



CHOICE BASED LETTING SCHEME

A Central Lincolnshire Partnership:

- City of Lincoln Council
- North Kesteven District Council
- West Lindsey District Council
- Acis Group Limited

www.lincshomefinder.co.uk

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| VERSION DATED | 3 October 2012 |
| SCHEME APPROVED | NKDC - 11 May 2010 (& 08/11/12) City of Lincoln Council – 12 June 2010 WLDC - July 2010 |
| SCHEME IMPLEMENTED | December 2012 |

Final Version
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1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHEME

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the allocations scheme (as required by the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and Localism Act 2011) for the City of Lincoln Council, North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and Acis Group Limited. It sets out the priorities and procedures that the partners will follow in the letting of housing to applicants on their common housing register.

These organisations have adopted a new approach to letting to give applicants access to affordable housing within the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) area.

The purpose of the Scheme is to make the process of registering for an affordable home as simple as possible and to give people greater choice in selecting where and in what property type and tenure they wish to live.

The new scheme will be called **Lincs Homefinder** (www.lincshomefinder.co.uk)

This Letting Policy sets out:

- The objectives of the Letting Policy
- How the Common Housing Register operates
- Who is eligible
- How customer's housing needs are assessed
- How social rented homes across the area are let
- How the Scheme operates

Each Partner will have a copy of this Letting Policy available at its main offices for inspection. A copy of this Letting Policy is available free of charge from any of the Partners, or available to download from any of the Partners websites.

The following Partners will participate in this scheme, and herein as known as the Partnership:

- City of Lincoln Council
- North Kesteven District Council
- West Lindsey District Council
- ACIS Group Limited

In addition, the Partnership also works closely with other accommodation providers who offer supported short and long term housing to people with particular support needs.

Because of the nature of the accommodation provided and the support offered, not all housing providers will participate directly in the scheme. However, the Partnership can refer suitable applicants to these Providers.

1.2 OUR STATEMENT ON CHOICE

The Partnership is fully committed to enabling applicants to play a more active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need in the district and partnership area. The Policy aims to be as open and transparent as possible and to offer the widest possible choice to people looking for an affordable home.

It is important to realise that the demand for accommodation is higher in some areas than in others. In making a decision about the choices available, applicants need to consider their housing need priority against the availability of properties in any given area.

The main objectives of the Policy are, to:-

- Provide a fair, open and accountable framework in which everyone has equality of access when seeking an affordable home.
- Assist customers in the highest housing need
- Provide a full Housing Options service. This will offer scheme users a range of other housing options, services and advice to find the solution best suited to their needs.
- Prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation through an effective prioritisation system
- Ensure the best use of limited housing resources and that balanced and stable communities are maintained.
- Ensure that quality and accessible advice about the Scheme is freely available to everyone, especially to those who may have difficulty in registering to join the scheme.
- Ensure all applicants are aware of and understand the Scheme and the ways in which they can apply for a home.
- Provide assistance to applicants of the Scheme who are unable, for whatever reason, to participate fully in the Scheme without help, support or advocacy.
- Provide a bidding process that is easy to access for all applicants of the Scheme.
- Take account of relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:
 - Localism Act 2011
 - Allocation of Accommodation: Code of Guidance for local housing authorities in England, 2012
- Reflect Partners individual Tenancy Policies and Tenancy Strategies
- Have due regard of the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy

1.3 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

All Partners have signed up to this Scheme and are committed to working together to deliver high quality housing services. All Partners will operate a single Letting Policy and a single Housing Register. The properties and housing options service will all be accessible through the same methods. This means that applicants will be able to submit an application to one Partner and be able to bid for and be considered for properties across the three areas.

1.4 HOW THE SCHEME WORKS

The common allocations scheme provides a new way of letting social housing, and promoting shared ownership properties, and other housing options across the partnership area. Partners will no longer use the traditional method of 'matching' applicants to properties, instead applicants will choose the tenure, property and area in which they wish to live.

The Scheme has been designed to be easy to use, provide the highest level of customer service and enable people to make the best choice for their needs from the full range of housing options available to them.

The Scheme will not however produce any more housing but will provide a fairer, more efficient and transparent way of letting the current social housing resources.

People who apply to join the scheme or are registered with the Scheme are known as applicants. By completing one application form, applicants needing an affordable home become eligible to bid for housing in the location of their choice.

Applicants are assessed and awarded a banding according to their need for a new, suitable home. Landlords advertise their vacant properties for rent and invite bids on each property from applicants who are registered.

Adverts will contain a detailed description of the property and will state which applicants are able to apply. Applicants can then bid for the property of their choice as long as they meet the qualifying criteria and are registered with the scheme.

The successful applicant will be selected from those who have bid for the property and who meet the qualifying criteria. Selection will be based on the relevant needs band, followed by the banding date where there is more than one applicant from the same band. The landlord then offers the property to the successful applicant.

