

# Housing Placements Policy

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## 1.0 Aims of Policy

- 1.1. This policy relates to the allocation of temporary accommodation (Part 7 Housing Act 1996), private sector offers, rent deposits and housing for those with no recourse to public funds.

## 2.0 Who is this policy for?

- 2.1 Council officers involved in the placement of households in accommodation.
- 2.2 This document is primarily for use to guide officers making placements in temporary accommodation; the same principals will apply for the use of Private Sector Offers, Rent Deposits and housing for those with no recourse to public funds.

## 3.0 Policy statements

- 3.1 Lambeth Council is committed to securing suitable temporary accommodation for homeless households where this is required under section 188 or section 193 of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Our aim is to provide accommodation within Lambeth wherever possible, but this is not always achievable.
- 3.2 Where a household needs to be moved away from a particular location for safety reasons or reasons relating to domestic abuse, this will always be taken into account when deciding on temporary accommodation allocation.
- 3.3 In assessing the allocation of accommodation the Council will comply with the relevant legislation, associated case law and give regard to the Homelessness Code of Guidance.
- 3.4 Consideration will be given as to whether the applicant can afford the housing without being deprived of basic essentials such as food, clothing, heating, transport and other essentials; and in so doing will take account of costs resulting from the location of the accommodation.
- 3.5 It should be noted that these are guidelines only and the individual circumstances of each case, including the time likely to be spent in the accommodation, must always be taken into account when determining the suitability of an offer of temporary accommodation.
- 3.6 All placements are subject to a suitability assessment to determine the type and location of temporary accommodation that should be offered. In an emergency situation, a homeless household can be placed in temporary accommodation in any location where there is availability on that day. If is deemed unsuitable then they will be given priority to be transferred to alternative temporary accommodation.

## Prioritisation

- 3.7 **Group A: Temporary Accommodation<sup>1</sup> in the borough of Lambeth.** Households in this group will be prioritised for Accommodation in Lambeth:
  - Households subject to a Child Protection plan who the relevant Heads of Service in Children's Social Care and Housing agree need to live within Lambeth to prevent likelihood of significant harm to a child.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes temporary accommodation; private sector placements; accommodation offered though the rent deposit scheme and housing for households with no recourse to public funds.

- Households containing one child (or more) who has a Statement of Special Educational Needs who are receiving education or educational support at a local school in Lambeth and where a change to another school or learning establishment would be detrimental to their continuing development.
- Households with significant disabilities or medical needs, including mental health, where their health or welfare may be significantly adversely affected by moving out of the borough, as assessed by the Council's Housing Medical Adviser. For example, this may include the following:
  - The applicant needs to live in a particular locality to give or receive care,
  - The applicant is in receipt of a significant care package or receiving specialist healthcare that cannot be transferred elsewhere,
  - The applicant has a severe and enduring mental health problem where a transfer of care would severely impact on the ability to engage with treatment.

**3.8 Group B: Temporary Accommodation within the Local Area.** The Local Area will include Lambeth (LBL) and adjacent boroughs to LBL or within approximately thirty minutes travelling time on public transport from any LBL boundary (Travelling time on public transport will be determined by the TFL website). Adjacent boroughs are: Southwark, Lewisham, Bromley, Croydon, Wandsworth, Merton and Sutton. The following will be prioritised for accommodation in the Local Area:

- Where a child has been assessed as being a Child in Need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 by Children's Social Care and where that need is in addition to their need of accommodation and where it can only be met through the provision of accommodation local to Lambeth.
- Households with one child (or more) in secondary school in the borough in their final year of Key Stage 4 (normally Year 11).
- Households where one person (or more) is in permanent and settled employment (for at least six months prior to date of homelessness application).
- Households where a member of the household is providing a significant amount of care for another person in the borough who falls into one of the following categories, where being unable to continue providing this care would adversely affect their welfare, as assessed by the Council's Housing Medical Adviser:
  - a) Over 75 years old and living alone, or with no other member of the household under 75 years of age,
  - OR b) In receipt of
    - i. Medium or higher rate of the care component or the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA),
    - ii. or ii. standard or enhanced Daily Living Allowance or enhanced Mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP),
    - iii. or iii. Attendance Allowance, or iv. War Disablement pension.

**3.9 Group C: Any Area.** All other homeless households will be offered Temporary Accommodation wherever the borough is able to procure it including outside of London:

- Households who would otherwise be in Group A or B but who are unable to afford temporary accommodation in Lambeth or the Local Area, for instance, due to benefit restrictions.

### **Additional Information**

- 3.10 Households will be required to provide documentary evidence that they fall within any of these groups. The Council's Housing Medical Adviser will also need to assess the applicants' eligibility where appropriate.
- 3.11 Where an adapted property is required for a disabled applicant, we will attempt to source one. Cases will be assessed on an individual basis.
- 3.12 Households who consider that they need to live in Lambeth or the Local Area to provide care for someone will need to obtain that person's authorisation to disclose their confidential details to the Council to verify their care needs.
- 3.13 Households in receipt of welfare benefits may be subject to restrictions on the amount of benefit they can receive, which may affect their ability to pay rent. Placement in Lambeth or the Local Area is subject to suitable accommodation being available and the applicant being able to afford accommodation in 5 these areas. Placement in accommodation by the Council does not imply that the rent will be covered in full by welfare benefits, or that the Council will pay any shortfall.
- 3.14 A refusal of a suitable offer will usually mean discharging duty if a property has been unreasonably refused.

### **Support and Resettlement for Placements Outside of the Local Area:**

- 3.15 Households who are more vulnerable being placed outside of the Local Area will be offered an introduction to the relevant support services.
- 3.16 Support will be provided in relation to their needs, e.g. support to access GPs, health visitors, education and Children's Centres. The Accommodation Service will provide details of incoming households to receiving boroughs and an information pack may be provided covering local services as appropriate.

**Figure 1:** Map of Lambeth and the Local Area, overlaid with 30-minute travel distance



#### 4.0 Links to relevant documents

- Part VI and VII Housing Act 1996
- Discharge of Duty Policy
- Localism Act 2011
- Allocations Policy