteria below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1104 438 2080 970"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="1104 438 1778 496">Household</th> <th data-bbox="1778 438 2080 496">Bedroom Need</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1104 496 1778 560">Single Applicant</td> <td data-bbox="1778 496 2080 560">Studio/One bedroom</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1104 560 1778 624">Couple</td> <td data-bbox="1778 560 2080 624">One bedroom</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1104 624 1778 687">Person aged 16 or over</td> <td data-bbox="1778 624 2080 687">One bedroom</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1104 687 1778 751">Single child from birth</td> <td data-bbox="1778 687 2080 751">One bedroom</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1104 751 1778 815">Two children, both under 10 years old</td> <td data-bbox="1778 751 2080 815">One bedroom</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1104 815 1778 879">Two children of the same sex, aged 10-15</td> <td data-bbox="1778 815 2080 879">One bedroom</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1104 879 1778 970">Two children of opposite sex, one or both over 10 years old</td> <td data-bbox="1778 879 2080 970">Two bedrooms</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Amend the policy wording on page 24: In respect of public health recommendations and the benefits demonstrated to children through access to outdoor space, in addition to the requirement for young people to remain in education until 18, houses will be prioritised to households with children under 18.</p>	Household	Bedroom Need	Single Applicant	Studio/One bedroom	Couple	One bedroom	Person aged 16 or over	One bedroom	Single child from birth	One bedroom	Two children, both under 10 years old	One bedroom	Two children of the same sex, aged 10-15	One bedroom	Two children of opposite sex, one or both over 10 years old	Two bedrooms
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New build criteria	Giving priority to workers is coming under increasing	Change the terminology of the policy to remove references to	Change page 23 to read: <b>New property priority - new build lettings</b>																

	scrutiny and criticism.	<p>employment/ work and replace with:  “Positive Community Impact”  Definitions of positive  Community impact would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers</li> <li>• Committed and frequent voluntary work</li> <li>• People with a disability (in receipt of PIP or attendance allowance)</li> <li>• People committed providing care for a relative/ friend (in receipt of carers allowance)</li> </ul>	<p>There will be a cascade priority for all new build developments on <b>first let only</b>.</p> <p>A shortlist for a new property will be re-ordered to ensure that the following cascade of priority is followed:  1<sup>st</sup> priority – Applicants demonstrating a local connection to the town/ village in which the property is being built  2<sup>nd</sup> priority – Applicants who can demonstrate that they would bring or benefit from a positive community impact (defined below)</p> <p>Positive community impact is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applicants in work (full or part time)</li> <li>- Applicants committed to 5 hours+ of weekly regular voluntary work (with a reference)</li> <li>- Applicants with a disability and in receipt of PIP or attendance allowance</li> <li>- Applicants providing frequent and regular care for a friend or relative with carers allowance in payment.</li> </ul> <p>To qualify for a new build priority the evidence of connection or community impact must be on file before the close of the bidding cycle; this is the applicants’ responsibility.</p> <p><b>**Where a new property is built within the confines of one of the rural communities the community connection criteria will replace the local connection criteria.</b></p>
Homeless band C+	The band C+ criteria needs to be adjusted and enhanced to reflect some legislative requirements to give reasonable	It is not presently clear what priority would be awarded to those who refuse offers and those who have homelessness duties owed by another LA but have a connection to CE borough.	<p><b>Page 14</b>  <b>Homeless or at risk of homeless but not under Cheshire East Council duty</b></p> <p>Where households have elected not to be assessed under the homelessness reduction act or are owed a duty by another local authority; priority band C+ will be awarded to applicants who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received a non-priority or intentional homeless decision</li> </ul>

	preference to some homeless people.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Had their prevention or relief duty discharged due to the refusal of an offer</li> <li>• Had their full homeless duty discharged due to the refusal of an offer</li> <li>• Have elected not to be assessed under the homelessness reduction act</li> <li>• In short-term supported accommodation provided by a non-commissioned provider and ready to move on</li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b> remain homeless or at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>Those with homelessness duties owed by another LA but have a connection to Cheshire East borough will be placed in band C for reasonable preference</p>
Amend partner list	A number of our partners have changed their names	- The partner list needs to reflect current providers we are working with.	
Urgent housing need	Wording changes to the word's domestic violence to domestic abuse	- To be consistent with the Domestic Abuse act	Various changes thorough out the policy to remove the use of the word "violence".
Overcrowding/ bedroom eligibility/ disability/ accessibility	Clearly identify what evidence is required to support certain eligibility criteria	The policy needs to be clearer about the assessment criteria for bedroom eligibility and bungalow eligibility for disabled applicants. and overcrowding. If the intent is to use Child benefit eligibility, then the policy should be clear on this evidence being required. The same goes for bungalow eligibility and defining CE determined need. Under, both sections refer to the criteria that we use as a measure.	<p>Page 19 (under the table outlining bedroom eligibility): To evidence occupants in a property child benefit eligibility will be used as a measure.</p> <p>Page 16 (under the table outlining the assessment criteria): To evidence occupants in a property child benefit eligibility will be used as a measure.</p> <p>Additional paragraph on page 22:</p> <p>In some cases, properties are advertised with an age restriction, e.g., bungalows; where it is likely that these homes are suitable for an applicant with a disability, providers will permit bids from applicants that have a (CE determined) need for adaptation. For the purposes of assessing a (CE Determined) need for adaptation</p>