Feedback will be provided through a range of methods on the level of demand for recently advertised vacant properties. This will help applicants to make more informed choices including looking at the other housing options being promoted by the partners

1.5 HOUSING OPTIONS

Due to the high demand on social housing some applicants may have to wait a considerable time before appropriate accommodation is made available to them, particularly in areas of high demand for social housing and/or where the applicant(s) has low priority. In some cases, applicants may have little prospect of ever being offered accommodation.

In order to give such applicants a wider choice the Partnership aims to provide information about other appropriate housing options which might be available to them. This might include:

- **private rented accommodation** - the private rented sector can provide types and sizes of dwellings which may not be readily available within the social rented sector. For those with a lower priority under the CBL scheme, and who may be waiting a considerable time before they are offered accommodation, a vacancy in the private rented sector may offer a quicker and equally suitable housing solution.
- **shared ownership schemes** – for those people who cannot afford to buy a home outright on the open market, shared ownership allows the applicant to purchase a share of a property and pay rent on the remainder.
- **mutual exchanges** – a quicker way of moving, rather than applying for a transfer. Tenants find another RSL or Council tenant to swap their homes with, providing they have the agreement of their landlord.
- **mobility schemes** – these are like mutual exchanges but enable applicants to move out of the district e.g. Homeswapper.
- **home improvement schemes or provision of aids and adaptations** – these may enable applicants to remain in their existing accommodation for longer.
- **Affordable Home Ownership Options** – several schemes are available to assist households in purchasing a property through a number of Housing Associations and local developers.

1.6 SERVICE STANDARDS

The following Service Standards aim to promote excellence through taking a customer focused approach to the delivery of our services. Partners will aim to work to these standards and have monitoring systems in place to measure and report performance where appropriate:

- Process a Registration Form within seven days of receiving it.
- Send a review letter each year to those applicants who have not made a bid during the previous twelve months.
- Write to applicants informing them of any amendments made to their registration within seven days.
- Respond to customer's emails and other communications within the standard set down by each Partner organization.
- Publicise details on the number of bids, priority banding and registration date of successful bidder for each vacancy advertised.

Furthermore, customers can expect Partners to:

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- Use Plain English in all our correspondence,
- Provide an interpreter service for customers, where needed,
- Promote equality of opportunity to all,
- Use private interview rooms when discussing personal details,
- Respect the confidential nature of information provided to the Partnership,
- Provide an accessible compliments, comments and complaint procedure.

1.7 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Partnership is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all existing and potential applicants wishing to access the Scheme. No one will be treated unfairly because of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, marital status, age, sexuality, health or other reason. This list is not intended to be exclusive, but indicative of the Partnerships intention and commitment to ensuring equality.

The Partnership aims to promote good race relations and equality of opportunity throughout the community. Copies of each Partners individual equality policies are available on request from each Partner.

In appropriate cases the Partnership will seek to provide wherever possible interpretation and translation facilities, as well as using alternative or additional methods of communication including:-

- Use of sign language interpretation,
- Information on tape/braille/large print,
- Translated guides and leaflets into languages other than English,
- Loop system for the hard of hearing,
- Staff to deal with any Type Talk calls,

1.8 INFORMATION SHARING BETWEEN PARTNERS

This Scheme is a Partnership between the named housing providers (see 1.1). In order for the Scheme to work effectively it will be necessary for the Partners to share information about applicants. By applying to the scheme an applicant is agreeing for information submitted to one Partner to be shared with other Partners.

1.9 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION.

Everyone has the right to be informed about how to join the Scheme. Every applicant accepted in to the Scheme has the right to be informed of the band into which they have been placed and the reasons why they have been placed into the particular band.

Applicants have the right to request information regarding any decision about the facts of their case which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account in considering their application.

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When an applicant applies to the Scheme we will only seek information that we require to assess the applicant's application and housing needs. We will collect and keep data in accordance with the guidelines on handling personal data. These guidelines are in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 that covers both electronic and manual records and the act governs everything we do with the data, including collecting, storing, using and disposing of it.

Confidential information held about applicants will not be disclosed to third parties apart from:

- Where the person(s) who is the subject of the confidential information has consented to the disclosure
- Where the Partnership is required by law to make such disclosures
- Where disclosure is made in accordance with an information sharing protocol

2 APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

2.1 WHO CAN APPLY

Anyone has the right to make an application to join the Scheme. Applicants should generally be aged 18 years or over. In the case of joint applications, at least one should normally be aged 18. Special provisions apply to 16-17 year olds, see over page. Applications from the following groups will be considered.

