

# HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

January 2020

Version 9

**Making Wellingborough a Place to be Proud of**

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# Housing Allocation Policy

## 1. Introduction

This Allocation Policy explains how the Borough Council of Wellingborough, working in partnership with a number of Registered Providers (RPs), allocates social housing and selected private rental properties within the borough through a jointly operated choice-based lettings scheme. Choice-based lettings involves the advertising of vacant properties and the registering of 'bids' by applicants who would like to live in the property.

The Borough Council of Wellingborough's choice-based lettings scheme, Keyways, is run in partnership with Kettering Borough Council and Corby Borough Council and is called Keyways. Keyways is intended to be the single point of access to all affordable rented and other social housing within the three Borough's. In addition to social housing, Keyways applicants will also be able to access vacancies in the private rented sector that are advertised via the scheme. Nomination agreements exist with all the social landlords participating in the Keyways Partnership area.

The Borough Council of Wellingborough differs from Kettering and Corby Borough Council in that it no longer owns its housing stock; this was transferred to Wellingborough Homes in December 2007. Consequently, the Allocation Policy of the Borough Council of Wellingborough differs in parts from that of Kettering and Corby.

With the current level of demand for social housing exceeding supply, the register exists to enable all households who are in need of housing to be included on one list, to maximise their opportunities for housing. The scheme seeks to offer choice, while giving reasonable preference to those in the greatest housing need and those with a local connection to the Borough of Wellingborough. The register also acts as an index of the level and nature of housing need locally.

By joining the register, those in housing need can be considered for vacancies which occur in properties owned or managed by any of the Keyways Landlords or selected private landlords. The aim is to make the task of applying for social housing as simple as possible, requiring only one form to be completed for all social housing opportunities in all three boroughs.

This Allocation Policy applies to:

- new applicants, and;
- existing Wellingborough Homes, Corby Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council and Registered Provider (RP) tenants who want to transfer from one tenancy to another with their current landlord, and;
- existing social rented housing tenants who want to transfer from one tenancy to another with a different social landlord. This includes changes from secure council tenancies to assured and affordable tenancies with a Registered Provider and vice versa.

The Borough Council of Wellingborough and the Keyways Landlords are committed to equal opportunities and to making sure that everyone is treated fairly.

## **2. Statement of Choice**

The Borough Council of Wellingborough and its Registered Provider (RP) partners welcome the principle of giving applicants an opportunity to express preference in relation to accommodation requirements in the Borough.

The Council is required to have an Allocation Policy which determines priorities and ensures that reasonable preference is given to those in greatest housing need.

The Housing Register has been designed to identify who is in the greatest need for accommodation and to make sure that they are housed to a suitable property as soon as possible. It must however be recognised that there is high demand for social housing in Wellingborough and that this demand cannot currently be fully met from the available resources.

The Borough Council of Wellingborough along with its Registered Provider (RP) partners operate a choice-based lettings system, known as Keyways. Applicants can bid for as many or as few vacancies as they wish. This enables applicants to consider the location of relatives, employment, schools and general facilities, which are important to them.

There will be certain situations where choice cannot be offered in the allocation of housing. For example; where a landlord needs to make a management move as a matter of urgency. Such situations will be the exception and occur infrequently.

## **3. Legal Background**

This Allocation Policy has been written to meet the duties of Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011 and has referred to the DCLG Code of Guidance issued on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2012

The Localism Act 2011 gives local authorities greater freedom to set their own policies about who should qualify to go on the waiting list for social housing in their area. This enables the Borough Council of Wellingborough to review the needs of the local area and make arrangements that best suit those particular needs.

There are instances where this Policy does not apply:-

- mutual exchange
- succession of tenancy
- assignment of tenancy
- decants
- sole to joint tenancy changes and vice versa
- renewal of a flexible tenancy in the same property
- lets made by Registered Providers outside of the Keyways Nomination Agreement
- properties leased to a support agency

## 4. Aims and Objectives of the Housing Allocation Policy

The Borough Council of Wellingborough no longer holds any housing stock, having carried out a transfer of its entire housing stock to a newly formed housing association Wellingborough Homes. This policy is adopted by the Borough Council of Wellingborough and Registered Providers (RP's) to allocate social housing stock in the Borough. This will be achieved through a common housing register, operated by a choice based lettings scheme.

The aims of this Allocation Policy are to help people with housing need choose where they would like to live in the Borough and to prevent people from becoming homeless.

The objectives of the Policy are to:

- enable applicants to make an informed choice about where they would like to live
- provide a fair and transparent system
- give reasonable preference for housing to those in the greatest housing need and those with a local connection to the Borough of Wellingborough
- encourage common practices of working between the three Borough Councils and all of the Registered Provider (RP) partners of Keyways
- include those who have served in the Armed Forces
- support local people to remain in the community to which they belong if they choose to.

## Qualification

## 5. Who Can Join the Housing Register?

Anyone can apply to join the housing Register

To be accepted on the housing register applicants must be a qualifying person. In order to be a qualifying person applicant must meet the following criteria:

:

- Aged 16 year or over
- Not subject to immigration control.....
- Be habitually resident in the common travel area<sup>9</sup>England,Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man
- Have a local connection to Wellingborough Borough Council section .....
- Have a housing need that places the applicant into Band A-D
- No history of unacceptable behaviour either the applicants or members of their household.
- Meet the income and capital threshold detailed in .....

## 6. Applicants under the age of 18 years

Applicants aged 16 or 17 years of age will be accepted onto the Housing Register, provided they are eligible and qualify. However, a tenancy cannot be legally held by an applicant under the age of 18, so:

A trustee must be appointed. A person under the age of 18 cannot be the legal owner of an interest in land, including a tenancy. The trustee would be the legal owner of the tenancy and hold it in trust until the young person reached 18 years of age.

- A suitable guarantor (i.e. somebody liable for the rent if the tenant does not pay).

### **People with Local Connection to the Borough of Wellingborough**

Due to the high demand for social housing locally applicants will require a local connection to the Borough of Wellingborough area to qualify to join the housing register.

A local connection will be established by virtue of any permanent member of the household meeting any of the criteria set out in the table below:

<b>Criteria</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residency in the Borough of Wellingborough for at least three out of the last 5 years.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants who are housed in the Borough of Wellingborough from another Local Authority under the homeless legislation remain the responsibility of that Authority for 2 years. To qualify for residency, these 2 years are discounted and the applicant must remain in the Borough of Wellingborough for a further 3 years to qualify for residency.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment in the Borough of Wellingborough for a minimum of 16 hours per week at the point of application and the point of nomination.</li> <li>• For the purposes of establishing this local connection, the applicant must either have a permanent contract (and passed any probationary period), or, be able to demonstrate they have worked for at least six out of the last 12 months in the Borough of Wellingborough and there is no reason to believe this arrangement is due to cease.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within 5 years of discharge.</li> <li>• Bereaved spouses or civil partners of a member of the Armed Forces where Ministry of Defence accommodation will cease to be available following the death of their service spouse or civil partner and the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service.</li> <li>• Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.</li> <li>• Verification will be required by the Armed Services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate family members currently resident in the Borough of Wellingborough i.e. parent, sibling or child, who have lived in the area for a minimum of 5 years.</li> </ul>

- Other Special Circumstances as decided by the Senior Housing Officer with a right to request a review to the Principal Housing Manager within 21 days.
- This will include, for example, applicants or a permanent member of their household who need to receive essential care and support in the Borough but who don't meet the normal residency criteria and this cannot be provided in any other area.
- It will also include those who were normally resident in the BCW before moving to Supported Housing out of the area and are now ready to move on from this accommodation.
- This list is not exhaustive

The above criteria must apply at both the point of application and allocation of any social rented tenancy. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the Borough Council of Wellingborough of any significant changes to their circumstances which may affect their local connection.

