

HOUSING PLACEMENTS POLICY

**Allocation of Temporary Accommodation (Part 7
Housing Act 1996), Private Sector Offers, Rent
Deposits and housing for those with no recourse to
public funds**

Revised November 2016

Foreword

Lambeth Council is committed to securing suitable temporary accommodation for homeless households where this is required under section 188 or section 193 of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. Our aim is to provide accommodation within Lambeth wherever possible, but unfortunately this is not always achievable. The Council is dependent on the supply of accommodation that is available, and ongoing benefit changes mean that for some households, accommodation in Lambeth will not be affordable. As a result, there will be an increasing need to use accommodation that may be at a distance from Lambeth, and we need to have a process in place to ensure that we prioritise those who have the greatest need to be in or close to a particular location. Where a household needs to be moved away from a particular location for safety reasons, this will always be taken into account when deciding on temporary accommodation allocation.

In assessing the allocation of accommodation the Council will comply with the relevant legislation, associated case law and give regard Homelessness Code of Guidance. 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.

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. 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 TA 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 TA.

The criteria set out is not an exhaustive list; as this policy recognises that individual cases must be assessed on their own merit to establish whether they are sufficiently exceptional to depart from the policy. The Council may also take into account the affordability of accommodation in deciding where to provide accommodation. Lambeth will continue to comply with IBTA agreements.

This document is primarily for use to guide 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.

Group A: Temporary Accommodation¹ in the borough of Lambeth.

Households in this group will be prioritized for Accommodation in Lambeth.

The following will be prioritized for temporary 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.
- 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

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 prioritized 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.

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

- 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); or
 - ii. standard or enhanced Daily Living Allowance or enhanced Mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP); or
 - iii. Attendance Allowance, or
 - iv. War Disablement pension.

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 including:

- 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.

Important Information

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. 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.

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

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.

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:

Households who are more vulnerable being placed outside of the Local Area will be offered an interview with the relevant support services, and a care plan will be prepared to address identified needs. Support will be provided in relation to these needs, e.g. accessing GPs, health visitors, education and Children Centres. The Accommodation Service will provide details of incoming households to receiving boroughs. An information pack will be provided to households covering local services as appropriate.

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