			applicants will be asked to supply evidence of their eligibility for the mobility element of the personal independence Payment (PIP).
Welfare	<p>The current criteria considered in the policy under welfare are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Financial hardship</li> <li>• Property condition</li> </ul> <p>To increase the eligibility for band C welfare priority by adding more</p>	<p>There are some people who are not accounted for in the band C assessments under welfare, such as</p> <p>People in refuge due to domestic abuse who have not made a homeless application to CEC</p> <p>Those moving closer to relatives to receive support</p>	<p>Page 17 amendments:</p> <p><b>Housing impact on a household’s welfare</b></p> <p>Where an applicant’s current accommodation is having an impact on the welfare of household members, applicants will be placed in Band C+ if they have no security of tenure and band C if they have security of tenure.</p> <p>Circumstances that will be given consideration under these criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Financial hardship</li> <li>• Property condition</li> <li>• Living in refuge accommodation</li> <li>• Moving closer to support from relatives where there is an assessed eligibility for social care support</li> </ul>
Local connection	<p>The term “other significant reason” is very broad and often challenged</p>	<p>Make it clearer that the applicant needs to be specifically in CEC and not just because people need to leave where they are living. There is a lot of challenge on this criterion because people do not feel safe where they live. People at risk of significant harm would be referred to us under witness victim protection programs and would be managed through (homeless applications rather</p>	<p>Applicants who fulfil any of the following will be considered as having a local connection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently live, or have lived, in settled accommodation within Cheshire East and have done for at least 2 consecutive years</li> <li>• Have immediate family (mother, father, brother, sister, adult child, adoptive parents) who are currently living in Cheshire East and have done for at least five years or more</li> <li>• Have a permanent contract of employment where the place of work is within Cheshire East borough</li> <li>• Members of the armed forces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) members of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		than as a direct part 6 application.	<p>(b) bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner</p> <p>(c) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a specific and significant reason to reside in Cheshire East <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Accepted by Cheshire East Council as having a connection by virtue of a statutory homelessness duty</li> <li>b) Accessing hospital or health care services that are only available in Cheshire East</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Applicants without a local connection will be placed in Band E. An applicant fleeing Cheshire East to secure temporary refuge from an incident of Domestic Abuse, with a view to make a return to the borough, will not lose their local connection by virtue of the time spent in refuge accommodation.</p>
Property size for allocations	Consider two siblings of the same sex being permitted to share a room beyond 16. Currently children over 16 get their own room. Is it reasonable for 2 siblings of the same age to share up to any age		
Social tenancy transfers	To include anti-social behaviour	This is a reason why tenants might be overlooked for a	Page 8 of the policy:

		transfer within existing housing stock that is not covered in the current policy.	<p>Common reasons for tenants being overlooked are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent arrears</li> <li>• Poor property condition</li> <li>• A poorly maintained garden</li> <li>• A recent history of anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>
Reviews and appeals	It presently reads as though all complaints come to Cheshire East when there is a separate reviews and appeals process complaints about decisions made by a registered provider.	Add text to explain to applicants how they appeal a decision, where their bid is overlooked by a registered provider.	<p><b>Reviews</b></p> <p>Applicants have the right to request a review against decisions made in the assessment process. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An assessment decision to reduce preference</li> <li>• An assessment decision about the priority band assessment</li> <li>• An assessment decision about eligibility to make an application</li> <li>• An assessment decision to close an application</li> <li>• A allocations decision to overlook a bid on a shortlist</li> <li>• A allocations decision to withdraw an offer/ reject an applicant's application</li> </ul> <p>The applicant's request for a review of the decision should be made in writing within 20 working days (4 weeks) of the original decision being made with supporting evidence why they require a review of the original decision.</p> <p>A more senior and independent officer will carry out reviews. The officer will not have been involved in the original decision. The officer will consider the evidence provided and decide whether to overturn or support the original decision. The applicant will be informed in writing of the decision within 20 working days (4 weeks) of receipt of the request for a review. The reply will contain the decision made, the reasons for the decision and the facts considered when making the decision.</p> <p><b>Appeals</b></p>

			<p>If the applicant is not satisfied with the decision made by a reviewing officer, they can appeal against the decision. Applicants will need to do this in writing within 20 working days (4 weeks) of the review letter being sent. For the purposes of assessment decisions, the Homechoice Panel (see below) will conduct the appeal and for the purposes of allocation decision Homechoice Board (see below) will conduct the appeal. A decision on appeal will be completed within 40 working days (8 weeks) and a final decision will be delivered in writing.</p>
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