Tenants of any of the Keyways Landlord who are currently resident in the partnership area, will be exempt from the local connection criteria.

### **Under 18 Years**

Applications to apply to the housing register can be made as long as the main applicant(s) is 16 or older. 16 and 17 year olds will not normally be allocated accommodation until they have reached the age of 18 years.

Applicants aged 16 or 17 who have been nominated for a property must provide details of a Trustee. In the absence of a Trustee we may consider those aged 16 or 17 years for accommodation if one or more of the following apply:

- They have been accepted as statutorily homeless and in priority need under the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011
- They are over the age of 16 and Social Services authorities under section 27 of the Children's Act 1989 have made a referral for assistance.

In both of the above cases, the Council will seek to undertake a joint assessment with Social Services of the applicant's housing, care and support needs to ensure that adequate support is available.

### **Homeowners**

Homeowners are able to apply to join the housing register in certain circumstances. If homeowners are allocated a property through Keyways, the Keyways landlords reserve the right to explore the applicant's intentions regarding the future use of the property they are leaving.

Applicants must declare if they own a home in the UK or abroad so that it can be assessed whether this home is suitable for their needs and considered reasonable to occupy.



Whilst all homeowners can apply, if it is assessed that their home is suitable and reasonable to occupy the applicant may be considered as having no housing need and will not be accepted to join the housing register.

Where the owners' property meets the Councils standard for private leased accommodation and meets the Councils need for further private leased accommodation, the Council may enter into negotiations with the owner to lease the property from them for a fixed period. Such private leased accommodation would be let by the Council to other households in housing need.

### **Income**

Joint applicants with a gross household income over £60,000 per annum will not qualify to join the housing register but will be offered advice on alternative housing options.

Single applicants with a gross household income over £40,000 will not qualify to join the housing register.

Income of any person in the household who is under 18 years of age will be disregarded unless this is the main or joint applicant.

There is no income cap for those applicants seeking very specialist housing properties.

Any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces as compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service will be disregarded.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

In exceptional circumstances, an applicant who would not ordinarily qualify for the Housing Register but who has an urgent housing need may be allowed to join the Housing Register. This decision will be approved by the Senior Housing Officer with the right of review to the Principal Housing Manager.

## **6. Who Cannot Join the Housing Register?**

### **Applicants with no housing need**

The Localism Act gives Councils greater freedom to set their own policies about who qualifies to go on the housing register for social housing in their area.

Due to the high demand for social housing in the Borough of Wellingborough applicants assessed as having no housing need will be excluded in addition to :-

- People from abroad subject to immigration control or regulations;
- People prescribed as 'non-qualifying' by Regulations made by the Secretary of State;
- People the Council considers unsuitable to be tenants due to unacceptable behaviour.

### **People Who Behave in an Unacceptable Way**

Applicants will not be allowed to join the housing register if they or any member of their household who wish to be housed with them, are guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant of a Housing Authority, and there is sufficient evidence that this behaviour is likely to continue and create problems for the neighbouring households.

In order to determine whether someone's behaviour is serious enough to make them ineligible to apply to the housing register, the behaviour must be so serious that, had the applicant been a tenant of the local authority, the authority would have been entitled to a possession order under Section 84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any ground detailed in Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Act, with the exception of ground 8. Antisocial behaviour is a serious issue which can have a significant impact on the quality of life of those exposed to it. The Council takes a hard line on anti-social behaviour. Where an application for housing is received, and previous antisocial behaviour is suspected, we will make detailed investigations through our close partnerships with the Police and other agencies. If the behaviour is perceived to be serious enough to pose a risk to future potential neighbours, the applicant cannot join the Housing Register.

Contained in the table below are the criteria that the Borough Council of Wellingborough will use when deciding if an applicant is a qualifying or non qualifying person. If the applicant or joint applicant meets any of the criteria contained within the table, the Council may choose not to accept the application onto the housing register:

<b>Criteria</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outstanding recoverable housing related debt:</li> <li>• This will include monies owed for rent, recharges for damages to property, service charges, court costs, deposit bond scheme debt and other loans form the housing prevention fund or other similar schemes.</li> <li>• Consideration may be given to applicants with an urgent housing need who have a housing related debt, however, cumulative debt outstanding must generally be less than £2000.</li> <li>• Consideration may be given in exceptional circumstances to those applicants with a debt in excess of £2000 who have a payment plan in place which has been maintained for at least 3-6 months.</li> <li>• Debt Relief Orders (DRO) will only be considered after 12 months from the date of issue and must include all debts that would make an applicant exempt from the scheme.</li> <li>• Housing related debt over 6 years old will be disregarded.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of antisocial behaviour or criminal activity, including any breaches of current or previous tenancy agreement by any applicant or members of the household where legal action has been taken to end that tenancy.</li> <li>• Those found guilty of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity where said behaviour is deemed serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant of a Social Rented property and there is evidence that this behaviour is likely to continue and cause problems for the neighbouring households:</li> <li>• Antisocial behaviour and criminal activity will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ perpetrator of domestic violence</li> <li>○ harassment/intimidation/ threats</li> <li>○ racist behaviour</li> <li>○ any violence or threats of violence</li> <li>○ damaging another person's home or possessions</li> <li>○ storing, selling, dealing, the growing of or manufacturing of any illegal or controlled drugs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ interference with security and safety equipment or landlords electricity supply to communal blocks</li> <li>● This list is not exhaustive.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Been made intentionally homeless more than once in the last 5 years.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deliberately caused the loss of their last settled accommodation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards any officer, official agent or property of any of the Keyways partner/landlord.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Been evicted from any social tenancy for subletting or abandoning a property within the last 7 years.</li> </ul>

The Borough Council of Wellingborough does not operate any blanket policy in relation to the above considerations and will consider each case on its own merit. The above list outlines examples of unacceptable behaviour which may lead to the Council classing the applicant as a non-qualifying person and is therefore not exhaustive.

## The Choice Based Lettings Process

### 7. How are Applications Assessed?

Applications are assessed based on the information provided on the Keyways online application form and any other supporting evidence or details provided.

We assess this information against the:

- Qualifying person rules
- Keyways bands
- Property eligibility table

The Council may need to contact the applicant or seek independent medical advice for further information regarding their medical condition in order to assess what band to place the application in if the applicant has:

- a permanent physical disability
- a mobility problem,
- a medical condition, or
- a mental health condition

### Applications from Split and Non-Traditional Households

When we receive an application from a household where the main and joint applicants do not currently reside at the same address we will consider both applicants' current accommodation and whether it is reasonable to expect one applicant to reside with the other or vice versa. We will also consider the relationship between the applicants in reaching a decision on whether to accept the application.

The Council retains the right to determine the level of priority to be awarded to applications from split and non-traditional households and will consider each case on its own merits.

Whilst we will allow households without children to bid on family accommodation (e.g. two friends sharing), households with a dependent child/children will be given priority when bidding for and/or being allocated a house or a flat with its own garden.

## **Access to Children**

Households with access to children, but no children permanently residing with them, can be considered for properties up to a two bedroom flat. Household income may be assessed by the landlord of the property against their affordability criteria to ensure that rental payments will be affordable before an offer of a tenancy is made.

