



CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Homelessness and Choice Based Lettings.

Carl Griffiths

Head of Statutory Housing Solutions

Homeless Applications

- Anyone can contact the Council for homeless advice/assistance.
- Applications have multiple stages and assessments. A final duty decision cannot be made the day of approach e.g. priority need or intentionally homeless.
- Applications are carried out under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the code of guidance and relevant caselaw.

Stages, Enquiries and Duties.

- Eligibility
- Homeless/Threatened with Homelessness
 - Prevention Duty
 - Relief Duty
 - Local Connection
- Priority Need
- Intentionally Homeless
- Main Duty

Prevention Duty

- 56-day duty to help prevent someone from losing their home.
- This can include CBC tenants facing eviction for rent arrears, private tenants issued no fault notice.
- Local connection is **NOT** required for a Prevention Duty but can impact support available.
- If unable to prevent homelessness/becomes homeless, application moves to the Relief duty.

Relief Duty

- 56-day duty to resolve a person's homelessness.
- Local connection can be assessed. If applicant has no local connection, the Council can refer to the applicant's home authority..
- At relief stage applicant may need Temporary Accommodation.
- Can start assessing Priority Need and Intentionality during Relief Duty.

Rehousing options for applicants at Prevention and Relief stages

- Supported accommodation
- Private rented accommodation
- Council accommodation
- Suitability of an offer is set out in homeless legislation and caselaw and is based on each applicant's circumstances.

Priority Need and Intentionality

- Priority Need
- Protected groups
- Vulnerability test
- If found to be NOT in priority need, application will not go to intentionality assessment and once Relief Duty ends there will be no main duty offer of council accommodation.

- Intentionality
- last settled address
- Deliberation action leading to loss of home
- Was the accommodation available to occupy when the applicant lost it?
- Was the accommodation affordable and reasonable to occupy?
- Act of good faith / unaware of relevant fact?

Main Duty

- A Main duty is owed at the end of a Relief Duty if the applicant is:
 - Eligible
 - Homeless
 - Local connection
 - Priority Need
 - Unintentionally Homeless
- Applicant will receive 1 offer of suitable accommodation through the Housing Register with Home Options. If the offer is refused the duty is discharged, emergency accommodation ends and no further assistance is provided.

Applying for Housing.

- We operate a Choice Based Lettings system, not a register.
- CBC are part of a wider partnership called the Home Options Partnership.

Home Options Partnership



- The Home-Options partners are:
- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Futures Housing Group
- Chesterfield Borough Council
- High Peak Borough Council
- Derbyshire Dales District Council
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- emh homes
- Platform Housing Group
- Erewash Borough Council
- Your Housing Limited

Registration

- Applicants need to provide proof of ID
- Proof of address history
- Proof of clear rent accounts
- ID and proof of responsibility for children
- Any criminal convictions?

When is a Housing Needs Assessment completed

- Once a Housing Application is made “LIVE” it is listed for a HNA.
- A member of the team will complete a HNA as soon as they are able.

Priority

- Housing Assistants and Housing & Health Officers award priority based on circumstances and with reference to policy. We make these assessments after considering supporting information.

Banding System

- 5 bands ranging from A to D (including a B+ band)
- Band A – top priority
- Band D – lowest priority.

Priority Bands

Band A

- 1 Urgent medical priority
- 2 Major property factors (Decant, Enforcement of the Housing Act 2004 likely to lead to homelessness or Statutory overcrowding)
- 3 Social housing tenants who are under-occupying
- 4 No legal right to succeed or has a legal right to succeed but the property is unsuitable or former joint tenants whose tenancy is ending
- 5 Urgent social priority
- 6 Temporary accommodation move

Further explanation in Policy

Priority Bands

- Band B+
- 1 Applicants owed the main duty under the Housing Act 1996
- 2 Applicants owed the relief duty under S189B of the Housing Act 1996 (priority need)

Priority Bands

Band B

- 1 Move-on from specialist and supported accommodation
- 2 Prevention of homelessness (priority need)
- 3 Overcrowding – requiring two or more bedrooms to solve overcrowding
- 4 Higher medical needs
- 5 Social housing tenants under-occupying – freeing one bedroom
- 6 Overcrowded social housing tenants – freeing two bedroom houses

Priority Bands

Band C

- 1 Applicants who lack or share basic facilities
- 2 Overcrowding – lacking one bedroom
- 3 Living with family, friends or ex-partner
- 4 Medium medical needs
- 5 Medium social needs
- 6 Homeless Prevention and Relief (no priority need)
- 7 Intentional homeless
- 8 Social housing tenants under-occupying – freeing one bedroom

Priority Bands

Band D

- 1 Private tenants with a desire to live in social housing
- 2 Social housing tenants with a desire to move
- 3 Owner occupiers with a desire to live in social housing
- 4 All other applicants

Housing Needs Assessment

- To assess and award priority
- To ensure applicants are housed suitably
- Identify urgent cases
- Refer for support
- Red flags – any issues? Violence, rent arrears , homelessness
- Manage expectations

Reviewing applications

- If an applicant's circumstances have changed, they can provide further supporting information.
- An Officer will assess the new information and consider Policy to determine whether a higher priority band should be awarded

Review process

- Applicants can ask for a review if they believe their application isn't registered correctly.
- Stage 1 – Housing & Health Manager
- Stage 2 – Home Options partners

Figures

- Approximately 3,000 applicants.
- Last year we completed 1251 HNA's – on average 100 per month.