- Persons not subject to immigration control taking account of nationality and immigration. The main customer groups to whom properties will be let to are:
 - All existing secure and introductory tenants of a Local Housing Authority and assured tenants of an RSL.
 - British nationals who are habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (CTA) i.e. United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or Republic of Ireland.
 - Commonwealth citizens who have the right of abode and are habitually resident in the CTA.
 - European Economic Area (EEA) nationals who have the right to reside in the UK and are habitually resident in the CTA.
- Persons subject to immigration control who have been granted:
 - Refugee Status
 - Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Protection, provided that there is no condition that they shall not be a charge on public funds
 - Indefinite Leave to Remain, provided that they are habitually resident in the CTA and their Leave to Remain was not granted in the previous five years on the basis of sponsorship given in relation to maintenance and accommodation (or if their sponsor has died)
 - Persons subject to immigration control who are nationals of a country that has ratified the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance (ECSMA) or the European Social Charter (ESC) provided that they are habitually resident in the CTA and lawfully present in the UK.
- In addition to European Nationals who are habitually resident in the UK, and can prove they have a current British National Insurance Number, applications from the following groups of people will also be considered: -
 - A person granted refugee status when his/her request for asylum is accepted.
 - Persons granted exceptional leave to enter or remain. This will be someone who has failed in the request for asylum, but has been given leave to remain where there are compelling, compassionate circumstances.
 - Persons granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK who are regarded as having settled status. Applicants still have to establish habitual residence.

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Under the Housing Act 1996, local authorities must consider whether applicants are eligible for housing assistance. This relates to some people who may have been living abroad or who do not have permanent permission to remain in the UK. Any person making an application who is identified as falling under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 will be assessed in accordance with the Act. We reserve the right to seek independent advice and assistance to resolve the issue of eligibility.

- Generally, applications from 16/17 year olds will also be accepted but will only be considered for vacancies in designated supported young persons schemes. However, the following will be accepted on to the list for general housing stock:
 - A single woman aged 16 or 17 expecting a child.
 - A single parent aged 16 or 17 with a dependent child.
 - A couple, with one or both aged 16 or 17 who are expecting a child, or have a dependent child.

In the case of applicants who are aged 16 or 17 and homeless, a joint assessment with Children's Services will be required to identify appropriate housing and support needs. This process may include other agencies such as Connexions, Health, Probation, and Youth Offending Teams. Such applicants will usually only be considered for appropriately supported housing schemes and not general purpose accommodation.

Some housing providers require 16/17 year olds accepted for housing to have a guarantor and/or sign up for support from the housing provider or their agent where satisfactory support is not in place from statutory agencies.

2.2 INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Those who **CANNOT** join the Choice Based Letting Scheme are: -

- Persons who are ineligible to reside in the United Kingdom.
- Persons granted exceptional leave to enter or remain but do not have recourse to public funds.

There may be cases where an ineligible person forms part of a household with others who are eligible. It is important to note that whilst the ineligible person cannot be granted a tenancy they may be taken into account in the size of accommodation to be offered, but the tenancy will only be granted to the individual who is eligible.

2.3 NON-QUALIFYING PERSONS

The following will be considered to be non-qualifying persons, and therefore unable to join this Choice Based Lettings Scheme:

- Existing social housing tenants who have not been in their current home for 12 months.
- Serious Unacceptable behaviour

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Applicant(s), or a member of the applicant's household whose behaviour (if s/he were a secure tenant of the Authority) would have led to a Possession Order being granted, therefore affecting their suitability to be a tenant. Such exclusions may be made regardless of previous tenure. Examples are listed in **Appendix E**. Such applications will be considered by the Lincs Homefinder Review Panel to determine whether they are considered to be a non-qualifying person due to their behaviour.

When reaching a decision to refuse an application because of unacceptable behaviour, the Panel will take into account all the relevant factors, including health, dependants and current housing situation, that a Court would consider before making any order. A decision will also be made on the length of time that the application will be excluded stating the reasons why and the actions that can be undertaken to enable an applicant to re-apply.

The Partnership will take into account other behaviour considered as unacceptable but that would not have been grounds for possession (if had been a secure tenant), this is detailed in **Section 2.12**

In respect of rent arrears, the following will be considered before any decision is made to refuse an application:

- the amount of debt outstanding and whether it is of such a level that, if the applicant had been a local authority tenant, the landlord would obtain a possession order. and
- the age of the debt,
- the applicant's commitment to repay
- existing repayment arrangements including maintaining regular payments for a minimum of 13wks

The Partnership will take into account other housing related debt that would not have been grounds for possession (if had been a secure tenant), this is detailed in **Section 2.21**

If the Partnership decides that an applicant is considered to be a non-qualifying person it will notify the applicant in writing of the decision detailing the grounds and their right to a review of the decision, within 21 days of receipt of the decision.

If an applicant is found to be a non-qualifying person for the Housing Register they may make a fresh application when the grounds for that decision no longer apply ie: social housing tenant who has now been in current property for 1 year or more, significant reduction of monies owned or sustained improved behaviour upon expiry of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

2.4 PROVIDING INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Applicants are required to provide proof of their identity e.g. their National Insurance Number(s) and proof of residency for themselves and anyone they wish to be rehoused with, please see the Scheme guide for a full list of acceptable documents. Without this information an application will not be accepted.

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Applicants who are applying to transfer from a current RSL tenancy do not need to provide proof of identity, but do need to provide proof of residency for members of their household currently residing with them. Failure to provide the required documents may affect an application's registration date, see **Section 2.28**.

In exceptional circumstances where an applicant is unable to provide the required documents, the case will be referred to a senior officer to consider their individual circumstances and approve the submission of any documents not on the accepted documents list.