A household with a permanently resident child/children and access to an additional child/children will only be considered for properties that are suitable for the permanent household members.

Where joint custody arrangements or shared residency orders apply, we will consider the housing circumstances of both parents / guardians in determining whether the child has suitable accommodation with one party. If a child has no suitable accommodation with either parent then both parents can include the child on their application until such time as suitable housing for the child has been secured. At this time, the other parent's application will be reassessed accordingly.

Households that have applied to adopt or foster a child/children, are assessed as if they have assumed parental responsibility. Confirmation in writing will be requested from the County Council or relevant adoption agency.

## **Definition of a Child/Children and other Dependants**

For the purposes of the property Eligibility Table, households with a dependent child/children can bid for and be allocated a house or a flat.

A dependent child is defined as up to the age of 18 (or 19 if in full time education). Households containing other family members outside of the parent/child relationship will need to be assessed to establish if they are dependent.

## **Effective Date**

Initially this is set as the date that the applicant is accepted onto the Keyways register. However, if the application is moved into a higher Keyways band then the Effective Date will change to the date the application was placed into the higher band. If the application is placed into a lower Keyways band then the Effective Date will change to the date that the application was accepted onto the housing register unless in exceptional circumstances the Council decides this is inappropriate.

## **Deliberately Making Housing Circumstances Worse**

The Council will reduce the priority band if the applicant or any household member on the application has deliberately made their household's circumstances worse.

The band of an application will be reduced by one band if the applicant or any household member has, for example:

- abandoned previous accommodation
- moved to new accommodation that is worse than the previous accommodation without good reason
- sold a property or given notice on a tenancy without securing alternative accommodation first.

- recently accepted accommodation which is now being claimed as unsuitable
- refused multiple suitable housing solutions that have been offered by the Housing Options team

For an applicant to have deliberately worsened their circumstances there must be evidence that it would have been reasonable for the applicant to have remained in their original accommodation.

If the applicant or any household member has deliberately made the household's own housing circumstances worse the priority band of the application will be reduced by one Keyways band for 12 months from the date of the application.

## **8. How are Applications Processed?**

### **Application Processing Standards**

When we receive a Keyways application:

- we will contact the applicant within five working days of receiving the application to confirm if we need any supporting information
- we will contact the applicant to confirm that the application is active within 14 days of receiving the fully completed and signed application form and any relevant supporting information we require
- we will let the applicant know if we cannot register the application within 14 days of receiving the fully completed and signed application form. The delay may be due to us requiring additional information from the applicant or another relevant agency

### **Confirming the Applicants Details**

Applicants are required to provide all of the information electronically or submit copies to the Housing Options Team.

We will check all Keyways applications when they are received. We may make any enquiries we consider necessary with current and former landlords and other relevant agencies to confirm the applicant's details.

If we need to get further information from the applicant we may need to arrange a home visit or office interview. We will contact the applicant to arrange a convenient appointment.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide us with the supporting information we require in order to confirm the applicant's details. We will not process Keyways applications until we are provided with this information.

If after a 28-day period, applicants have not provided the information we have requested we will close the Keyways application.

### **Contacting Applicants**

Once we have made all necessary enquires and we have processed the Keyways application, we will write to the applicant to inform them:

- If the applicant does not qualify to join the housing register, the reasons for this and their right to a review of the decision
- that we have accepted the application and the applicant can start to place bids for properties advertised on Keyways
- the applicant's unique housing application number and log in details.
- the Keyways band we have placed the application in
- the date we placed the application in that band
- how to use Keyways to look for properties
- the terms of the Keyways scheme and details of the applicant's rights and responsibilities under the scheme.

## **Reviewing Banding**

Applicants in any band have the right to ask us to review their banding by contacting the Borough Council of Wellingborough Housing team.

## **9. Change of Circumstances**

Applicants must inform the Council if the circumstances of any person included in the Keyways application changes as this may affect the band in which the applicant has been placed.

Changes in circumstances can include but are not limited to:

- a change of address
- a change of contact telephone details
- people leaving the household or more coming into the household
- a change in a household member's health or wellbeing

If the Council discovers later that a change in circumstances has not been disclosed this could affect the Keyways application and/or the applicant could be in breach of their tenancy.

It remains the responsibility of the applicant to inform us of a change of circumstances that may affect the banding of the application. We may request that a new Keyways application is completed so that we can re-assess an application if the applicant's circumstances have changed significantly.

If there is a change in circumstances we may have to change the band of the application and the date the application was placed into that band. We will always write to inform the applicant of any changes we make to the banding of the application.

All Keyways applicants should contact the Housing team to advise of any change in circumstances. The Council aims to process changes of circumstances within 14 days of receiving all the information we require from the applicant and other relevant agencies.

## **10. Closing a Keyways Application**

Keyways applications will be closed if, for example:

- the applicant requests that it be closed
- the applicant has not replied to our review letter
- the applicant has been re-housed by a Keyways Landlord
- the applicant moved and did not inform us of their new address
- we contacted the applicant and they have not responded within 28 days
- the applicant gave false or misleading information
- the applicant has not given us all of the information we have asked for to support the application within 28 days unless a longer time is agreed by a member of the Housing team.

If we close an application, the applicant has the right to a review.

## **11. Inactive Applications**

Applicants that fail to place any bids within any consecutive 12 month period will have their application closed unless it is demonstrated that no suitable accommodation has become available within those 12 months or there was another exceptional circumstance that made placing bids impossible. Those with closed applications may reapply but their housing circumstances will be investigated in full before being accepted back on to the housing register.

## **12. False Statements and Withholding Information**

Any person who knowingly withholds any information about their housing application or deliberately provides false information to increase their banding group, will be guilty of committing a criminal offence, and could face a fine if convicted. Such an applicant would no longer qualify to join the Housing Register.

The Borough Council of Wellingborough may use agencies such as Experian to verify the details of a housing application.

## **13. Councillors, Board Members, Employees and their Close relatives**

Applicants who are related to a Councillor or a Member of the Board of an RP, or are a member, or related to a member of staff of the Council will be asked to declare this.

### **Property Types**

## **14. What type of property will I be considered for?**

The size and type of property we normally offer applicants will depend on the size of the household. Only permanently resident household members will be considered for this purpose.

In some instances the size of the bedrooms in a property may dictate that the property is not the right size for the type of household outlined in this matrix. As a result the households outlined in this matrix may not be considered for the property specified. Wherever possible the property advert will advise applicants when this is the case.

We will normally be able to offer a household accommodation with an extra bedroom if a member of the household requires a permanent overnight carer or a medical condition that means they require an extra room.

## 15. Adapted properties

Properties may be adapted to any of the levels below:

### Existing policy defines adapted property as:-



**A:** Property has full mobility adaptations



**B:** Property has a level access shower and possibly an adaptation from C,D and E



**C:** Property has a stair lift and possibly an adaptation from D and E

**D:** Property has an external ramp and possibly an adaptation from E

**E:** Property has minor adaptations eg grab rails, lever taps etc.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the property is let to a household that fully requires such adaptations. Where a property has been adapted to levels A, B and/or C the Council reserves the right to direct let to a household requiring such accommodation without advertising the property. This is in order to make best use of the social housing stock suitable for applicants with disabilities.

When a property adapted to levels A, B or C above becomes available, the following process will be followed:

- 1) Keyways applicants with a need for specific adaptation(s) (within the property eligibility table) will be identified by a filtering process
- 2) Applicants with a need for all adaptations that have a local connection to



the Borough of Wellingborough

- 3) Applicants with a need for part of the adaptations that have a local connection to the Borough of Wellingborough
- 4) Applicants with a need for all adaptations that have a local connection to the wider Keyways Partnership area
- 5) Applicants with a need for part of the adaptations that have a local connection to the wider Keyways Partnership area
- 6) If, after two advert cycles, no suitable applicant has been found, the property will be advertised for applicants with no need for adaptations in accordance with wider Housing Allocation Scheme.

## Adapted and Non Adapted Bungalows



**A:** Property has full mobility adaptations



**B:** Property has a level access shower and possibly an adaptation from C, D and E



**C:** Property has a stair lift and possibly an adaptation from D and E

**D:** Property has an external ramp and possibly an adaptation from E

**E:** Property has minor adaptations eg grab rails, lever taps etc.

*Where a bungalow adapted to any of the levels A-E becomes available, the following process will be followed:*

- 1) *Applicants over the age of 60 years with a need for the adaptations in the property*
- 2) *Applicants aged under 60 years with a need for the adaptations*

*If, after two advert cycles, no suitable applicant has been found, the following process will be followed:*

- 1) *Applicants over 60 years who do not need the adaptation but need ground floor accommodation*
- 2) *Applicants under 60 years who need ground floor accommodation*
- 3) *Applicants over 60 years who do not need ground floor accommodation*

**BUNGALOWS WITHOUT LIMITED ADAPTATIONS**

*Where bungalows without adaptations or minor adaptations (levels D and E) the following process will be followed;*

- 1) Applicants over 60 years with need for ground floor due to mobility issues (whether or adaptations are required)*
- 2) Applicants of any age with ground floor need (whether or not adaptations are required)*
- 3) Applicants over 60 years without ground floor need (whether or not adaptations are required)*

*If, after two advert cycles, no suitable applicant has been found, the property will be advertised for applicants with no need for adaptations in accordance with wider Housing Allocation Scheme.*

## **16. Family Accommodation**

The Property Eligibility Matrix in Appendix B outlines the number of bedrooms that a household with children can be considered for. This is dependent on the age and gender of the children, not just the number.

A household will only be able to bid on properties with the number of bedrooms required. This amendment will ensure efficiencies and better manage an applicant's expectations.

The following are considered able to share a bedroom under this policy:

- Children of the same gender are expected to share, however, if there is an age gap at least 10 years, (with the eldest being minimum of 16 years old) another room can be allocated.
- Children 10 or under are expected to share regardless of gender
- Disabled household members who require a non-resident overnight carer will be allowed an extra room

Households that have applied to adopt or foster a child/children, are assessed as if they have assumed parental responsibility. Confirmation in writing will be requested from the County Council or relevant adoption agency.

## **17. Sheltered Accommodation/Independent Living**

Sheltered/Independent Living accommodation is designed to help tenants remain independent with choice and control over their own lives. Tiered levels of support are available and emergency assistance is generally available 24 hours a day. Applicants must have a level of support to access this accommodation although it cannot be so high that it cannot be safely managed in this type of housing. The level of support is determined via an assessment, completed by the housing provider, allowing them to bid

on this type of accommodation. Some sheltered/independent living accommodation has a minimum age requirement attached to it.

## **Allocations**

### **18. How Are Applicants Selected For Allocation?**

A shortlist of applicants who have bid for a property is automatically created once the advertising period has ended.

The shortlist is undertaken as follows:

1. The Keyways Band
2. The date applications were placed in the Band
3. Whether the household has a local connection to the Borough of Wellingborough.

For all properties in the Borough of Wellingborough advertised on Keyways preference is given to applicants that have a local connection to the Borough of Wellingborough as follows:-

1) Properties in the town of Wellingborough:

- i) Bands A, B, C and D: connection with the Borough of Wellingborough
- ii) Bands A, B, C and D: connection with Corby and Kettering

2) Properties in the Parishes of the Borough of Wellingborough:

- i) Bands A, B, C, D connection with that Parish
- ii) Bands A, B, C, D connection with a Parish Council Area
- iii) Bands A, B, C, D connection with Wellingborough town
- iv) Band E connection to Parish, then Parish Council Area

1) Rural Exceptions Site

- i) Bands A,B,C,D,E connection with that Parish
- ii) Bands A,B,C,D,E connection with an Parish Council Area
- iii) Bands A,B,C,D connection with Wellingborough town

Definitions of Parish Council Areas can be found in Appendix 4 to this Allocation Policy.

If an applicant(s) is made an offer of accommodation by a Keyways Landlord (further to successfully passing verification and affordability checks) they will be given the opportunity to view the property.

Whilst applicants are under consideration for a property (i.e. matched to a property) they will be bypassed (skipped) for all other properties on which they place or have placed bids.

### **19. Refusals**

Where an offer of accommodation is refused by an applicant the offer will pass to the next suitable applicant from the property shortlist.

Applicants in Band A who are accepted as statutory homeless will be entitled to one offer of suitable accommodation of any tenure. If they refuse an offer of suitable accommodation through Keyways their application will be closed. If an applicant bids for and is successfully matched with a property, this will constitute their only and final offer.

All other applicants in Band A and all applicants in other bands can have two offers of accommodation that are reasonable and suitable in any 12 month period. After this their application will be closed and a new application will only be taken after a further 12 month period.

Applicants can request a review of this decision if there has been a significant change in their circumstances during this 12 month period which adversely affects the household.

If a Keyways Landlord rejects a nominated applicant for a property, the Landlord will contact them directly.

## 20. Offers

If applicants are successful with a bid they will be contacted by the Keyways Landlord that owns the property with details of a potential offer. Each Keyways Landlord may have a different process that they follow.

All Keyways Landlords reserve the right to:

- carry out checks on the information the applicants have provided as part of the Keyways application. Usual checks include whether the applicants have rent arrears or criminal convictions. If the applicants circumstances have changed and they did not inform us of the change(s), they may not receive an offer until the changes have been fully assessed
- withdraw an offer if checks reveal issues that are not included in the Keyways application
- withdraw an offer if a notice to vacate a property is withdrawn or the property becomes unavailable for letting
- carry out a financial assessment of the household to establish if the rental payments will be affordable
- withdraw an offer if, following a financial assessment, it is established that the household cannot afford the required rental payments.
- carry out a property inspection of the household's current home.

For Band A statutory homeless applicants who successfully bid for a property, this will constitute their only and final offer of accommodation to end the Council's duty to them under the homeless legislation.

### **Direct Offers**

In certain circumstances the Borough Council of Wellingborough may or take from Registered Providers direct offers of particular accommodation; for example, where a person on the Housing Register has been pre-matched to a property to prevent under-occupying or is facilitating a move into more suitable accommodation.

A direct offer of accommodation is also an allocation for the purpose of this Policy. All properties

subject to a direct let will need to be advertised on Keyways in accordance with section 27 of the policy and will need to explicitly state that the property is a direct let.

All recipients of a direct let will need to be registered on Keyways in order to be eligible for the allocation.

## 21. Local Lettings Policies

The Council may from time to time agree a local lettings policy for specific areas or developments to reflect local circumstances.

Any local lettings policies in place will be advertised along with the property advert so that applicants can make an informed choice as to whether they wish to place a bid on that property or not.

Appendix 3 provides further details on our Local Lettings Policy.

### What are the Bands?

We will categorise Keyways applications into one of five bands which reflects the level of priority for housing. These bands are A, B, C, D and E. Applications in Band A have the highest level of priority.