In accepting any application which includes anyone from abroad, proof of identification, nationality and immigration status will be required. Verification will be sought from the Immigration Service to safeguard the use and allocation of public funds.

In order to determine the priority an application receives, a duty is placed upon the applicant(s) to provide any and all information reasonably required by the Partnership. Such information may extend beyond that requested on the Application Form. Until all required information is provided the application will not be registered and/or will NOT be eligible to bid.

2.5 FALSE INFORMATION

It is important that the information provided by applicants is accurate to determine the correct priority that the application receives. It is also the applicant(s) responsibility to ensure they notify the Scheme Partnership of any change in their circumstances. The Housing Act 1996 section 171 states that a person commits an offence if, in connection with the exercise by a local housing authority of their functions under this Part –

- (a) s/he knowingly or recklessly makes a statement which is false in a material particular, or
- (b) s/he knowingly withholds information which the authority have reasonably required her/him to give in connection with the exercise of those functions.'

False information can include any information given on an application form, given in response to subsequent review letters, given during telephone conversations or interviews, or by other updating mechanisms or information submitted by applicants during the proceedings of a review.

The Scheme Partnership may seek possession of a property under Ground 5 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 if a tenant has induced the Council to grant a tenancy by knowingly or recklessly making a false statement. The offence is also punishable on summary conviction by magistrates by a fine of up to £5000.

2.6 HOUSING SUPPORT AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

A range of support services may be available throughout the area and are there to help vulnerable people live safely and independently within the community.

In assessing support needs, the Partnership will require risk assessments, support plans and other relevant information from organisations such as Social Services, Connexions, Addaction, Probation, Community Mental Health Team, Supporting People Team and other relevant agencies.

If this information is not provided by the agencies the application will be suspended, and the agency and applicant notified of the agency responsible. Where an identified support need cannot be met or the applicant refuses support, the relevant Partner may refuse the bid.

The Partnership reserves the right to refuse any bids from applicant's for accommodation it deems unsuitable and where in its opinion, support plans are not sufficiently detailed to provide support to the applicant to ensure that their tenancy remains sustainable or they can maintain independent living.

2.7 CARERS, PROSPECTIVE/APPROVED ADOPTERS AND FOSTER CARERS

Applicants with a disability or other need who require an additional bedroom to accommodate a carer are required to provide an approved and detailed Care Plan. Such Care Plans will need to be shared with all providers so that appropriate accommodation can be considered.

Partners will work closely with the relevant Children's Services departments, on an individual case basis to assist in meeting the needs of prospective and approved adopters and foster carers and duties under s22G of the Children's Act 1989.

2.8 SHELTERED HOUSING

Sheltered accommodation is normally allocated according to the following criteria:

- a) applicants in need of supported accommodation who fulfill the Supporting People criteria, this will be determined by a *sheltered housing needs assessment*, to assess individual needs and independence and ability of the "sheltered" service to meet those needs.
- b) applicants or their partner be 60 years of age or over, (this may vary between partners) taking into account the requirements of the scheme and community.

Such properties will be clearly advertised detailing who can bid and be considered for the vacancy. (Also see **Section 3.14**)

2.9 OTHER SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Some properties are within schemes that are designated for individuals with specific support needs and may include those aged 16 to 24yrs or with mental health issues. An appropriate support needs assessment must be completed prior to any offer of accommodation. This will determine individual needs and the suitability of the support available to meet those needs.

Such properties will be clearly advertised detailing who can bid and be considered for the vacancy.

2.10 ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

Applications should be forwarded to, and appropriately processed by the Partner:

- Administering the area you currently live (if currently residing within Partnership area); or
- Administering the area you wish to live (if currently residing outside the Partnership area).

All applications will be processed and subject to the same assessment regardless of which Partner it is submitted to.

In exceptional circumstances, where an applicants circumstances fall outside of the given banding criteria, a Partner may refer an application to the Lincs Homefinder Review Panel.

Under such circumstances the Panel will award an appropriate banding to the application. If the applicant is unhappy with the decision of the Panel, they will have the right to request a review in accordance with **Section 4**.

2.11 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The application form provides the basic information to enable an applicant to be registered with the Scheme and determine which Priority Band will be awarded. As a result of information given on that application, applicants may be asked to provide additional information to ensure their circumstances have been appropriately assessed.

For example, an applicant indicates they have been asked to leave their current private tenancy, applicant may be requested to provide proof of notice from the landlord. Where this is not possible alternative evidence may be accepted.

The Partnership may also require supporting information from other agencies concerning an applicant's household, current circumstances and needs. The Partnership will have due regard to confidentiality and data protection in accordance with **Section 1.9**, and applicants permission will be sought where appropriate.

2.12 ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEEDS AND BANDINGS

The Partnership has adopted a Banding Scheme to prioritise the current housing needs of applicants. These include the applicant's current accommodation, physical and mental health, mobility, affordability, employment and social wellbeing.

There are 4 Bands: named 1, 2, 3 and 4 with Band 1 being for those with highest priority. These bandings have been adopted following guidance issued by the Secretary of State. All eligible applicants are placed in Bands in accordance with their housing needs assessment. More detailed information about each band is detailed in **Appendix C**.