## 22. Band A

We will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following criteria: -

Criteria
<p><b>Cannot be Discharged from Hospital</b> You or a member of your household cannot be discharged from hospital or rehabilitation centre because you have no accommodation, or your current accommodation has been deemed hazardous to your health and the situation cannot be rectified for you or them to continue to live there and you are accepted by the Borough Council of Wellingborough as being able to sustain your own independent accommodation (with or without tenancy support).</p>
<p><b>Severe Medical Condition</b> You or a member of your household's health is so severely affected by your current accommodation that it is life threatening or likely to become life threatening, and the condition of the property cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time.</p>
<p><b>Armed Forces</b> Member of the Armed forces with a reasonable preference and an urgent housing need</p>
<p><b>Risk of Harm</b> You or a member of your household is at serious risk of harm or severe emotional or physical trauma resulting from violence or threats of violence or physical, emotional or sexual abuse or other serious trauma in the current accommodation and need to</p>

relocate to ensure your safety

**Category 1 Hazard**

You are a private sector tenant or owner occupier, and the Borough Council of Wellingborough has determined that your current accommodation poses a Category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme, the problem cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time i.e. 6 months, and by continuing to live there poses a significant risk to health e.g. as a result of severe damp with mould growth, structural defects or you are lacking other basic facilities e.g. bathroom, kitchen, inside toilet, hot and cold water supply.

**Demolition**

You need to move because your home is about to be demolished or redeveloped.

**Extensive Adaptations**

The Borough Council of Wellingborough has assessed that you require extensive adaptations to your home (to Keyways standards A, B or C, on medical grounds), and your circumstances will be resolved by moving to adapted accommodation.

**Statutory Homeless**

The Borough Council of Wellingborough has accepted a main homeless duty to you under S193 (2) when the S189B Relief duty has come to an end because you have been assessed as in priority need and unintentionally homeless.

Applicants will have their applications set to auto bid and will no longer receive choice on Keyways.

Applicants will receive one offer only of a suitable property in the private or social rented sector.

**Priority Adapted Property**

You are a social rented tenant willing to transfer to suitable non-adapted accommodation and are releasing a house, flat, or bungalow which is adapted to Keyways standard A, B, or C.

Where existing adaptations will not offer any housing solution, you will not be a priority, for example, if a level access shower is fitted in a first floor flat.

**Priority Sheltered**

You are a social rented tenant living in sheltered, supported or assisted living accommodation and you have a medical condition which is seriously adversely affected by your current accommodation, which would be resolved by a move to sheltered accommodation.

**Supported Move On**

You are ready to move on from supported accommodation in the Keyways Partnership area and have been accepted as ready for independent living by a relevant support provider.

This criterion includes care leavers who are ready to move to independent accommodation and have supporting evidence to this effect and the Council is satisfied they are genuinely able to sustain a tenancy on their own.

In addition to those criteria above, in exceptional circumstances we may also award Band A status to other emergency circumstances not covered in the criteria above. In such rare circumstances therefore, Band A status may be awarded if you have an emergency housing need to move determined by the Borough Council of Wellingborough and authorised by a senior officer.

### **Statutory Homeless Final Offers**

The Localism Act 2011 permits the Borough Council of Wellingborough to end its homelessness duty by providing one offer of a suitable property of any tenure to accepted statutory homeless households. This could include a private rented sector offer.

A household waiting for a decision on their homeless application will remain in the band which best suits their need until a decision is made.

If accepted as statutory homeless, applicants will be placed into Band A for a period of 4 weeks and one offer of suitable accommodation will be made to them to end the homeless duty. Applicants will have their applications set to auto bid from the date that the main homeless decision is made and they are placed in Band A.

The Council will continue to look at options within the private rented sector and applicants will be expected to consider all suitable offers of accommodation in the social, affordable and private rented sector

If an applicant believes any final offer to be unsuitable, they are entitled to ask for a review. Any applicant considering refusing a final offer should first discuss this with a Housing Options Advisor.

When reviewing a final offer, the Council will check that:

- The property is the right size and type for the household
- The property is safe for the household to live in
- The property is affordable
- Consideration has been given to the location of the property
- Consideration has been given to any special needs the household has
- Consideration is given to any other relevant circumstances that the applicant has informed us of before we made a decision
- All legislation has been complied with

All households are expected to adhere to their tenancy conditions; however, if any private rented sector offer tenancy comes to an end within 2 years of the date in which the offer is accepted, and the applicant has lost the accommodation through no fault of their own, then the local authority's original homelessness duty will remain.

### **Additional Support for Band A Applicants**

If a final offer of suitable accommodation has been made to fulfil the S193 (2) main homeless duty and this offer has been refused by an applicant, then the council has discharged its duty and is under no obligation to make any further offer of accommodation. You will be required to move out of any temporary accommodation provided through the council; however the council will still continue to provide you with housing advice.

If you have refused your final offer of accommodation you will not qualify for the housing register for a period of 12 months. You will not have a reapplication to the register considered for a period of 12 months from the date of the non-qualifying decision.

## 23 Band B

We will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following criteria: -

<b>Criteria</b>
<p><b>Need Two or more additional bedrooms</b>            You need two or more bedrooms than your current accommodation provides because you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children of different genders (one child must be at least 10 years old) sharing a bedroom, or</li> <li>• Children of the same gender with an age difference of 10 years (one child must be at least 16 years old) or more sharing a bedroom, or</li> <li>• Three or more children sharing a bedroom, or</li> <li>• You are sharing a bedroom with your child and there is no other bedroom available for you to use</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sole Parental Responsibility</b>            You have sole parental responsibility of a child/children living in the UK or Republic of Ireland who is/are unable to live with you currently because of your accommodation</p>
<p><b>Serious Permanent Medical</b>            You or a member of your household has a permanent medical condition which is seriously adversely affected by your current accommodation, but you/they are not housebound or your/their life is not at risk due to your current housing, but your housing conditions directly contribute to causing serious ill health.</p>
<p><b>Essential Substantial Care</b>            You or a member of your household need to give or receive essential care and support that is substantial and ongoing and that cannot be provided from, or in, your current accommodation.</p> <p>Substantial ongoing care and support, for example, a regular provision for a minimum of 3 times per week.</p> <p>Applicants must be either in receipt of carers allowance and /or have a carer who is in receipt of Carers Allowance and /or applicants must have had an assessment by social services or another similar support service so it can be established if that care or support is substantial.</p>
<p><b>Financial Hardship</b>            You or a member of your household need to take up or continue permanent employment of 16 hours or more per week, your travel costs are causing you financial hardship and/or you do not live within a reasonable commuting distance:</p>



and/or

You are in extreme financial hardship which is resulting in you being unable to afford your housing costs. This will be assessed by an independent financial advice agency

**Homelessness Prevention or Relief Duty**

You have been interviewed by the council housing options team and assessed as being owed either the prevention or relief homeless duty as defined in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 because you are, or believed to be, in priority need, have a local connection to the borough of Wellingborough and are deemed not to have worsened your housing circumstances.

Applicants will have their applications set to autobid and will no longer receive choice on Keyways.

**Supported Move On**

You are ready to move on from supported accommodation in the Keyways Partnership area and have been accepted as ready for independent living by a relevant support provider.

This criterion includes care leavers who are ready to move to independent accommodation, and have supporting evidence to this effect and the Council is satisfied they are genuinely able to sustain a tenancy on their own.

**Under-Occupying by two or more bedrooms**

You are under occupying socially rented accommodation (comprising 2 bedrooms or more) within the Keyways partnership area, by one, two or more bedrooms and you wish to downsize.

**Successor**

You are a successor or non-statutory successor of social rented accommodation, approved for an offer of alternative suitable accommodation (12 month time limit)

**Harassment/Abuse/Threats of violence**

Sustained harassment, violence or abuse from others (not resident in the property) targeted at a member of the household. Agency supporting evidence will be required.

**Right to Move**

You are a social rented tenant with a job offer for a permanent job in the Borough and you would suffer financial hardship if you were unable to take up the position.

**24 Band C**

We will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following criteria: -

**Criteria**

**Need one more additional bedroom**

You one more bedroom than your current accommodation provides because you have:

- Children of different genders (one child must be at least 10 years old) sharing a bedroom, or
- Children of the same gender with an age difference of 10 years (one child must be at least 16 years old) or more sharing a bedroom, or
- Three or more children sharing a bedroom, or
- You are sharing a bedroom with your child and there is no other bedroom available for you to use

### **Non-statutory homeless**

You are homeless but assessed as having no priority need under the homelessness legislation or have given no reason to believe that you have a priority need. However you are owed a prevention or relief duty under the homelessness reduction act, have a local connection to the borough of Wellingborough and are deemed not to have worsened your housing circumstances.

Applicants will have their applications set to autobid and will no longer receive choice on Keyways.

### **Notice to Vacate (Requiring non-family accommodation)**

Your current landlord has served legal notice requiring you to leave your accommodation for a reason or situation which is not caused by you or a member of your household, and the tenancy cannot be prevented from ending. This banding will be reviewed after 6 months and withdrawn if the landlord has not issued legal proceedings as necessary or otherwise taken steps to require the applicant to leave the accommodation.

### **Family Sharing**

You are a household with at least one dependent or a pregnant woman with a confirmed due date, sharing accommodation with your family or another household.

### **Foster Care**

You are a foster carer approved by Northamptonshire County Council and your housing prevents you from being able to start, or continue to provide foster care.

### **Non-Urgent Medical**

You or a member of your household has a non-urgent medical condition which is made worse by your current accommodation.

### **Ongoing Care**

You or a member of your household need to give or receive essential care and support that is ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in, your current accommodation.

Essential care and / or support does not have to be substantial in that applicants may not have a carer/be in receipt of Carers Allowance or have Social Services involvement. Essential care may include practical and/or emotional support that is essential to the physical or mental wellbeing of the person receiving the care/support. Evidence must be submitted to support this.

This will include vulnerable applicants who live in a supportive home environment which is not sustainable in the medium to long term (e.g. elderly parents who are carers)

## 25. Band D

We will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following criteria : -

Criteria
<b>Seeking Sheltered</b> You are eligible to be considered for, and seeking, sheltered, supported or assisted living accommodation.
<b>Awaiting a Decision or Offer</b> You have made a homeless application to the local authority and are awaiting a decision or private rented sector offer.

## 26. Band E

Band E
You are adequately housed with a village local connection for a village Exceptions Site.

Where an applicant's circumstances do not fit the criteria outlined in any of the four bands the Housing Manager will decide on the most appropriate band to place an application based on the household's circumstances.

## Bidding

### 27. The Bidding Process

Each Keyways Landlord is responsible for advertising their properties on Keyways.

Each property will be advertised with the criteria for eligibility and details of the property as follows;-

- Number of bedrooms and the eligible household size for the property
- Letting restrictions, e.g. local connection to a parish where there is a formal planning agreement, no pets etc.
- Age restrictions
- Details of tenancy type e.g., Fixed Term, Assured, Affordable Rental product etc.
- Location
- Name of Keyways Landlord
- Rental payment cycle and details of any other charges.
- Any other available information such as the type of heating adaptations, number of steps leading to the property

If an applicant does not meet the criteria for a property, they will not be able to place a bid on that property.

## **Grouped Property Advertisements**

At times, we will group some properties together and advertise them with one reference number on Keyways. In these cases, applicants only have to express an interest once to cover all the properties within the group.

Examples of when we may do this include when we have:

- a new development which include a number of the same size and type of properties.
- an existing scheme where there are a number of empty properties of the same size and type.

## **Reviews**

### **28. The Applicant's Right to a Review**

The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, gives applicants the right to ask for a review if we decide not to allow the applicant to join the Keyways register or make any decision that affects their housing application.

The applicant, or the applicant's representative, must make a request to the Principal Housing Manager at the Borough Council of Wellingborough in writing within 21 days of receiving a written decision. The applicant, or the applicant's representative, may give the reasons for requesting a review in person, if it is difficult to tell us these reasons in writing.

The Council will review the decision and consider the reasons for the review being requested. The review decision will be based on the known facts at the time of the review. In some cases, the Council may need to request more information from the applicant in order to make a decision. The applicant will be provided with written confirmation of the decision within eight weeks of the request for the review.

### **29. To Request a Review of the Landlords Decision to Refuse an Offer of a Tenancy**

In some circumstances Keyways landlords may refuse applicants the offer of a tenancy. If an applicant wishes for this decision to be reviewed the applicant or the applicant's representative must make the request in writing direct to the given Keyways landlord within 21 days of receiving their written decision.

### **30. Reviews of the Keyways Housing Register**

The Council will carry out a review of applicants in all bands every year to ensure that :

- the number of applicants on the register reflects the immediate needs for social housing
- applicants still want to stay on the register
- applicants details are accurate and up-to-date.

Those applicants in Band A will have their application reviewed regularly. If the applicant has not bid for suitable vacancies that are available the Council may place bids on the applicant's behalf and/or place the application in a lower band.

## **Getting It Right**

### **31 Compliments and Comments.**

Applicants who wish to make a compliment or comment about Keyways or the Borough Council of Wellingborough can do this writing to the Council. Applicants who wish to make a compliment or comment about any partner Keyways landlord should contact them directly.

### **32. Complaints against the Borough Council of Wellingborough**

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the service they have received from the Borough Council of Wellingborough can contact us and we will seek to resolve the problem immediately. You can contact us in the following ways:

- Visiting [www.wellingborough.gov.uk](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk) and clicking on "Say" to give us feedback
- Telephoning 01933 229777
- Visiting one of our offices to talk to someone, or taking a customer survey at one of the touch panels in our receptions
- Writing to us or completing a form available in our offices and sending it to:

Organisational Development  
Borough Council of Wellingborough  
Swanspool House,  
Doddington Road  
Wellingborough  
NN8 1BP

Applicants who telephone or visit us are advised to take note of the names of the people they speak to.

### **33. Complaints against Keyways Landlords**

Applicants who feel that they have been treated unfairly or have not been given a professional service by any Keyways Landlords should complain directly to them. All the Keyways Landlords have their own formal complaints policies and procedures.

Applicants who have followed the relevant Landlords complaints procedures but remain unsatisfied with the outcome can contact the Local Government Ombudsman:

Local Government Ombudsman:  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614  
Fax: 024 7682 0001  
Or text call back on: 0762 480 3014

**OR**

The Independent Housing Ombudsman for complaints about Registered Providers (RPs):

Housing Ombudsman Service  
81 Aldwych  
London WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

If you would like more information in your language, in large print, on tape or in Braille, please contact Housing Options at the address or telephone number shown in this document.

Si desea recibir más información en su lengua, en un tamaño de fuente mayor, en casete o en Braille, póngase en contacto con nosotros en la dirección o mediante el número de teléfono que aparecen en este documento.

Se desiderate ulteriori informazioni nella vostra lingua, a caratteri grandi, su cassetta, o in Braille, siete pregati di contattarci all'indirizzo o al numero di telefono indicati sul presente documento.