Applications are prioritised first by band, and secondly by date see **Section 2.22** for more details.

If an applicant is assessed as having more than one identified need within a band, the application will be assessed as follows:

- An applicant who has been assessed as having three or more "Band 3" needs is placed into Band 2
- An applicant who has been assessed as having two or more "Band 2" needs is placed into Band 1

Space standards are contained in Part 10 of the Housing Act 1985 and the Housing Act 2004 which includes the Housing & Health Safety Rating Standard (HHSRS). The HHSRS is a tool for assessing the living conditions of a property; it is based on 29 possible hazards to the most vulnerable occupier and is structured around an evidence based risk assessment process. It is a two stage process which addresses firstly the likelihood of an occurrence and then the range of probable harm outcomes. These include space standards.

Housing Priority may be reduced, in certain situations, for example:

- Committing serious anti-social behaviour
- If it is found that an applicant can afford to resolve their own housing difficulties for example by buying or renting accommodation.

Where priority has changed applicants will always be informed in writing stating the reasons, any time restrictions and their right to review of that decision.

2.13 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

The Partnership will take into account any behaviour of the applicant or member of their household, which did or would have, lead to the making of an ASBO or other Court Order, but did not or would not have entitled the Authority to be granted a Possession Order, ie: cases demonstrating unacceptable behaviour but **Section 2.3** is not applicable.

Such applications will be considered by the Lincs Homefinder Review Panel who may, in consideration of this behaviour along with other housing needs, decide to reduce the priority given to an application by one band.

2.14 WORSENE D CIRCUMSTANCES

Where a Partner determines that an applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances and gained additional priority, they reserve the right to reduce the priority awarded by 1 band for up to 6 months. Examples include, but not limited to:

- Giving up suitable accommodation that was available to them
- Moving into an unsatisfactory arrangement eg: sharing facilities or overcrowded

Partners will take into account the current needs of the household before reducing any priority and in setting the period of time.

Where priority has changed applicants will always be informed in writing stating the reasons, any time restrictions and their right to review of that decision.

2.15 CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Applicants are required to inform the relevant Partner if their personal circumstance change and it may reasonably be expected to have an effect on their Housing Register application. This includes any change in their address or household composition.

A specific form may be available for this purpose and this must be signed by each of the applicants. Examples of this include:

- Housing circumstances have improved
- Recovered from an illness which previously gave medical priority

When a child is born and a copy of the birth certificate has been provided there will be a re-assessment of the banding and if the banding results in a higher band it will have a band date of when the Scheme Partner received confirmation of the child's birth.

Changes in circumstances that lead to re-banding will be dealt with in accordance with this policy. The relevant Partner will re-assess an application where there has been a change of circumstances and will notify the applicant in writing that this has been done. If the change results in the applicant's priority changing this will be explained in writing to the applicant.

2.16 MEDICAL BANDING

An assessment of medical need is made by either a medical professional appointed by the Partnership or an officer within each Partner organisation using an agreed criterion. The appropriate medical banding will be subsequently determined by the relevant Partner.

If the assessment places an applicant into a higher band, then the registration will be re-dated to the date of the assessment. If the assessment does not change the band into which the registration falls, the existing effective date and banding remains unchanged.

The assessment determines medical priority based on the current housing circumstances in relation to the effect on the illness or disability of the applicant or their household.

The Partnership will consider a request for a further medical assessment if it is satisfied that there has been a significant change in the medical circumstances of the applicant or their household.

2.17 REASONABLE PREFERENCE

The law states that certain groups of people have 'reasonable preference' within any Housing Allocation Scheme operated by a local Housing Authority. These groups are:-

- People who are homeless (within Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002); this includes people who are intentionally homeless, and those who are not in priority need;
- People who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and who are in priority need who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 193 (2) or 195 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (or under Section 65 (2) or 68 (2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under Section 192 (3) ;
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds;
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the area, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).
- Those leaving the Armed Forces who are in housing need

2.18 HOMELESSNESS

In cases where the Local Authority have accepted a main housing duty as statutorily homeless, applicants will be placed into the appropriate band and are required to make bids for the first 2 suitable properties that they are eligible for, from the date that they have been accepted as homeless.

Homeless cases will be monitored, and if applicants fail to make bids, the Partnership will then bid on their behalf for the next suitable property they are eligible for. If an applicant refuses a successful bid that is considered suitable and reasonable, the homelessness duty to them may be discharged. In such cases the application will be re-assessed.

Where statutorily homeless applicants have a housing related debt they may be placed into temporary accommodation under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996. During this time an affordable repayment agreement will be made with them to repay the debt. This will allow applicant(s) to place bids, however, they will not be offered a property unless the debt has been cleared or regular payments have been made to reduce the debt in accordance with **Section 2.21**.

Final Version

Anyone provided with a temporary tenancy in pursuant to a homeless application will be required to complete a new application form and then will be placed into the appropriate band, as they are in temporary accommodation. Starter tenancies and demoted tenancies are not classed as being temporary accommodation in this sense.