Se você gostar de mais informação em sua própria língua, a cópia grande, na fita adesiva, ou em braille contata-nos por favor no endereço ou no número de telefone mostrado neste original.

আপনি যদি নিজের ভাষায়, বড় হরফে, টেপ বা ব্রেইলে আরও তথ্য জানতে চান তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করবেন। এই কাগজে আমাদের ঠিকানা ও টেলিফোন নম্বর দেওয়া আছে।

如果你需要更多详情, 希望有中文版、大字体印刷件、磁带录音或盲文版, 请按本文件中提供的地址和电话号码与我们联系。

اگر آپ کو مزید معلومات اپنی زبان میں، بڑے حروفوں میں، یا آواز کی صورت میں ٹیپ پر یا بریل میں درکار ہیں تو اس دستاویز میں دیئے گئے پتے یا ٹیلی فون نمبر پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Jeżeli chcesz otrzymać więcej informacji w swoim języku ojczystym, dużym drukiem, na taśmie lub alfabetem Braille, proszę skontaktować się z nami pod adresem lub numerem telefonu podanym w tym dokumencie.

## Contact: Housing Options Team

Borough Council of Wellingborough  
Tithe Barn Road  
Wellingborough  
Northamptonshire  
NN8 1BL

TEL: 01933 229 777  
housingoptions@wellingborough.gov.uk

## Appendix 1

### Definitions

The words printed in bold appear throughout this document and mean the following:

<b>Accredited Landlord</b>	A private landlord that has been accredited by the East Midlands Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
<b>Affordable Rent</b>	Rented housing let by Registered Providers to households who are eligible. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.
<b>Allocation Policy</b>	This explains the rules that determine how Borough Council of Wellingborough and the Keyways Landlords in Wellingborough allocate properties. The policy also outlines other housing options.
<b>Applicant</b>	A person who applies to go on the Keyways register.
<b>Bid</b>	The term used when an applicant expresses an interest in a property advertised on Keyways
<b>Bypassing</b>	The term used when a Keyways Landlord rejects an applicant for a property because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant is not suitable, or</li> <li>• The property would not meet the applicant's needs.</li> </ul>

<b>Choice-based lettings</b>	A scheme like Keyways that gives all applicants a greater degree of choice of home.
<b>Decant</b>	The term used to describe the process whereby a social housing tenant has to temporarily move out of their home into another property owned by their landlord to enable the landlord to complete essential repairs/maintenance to the property.
<b>Eligibility</b>	The term used to describe factors that match an applicant to a property. For example, the size of your household and the number of bed spaces in a property.
<b>Fixed Term Tenancy</b>	Tenancies granted by Registered Providers to new housing tenants that are not lifetime tenancies but that are for a fixed length of time.
<b>Habitual residence test</b>	The test looks at whether the applicant's residence in the United Kingdom is of a settled nature. For example, it looks at the length and continuity of residence, work/work prospects or family ties.
<b>Intermediate rent and Affordable Housing</b>	Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents. These can include shared equity products (e.g. HomeBuy / Shared Ownership), and other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent (excludes low cost sale).
<b>Keyways Nomination Agreement</b>	An agreement that the Borough Council of Wellingborough has with some Registered Providers that stipulates the proportion of lettings to be made through the Keyways Allocation Scheme
<b>Mutual exchange</b>	A swap of accommodation between housing tenants (excluding private rented) that relies on each tenant moving permanently into the other persons/tenants property.
<b>Non-statutorily homeless</b>	A term that refers to homeless people or households to whom local housing authorities do not have a duty to make an offer of permanent housing.
<b>Nomination</b>	The term used when a local housing authority provides, from its housing register, the name and details of an applicant to a landlord for an offer of housing.
<b>Property leased to a support agency</b>	This is a property that is owned by a Keyways Landlord but is managed by a support agency. As a result the re-letting of this property is the responsibility of the support agency and not the Keyways Landlord.
<b>Rechargeable repairs</b>	This is damage caused by a tenant to a property during a tenancy for which the tenant is directly and/or indirectly responsible.
<b>Registered Provider (RP)</b>	A housing association or a not-for-profit company registered by the Homes and Communities Agency to provide housing.
<b>Qualifying Person</b>	A local housing authority can decide what classes of persons are, or are not, qualifying persons for joining the Keyways Register. Non qualifying persons include people with no housing need, and those that have demonstrated previous unacceptable behaviour.
<b>Rights of Residence Directive</b>	This directive allows citizens from the European Economic Area who are not economically active to live in another member country. A condition of this is that the citizen should have enough resources to avoid relying on the benefits system of the member country.
<b>Shortlist</b>	A list of applicants that have expressed an interest in a particular



	property advertised on Keyways.
<b>Social housing</b>	Social housing is to provide accommodation that is affordable to people on low incomes.
<b>Statutorily homeless</b>	A term that refers to people or families to whom a local housing authority have a duty to make a permanent offer of housing.
<b>Succession of tenancy</b>	When a tenant dies, the tenancy will automatically pass to any joint tenants, a partner or a close member of the of the tenant's family as long as they were living with the tenant at the time of death and for at least 12 months before, and as long has the tenancy hasn't been succeeded already. Anyone who takes over the tenancy in this way is called a successor.

## Appendix 2 – Property Eligibility Table

Priority will be given within a Band to those who require all the bedrooms the property can offer over and above those who would be deemed as under- occupying

Please note:															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a household's circumstances do not fit any of the criteria outlined in this matrix, the Housing Options Officer will decide what size and type of property the household is eligible for. This may include, for example, applicants who are only eligible for properties in very short supply such as larger houses and 3 bedroom flats</li> <li>• The term 'Household' refers to a single adult or couple.</li> <li>• The term 'Couple' includes same sex couples.</li> <li>• Sheltered accommodation will normally be offered to households over 60 (or over 55 in some circumstances).</li> <li>• Households expecting their first child are eligible to place bids on 2 bedroom properties.</li> </ul>	Bedsit	1 bedroom bungalow	1 bedroom flat	1 bedroom house	2 bedroom bungalow	2 bedroom flat	2 bedroom house	3 bedroom bungalow	3 bedroom flat/maisonette	3 bedroom house	3 bedroom parlour house	4 bedroom house	4 bedroom flat/maisonette	5 bedroom house	
Single person	X	X	X	X											
Couple without children	X	X	X	X											
Household expecting first child					X	X	X								
Household with 1 child					X	X	X								
Household with 2 children					X	X	X								
Household with 3 children								X	X	X	X**				
Household with 4 children								X	X	X	X**	X**	X**	***	
Household with 5 or more children											X	X	X	***	

\* A financial assessment will be carried out by the landlord to ensure that rental payments will be affordable before an offer of a tenancy is made.

\*\* Working age households will only be offered properties of this size if the children cannot share rooms (see table below). A financial assessment will be carried out by the landlord to ensure that rental payments will be affordable before an offer of a tenancy is made.

\*\*\* Due to the extremely limited number of 5 bedroom properties, you will be invited to discuss your housing circumstances with the Housing Service if you require a property of this size or more.

### **WHO CAN SHARE A ROOM?**

- Children of the same gender are expected to share, however, if there is an age gap at least 10 years, (with the eldest being minimum of 16 years old) another room can be allocated.
- Children 10 or under are expected to share regardless of gender
- Disabled household members who require a non-resident overnight carer will be allowed an extra room

## **Appendix 3**

### **ACCESS STRATEGY FOR THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH**

#### **1. Equality and Diversity**

The Borough Council of Wellingborough their partner Registered Providers (RPs) are committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services. We aim to deliver quality services without prejudice and discrimination to meet the needs of all the community, regardless of age, cultural or ethnic background, disability, gender, marital status, religious or political persuasion or sexual orientation.

To view Borough Council of Wellingborough's Equality and Diversity Strategy please visit our website or contact Borough Council of Wellingborough on 01933 229777. An Action Plan has been developed as a result of the Equalities Impact Assessment that has been undertaken.

Those providing support will ensure that the principles of equal opportunity are adhered to, in that equal access to support will be provided according to the individual's needs. We recognise that different people have different needs and we will consider this appropriately when providing support to ensure that the person is able to fully participate within the process

So that we can monitor performance in dealing with applications, we will collect appropriate information from the application forms. We ask that all applicants help us by providing the necessary details. The information collected will be used to keep the policy under review and will be kept in the strictest of confidence and in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

#### **2. Choice Based Lettings:**

CBL places new demands on customers who need to be more proactive than was the case under previous allocation systems. We recognise that some customers may find using CBL more difficult than others for a variety of reasons. It is our aim as a Council to ensure that everyone who wants to use the CBL system is able to do so regardless of their circumstances.

At the Borough Council of Wellingborough we want to ensure that vulnerable people:

- Receive sufficient support to use the CBL system
- Are empowered to engage effectively with the CBL system
- Achieve the same positive outcomes as non-vulnerable people who use the CBL system.

The Council will support customers by:

- Translation of documents
- Providing documents in an alternative format or large print
- Posting a newsletter out to housebound applicants; this can include vacancies in Wellingborough only or in the whole of the Keyways area
- Enabling customers to appoint an advocate
- Enabling family or friends to bid on behalf of an applicant
- Enabling partner organisations or other stakeholders to assist applicants to bid
- Auto bid facility
- Council staff bidding on behalf of a customer
- Support with bidding in the reception areas from trained staff
- Telephone support from staff

### **3. Non-Qualifying Persons:**

A local housing authority can decide to treat an applicant as a non-qualifying person (i.e. to exclude them from accessing the waiting list) because of serious unacceptable behavior under s.160ZA(7) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

The Secretary of State can make amendments and prescribe classes of persons that the Council can, or cannot, class as qualifying, and can also prescribe criteria that the Council is not able to use. Currently people who we consider to have behaved in an unacceptable way will not qualify to access the Borough Council of Wellingborough's Housing Register.

The Borough Council of Wellingborough does not operate any blanket policy to exclude from the Housing Register applicants with debt, a history of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity. Each application is considered on its own merits.

There are some circumstances in which applicants to the Housing Register will require further consideration to establish whether or not they should be considered as a qualifying person for an allocation of social housing:

- Those with outstanding recoverable housing related debt
- Those found guilty of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity
- Those that have demonstrated other forms of unacceptable behaviour towards staff of any Keyways partner

#### **Outstanding Recoverable any Housing Related Debt**

When deciding whether to exclude an applicant for any outstanding housing debt, the following is taken into account:

- The amount outstanding
- Whether a repayment agreement has been established
- Whether a repayment agreement has been adhered to
- For how long a repayment agreement has been adhered to
- The regularity of payments made towards clearly the debt
- The total amount cleared off the initial debt
- The reason the debt accrued
- Who was responsible for incurring the debt?
- Whether the debt is still legally recoverable
- Whether any of the Community Contribution criteria set out in the Local Lettings Policy apply.

#### **Anti-Social Behaviour or Criminal Activity**

When deciding whether to exclude an applicant for anti-social behaviour or criminal activity, the following is taken into account:

- The nature of the ASB / crime
- When the ASB / offence occurred
- Where the ASB / offence occurred
- Links between ASB / criminal behaviour and other support needs
- Whether the ASB / offending behaviour (or causal factors) have been addressed

- Whether the applicant is engaged with, or managed by, support agencies to address negative behaviours
- The impact of exclusion on wider community objectives (e.g. reducing offending)
- Who perpetrated the antisocial behaviour / offence and whether they are still a member of the household
- Whether any of the Community Contribution criteria set out in the Local Lettings Policy apply.

#### **4. Local Lettings Policy**

The Housing Act 1996 (amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), requires local authorities to have a written policy that determines the priorities and the procedures to be followed in letting housing. Whilst reasonable preference must be given to defined groups, section 167(2E) s.16(3)] enables authorities to let properties to people of a particular description where there is a clear need for the approach. This includes people who play a part in making their neighbourhood a good place to live, work and play. The Council believes such people should be allocated social housing in order to continue contributing to sustaining local communities in the area in which they contribute.

Local Lettings Policies will be used on new developments in the Borough and on existing developments where a management issue has been identified.

Some of the following criteria may be taken into account when devising Local Lettings Policies:

- A current positive residence history,
- A contribution to the Borough's economic growth, or another valuable contribution in their community,
- Households in employment
- Applicants in training or education
- Ex-service personnel
- Registered foster carers

There may be cases where due to age or ill health an applicant cannot meet the full criteria. Such cases will be considered on an individual basis.

## Appendix 4 - Local Connection in Rural Settlements – Civil Parish Areas

<b>Sywell</b> Ecton Mears Ashby Hardwick	<b>Mears Ashby</b> Hardwick Sywell Ecton Wilby Earls Barton
<b>Ecton</b> Sywell Mears Ashby Earls Barton	<b>Earls Barton</b> Ecton Grendon Mears Ashby Wilby Gt Doddington
<b>Finedon</b> Little Harrowden Great Harrowden	<b>Isham</b> Finedon Little Harrowden Orlingbury
<b>Great Harrowden</b> Little Harrowden Finedon Hardwick	<b>Little Harrowden</b> Great Harrowden Isham Finedon Hardwick Orlingbury
<b>Hardwick</b> Little Harrowden Great Harrowden Sywell Mears Ashby	<b>Orlingbury</b> Little Harrowden Isham Sywell Hardwick
<b>Wollaston</b> Bozeat Grendon Strixton Gt Doddington Irchesters	<b>Bozeat</b> Easton Maudit Strixton Grendon Wollaston
<b>Strixton</b> Grendon Wollaston Bozeat	<b>Great Doddington</b> Earls Barton Wilby Grendon Wollaston Irchesters
<b>Irchesters</b> Great Doddington Wollaston	<b>Easton Maudit</b> Grendon Strixton Bozeat
<b>Grendon</b> Earls Barton Great Doddington Wollaston Strixton Easton Maudit Bozeat	<b>Wilby</b> Mears Ashby Earls Barton Great Doddington

This will be used to determine local connection to Civil Parish Areas in line with the Allocations Policy.

## **Appendix 5**

### **DATA PROTECTION, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND INFORMATION SHARING**

- Your data will be used in order to process your application to join Keyways
- Your data will only be used to process your application to join Keyways
- The data we collect is only that which we require to process your application to join Keyways
- We will ensure that our records are accurate
- We will retain data only for as long as we are legally required to do so
- We will allow you to access the data we hold about you as prescribed by law (see below)
- Your data will be kept securely
- Your data will not be stored outside the Keyways partnership

You have the right to access the personal information we hold about you. We will use the information that you provide to enable us to band your application correctly. We may also use the information for issues of child protection, public protection and for preventing and detecting fraud and other criminal offences. This includes information we hold as paper and electronic records. If you would like to access your file, please contact the Borough Council of Wellingborough customer services on 01933 229777 for an application form.