2.19 ROUGH SLEEPING

The Partnership defines rough sleeping as being street homeless and having access to no accommodation at all, supporting information may be sought from supporting agencies. People of 'No Fixed Abode', who are for example staying at various locations on an ad hoc basis, are not regarded as rough sleepers.

2.20 NO FIXED ABODE

Applicants who claim that they are of no fixed abode have to satisfy the Partnership that they genuinely have no settled accommodation and are living at various locations for very short period of time.

In confirming cases where applicants claim that they are of no fixed abode, proof may be sought from each address and/or other agencies with which they are registered.

2.21 HOUSING DEBTS

Where an applicant(s) has any current/former rent arrears or other housing related debt, and **Section 2.3** is not applicable, they will be accepted onto the housing register and placed in the appropriate band.

Partners will advise applicants when a housing related debt is made known to them, explaining the consequences and provide advice and information to make arrangements to clear the debt or to make a repayment plan.

If an applicant makes a bid and is successful, their application may be passed over, until a repayment agreement has been made and maintained for 13wks, having regard to the following criterion:

- the amount of debt outstanding,
- the age of the debt,
- the applicant's commitment to repay,
- current housing circumstances,

In the event that an application is passed over by a Partner for these reasons, applicant(s) would be notified in writing and informed of their right to review of that decision. Applicants must be aware that the letting of a property will not be delayed pending a review, the outcome of the review will only be applicable for future vacancies.

2.22 FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Households applying to this Scheme may be assessed for their ability to buy/rent a suitable property within the area, or improve/adapt their own home to meet their assessed needs. This includes applicants who have been accepted under homelessness legislation to whom the Local Authority owes a duty under sections 193(2) or 195(2) as well as general applications.

Assets that may be taken into consideration when assessing financial capacity may include but are not limited to savings, shares, bonds, commercial property, residential property, property abroad and money apportioned through the proceeds of a divorce settlement, inheritance or any form of cash windfall.

Applicants assessed as having the financial resources to resolve their own housing difficulties, may have their housing priority reduced.

In determining the priority an applicant receives within the scheme, the Partnership considers the following:

- Whether the applicant(s) can sell their current home.
- The expected equity after the proposed sale of the property.
- The applicant(s) current financial circumstances and commitments.
- Whether the applicant(s) will be eligible for a mortgage.
- The supply of accommodation suitable for the applicant(s) specific needs on the private market for either sale or rent.
- Whether the applicant(s) housing need can be met in the private market taking into consideration the cost of housing within the district.

- Whether adaptation of the present property is a viable option.
- Whether significant care and support needs would impact on the ability of the applicant to secure and maintain accommodation.

The Partnership reserves the right not to make an offer of tenancy to an applicant who has the financial capacity to reasonably resolve their housing situation when taking the above into account. This criteria may be reviewed where a property is deemed to be in a 'low demand area' or at the discretion of the Partner who manages the relevant property.

2.23 DISABLED FACILITIES AND RENOVATION GRANTS

Where an applicant(s), or member of the moving household has benefited from either a disabled facilities grant/adaptation or renovation grant they will be accepted onto the housing register and placed in the appropriate band. However, their application will be passed over, for a period of 5 years from when the work was undertaken, unless the household's circumstances have substantially changed to make the property unsuitable.

Final Version

Applicants need to be aware that if they are subsequently re-housed within the 5 year grant period, the relevant grant conditions, as signed, may still apply along with any financial consequences.

In the event that an application is passed over by a Partner for these reasons, applicant(s) would be notified in writing and of their right to review of that decision. Applicants must be aware that the letting of a property will not be delayed pending a review, the outcome of the review will only be applicable for future vacancies.

A Partner may refer an application to the Lincs Homefinder Review Panel, where it is considered that a households circumstances or housing needs have changed since the completion of the relevant works. The Panel will determine whether the application will continue to be passed over for the 5 years period.

2.24 RIGHT TO BUY

Where an applicant(s), or member of the moving household has benefited from a Right to Buy, they will be accepted onto the housing register and placed in the appropriate band. However, their application will be passed over, for a period of 3 years from purchase of the property, unless the household's circumstances have substantially changed to make the property unsuitable.

Applicants need to be aware that if they are subsequently re-housed within the 3 year period, the relevant discount conditions, as signed, may still apply along with any financial consequences.

In the event that an application is passed over by a Partner for these reasons, an applicant would be notified in writing and of their right to a review of that decision. Applicants must be aware that the letting of a property will not be delayed pending a review, the outcome of the review will only be applicable for future vacancies.

A Partner may refer an application to the Lincs Homefinder Review Panel, where it is considered that a households circumstances or housing needs have changed since the completion of purchase. The Panel will determine whether the application will continue to be passed over for the 3 years period.

2.25 LANDLORD REFERENCES AND CREDIT CHECKS

Partners will contact an applicant's current or former landlord(s) for information on how that tenancy was conducted. This will cover payment of monies due, condition of property, anti-social behaviour and other tenancy conditions. The purpose of this is to verify information provided by applicant, identify any outstanding housing debt and ascertain any other tenancy issues that need to be taken into account.

Final Version

Partners reserve the right to undertake credit reference checks. Such checks are a useful tool to help verify circumstances and identify applicants who may need to be passed over at point of offer because of housing debts. They can also help to provide better information about prospective tenants who may be vulnerable and, or, need help with budgeting.

If a credit check provides information about other addresses not notified on an application further enquiries may be carried out on these as well.

2.26 USE OF HOME VISITS

It is sometimes necessary to carry out home visits to assist with the assessment of housing applications and also to provide an alternative way for customers to discuss their particular requirements.

They will only be carried out by prior appointment, unless in exceptional circumstances.

The Partners reserve the right to suspend applications where access to the home is denied and until such time as this can be given. The Partners reserve the right to decline the request for a home visit where this may place a member of staff at risk or is otherwise considered unnecessary

2.27 RENT (AGRICULTURE) ACT 1976

The Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976 and the Housing Act 1988 give certain agriculture workers (including retired workers and successors) living in farm cottages, security of tenure. However, under these Acts a farmer may apply to the Local Authority to have the protected worker re-housed, if they need the cottage for another worker in the interests of efficient agriculture. To assist the authority in considering the farmer's application the 1976 Act provides for an Agricultural Dwelling Housing Advisory Committee (ADHAC) to give advice on the case made by the applicant concerning the interests of efficient agriculture and regarding the urgency of the application.

If the ADHAC considers that the farmer requires the farm cottage for a new employee, ADHAC may recommend that the local authority award priority re-housing to the retiring farm worker. If urgent re-housing is recommended, the application will be placed into the appropriate band.

2.28 DATING OF REGISTRATIONS

The initial registration date of an application form will be the date the housing application form is received at any of the Partners offices. All relevant documentation requested by the Partnership should be provided within 28 days of initial contact. Failure to provide relevant documentation may result in a later registration date, or cancellation of application.

Final Version

Applicants will be placed within a band in date order.

- **new application**, the banding date will be the same as the applicant's registration date.
- **change in circumstances which results in a higher band assessment**: the banding date will be the date the applicant provides satisfactory evidence of the change in circumstances.
- **change in circumstances which result in a lower band assessment**: the banding date will revert to the original application date.

For example: birth of a child may cause a household to be lacking 1 bedroom and may therefore move up a band. The banding date is the date that the birth certificate was provided to the Partnership (leading to the re-assessment) not the child's date of birth.

2.29 NOTIFICATION TO APPLICANTS

Upon acceptance to the Scheme applicants will be notified in writing of the following:

- Date of registration,
- Priority Band,
- Property Eligibility,
- Any confirmed local connection,
- Right to Review of Decisions.

Applicants will subsequently be notified in writing of any changes in their housing needs assessment, banding or status of their application.

2.30 CANCELLATION OF APPLICATIONS

The Partnership will cancel applications where:

- An applicant is housed as a result of that application,
- An applicant fails to respond to the annual review within the set timescale,
- An applicant has moved and failed to notify the Partnership,
- An applicant persistently fails to respond to a Partner's communication or requests for information over a reasonable timescale.

Should an applicant subsequently wish to re-join the scheme then they will be required to complete a new application which will be processed accordingly based on their current circumstances and with the subsequent registration date.

2.31 ASSISTED PERSONS LIST

Some vulnerable applicants may require help to ensure that they have the same opportunity to access the scheme. The Partnership therefore offers an "Assisted List" to allow those who cannot participate fully without assistance, easy access to the scheme. This list will also extend to those who require help with applications for Registration.

Final Version

The “Assisted List” seeks to provide a number of tailored services for vulnerable applicants, such as;

- Contact with applicants to advise them of available properties,
- Referral to the appropriate local agency or support worker to enable proactive support for bidding, or bidding on the applicant’s behalf,
- A list of vacancies will to be posted to the individual applicants home in their preferred format,
- Regular contacts will be made to ensure needs are being met in terms of bidding support.

Referrals for inclusion onto the Assisted List may come from a number of sources, although most would come from the following (however this is not exclusive);

- From the Registration Form – where a badly completed form may indicate literacy or language problems or where the applicant may indicate a particular disability such as hearing or sight impairment,
- Request from support worker – where a support worker specifically requests additional assistance for one of their clients,
- From monitoring applicants who have not bid – where the Partnership identifies applicants who are not making bids for accommodation.

Examples of those who may require help include:

- Those with communication difficulties i.e. language / literacy,
- Those with access to transport difficulties,
- Those with Learning Disabilities,
- Those at risk of Domestic Abuse,
- Those with a support worker,
- Those with sensory / physical disability.

2.32 PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY

Applicants, upon acceptance to the Housing Register, will be notified in writing of the properties they are eligible to bid for. Property eligibility is based upon a households composition and their needs, **Appendix D** details which applicants are eligible for each type of property.

Additionally, applicants will also be advised of any approved local connection they have within the partnership areas. Details of any priority awarded for local connection will be detailed within a vacancy advert, taking into account local housing needs.

The advert will clearly state which applicants can bid for each property and which applicant will have priority for the vacancy.

Applicants may be offered accommodation not usually considered for their household type or size, for example where the list has been exhausted or availability of properties in a certain area are scarce therefore property may be larger than required or those with no medical need may be considered for level floor accommodation to those with no medical need.

2.33 ANNUAL/ROLLING REVIEW

The Partners are required to undertake an annual review of applicants on the Register. This helps to ensure that those on the register are still interested in applying for suitable properties and also reduces the amount of time and resources wasted in sending information to those applicants who are no longer looking to move house.

Each applicant will be contacted, in writing, on the anniversary of their application to ascertain if they still wish to be registered. Should there be no response to this letter **within 4 weeks**, the application will be suspended. A further letter will be sent to the applicant notifying them their application is suspended and should they not respond, within 14 days, their application will be cancelled.

Applicants who subsequently decide they wish to rejoin the Register will need to re-apply in the normal way and will have their current circumstances assessed. The application date will not be backdated under these circumstances.

3 ACCESSING HOUSING

3.1 FINDING A HOME

Once applicants are registered on the scheme they can start looking for a property of their choice across the Partnership area. Applicants do not need to be registered to access some of the other housing options available through the scheme, for example, housing advice, shared ownership properties and privately rented accommodation

3.2 ADVERTISING OF VACANT PROPERTIES

Social rented properties will be advertised on a weekly basis. Properties will be advertised in the following ways:

- **Lincs Homefinder Website** – www.lincshomefinder.co.uk All Partner websites allow applicants to view available properties and apply 'on-line' for properties of their choice. Access to the website is available in some of the Partner's reception areas.
- **Reception Areas** – All Partners advertise all properties available within the Scheme in their reception areas.
- **CBL Property Available List** – This is available on request and circulated to stakeholders and for a small fee (if not on the Assisted Persons List) be sent to applicants home
- **Newspaper** – Partners may advertise their properties in the local press.
- **Remote locations** – Other locations around the Partnership area are used to display property adverts. These will be advertised across the partnership area and on all partner websites.

3.3 PROMOTION OF OTHER HOUSING OPTIONS

Information will also be provided about other housing options we are able to offer advice and assistance with, including:

- Help to stay in current home
- Rent Deposit Schemes and other ways to access privately rented properties
- Mutual exchanges
- Help to access private sale properties
- Shared ownership
- Affordable Home Ownership Options i.e Firstbuy, Rent to Homebuy.

3.4 PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS

Properties advertised will, wherever possible, carry a photograph of the property (or similar) and will always have a full description of the property. This description will include the following information:

- Property address
- The type of property (house, flat, etc)
- Rent charged/service charges

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- Amenities in the area
- The tenure type for the property (social rented, shared ownership, etc)
- The number of bedrooms the property has
- Services provided (e.g. warden, caretaker, cleaning)
- Any local connection criteria
- The level of accessibility the property has for people with mobility problems/wheelchair users
- Any adaptations (e.g. disabled facilities etc)
- The heating type
- Any age restrictions
- Indication of the estimated demand for the property (high/medium/low)
- Whether pets are allowed
- Availability of outside space (garden, etc)
- Availability of parking
- SimonSpecial information
- Property size qualification
- Whether the property is available to all applicants or transfer applicants only

Applicants must qualify for the size of the property. Applicants will have been informed of the size and type of property they qualify for when they registered with the scheme.

Adverts also give information on who will be eligible to bid for the property. For example if the property is a sheltered housing unit the advert may state that only applicants above a certain age or those with assessed support needs.

3.5 BIDDING FOR A PROPERTY

Where an applicant meets the bidding criteria they may bid for that property within the deadline given. Applicants may use any of the following methods to make a bid:

- By phone,
- Via the website www.lincshomefinder.co.uk,
- By post,
- Through the assisted persons process (see section 2.26 for more details),
- In person at any of the Partners' reception areas,
- By text message (may not be available immediately).

Where a property has been advertised and no bids have been received, the property may then be allocated on a first come first served basis providing that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria.

3.6 DEADLINE FOR BIDS

Properties will normally be advertised in weekly cycles normally starting on a Wednesday. All property adverts will clearly state a deadline by which bids for those properties must be received, this will normally be Monday's at noon (5 days following start of cycle). Bids received after the specified deadline will not be considered under any circumstances.

3.7 NON QUALIFYING BIDS

Applicants are restricted to making 2 bids in each bid cycle. Applicants will not be considered for any property without meeting the qualifying criteria details in the advert. For example, a single person would not be considered for a three bedroom property.

3.8 SELECTION OF SUCCESSFUL BIDS

At the end of the advertising period, applicants who have bid for a property will be short listed according to the letting policy criteria and any qualifying criteria on the property. The successful applicant for each property will be the one who qualifies for the property, with preference given to the relevant banding, and with the earliest banding date, subject to the provisions set out below. Additional verification checks will be undertaken at this stage to ensure the applicant still qualifies for the offer of accommodation.

3.9 MAKING AN OFFER

At the close of the bidding process a list will be produced in priority and date order. The successful applicant will be contacted by the Housing Officer from the relevant partner landlord whose property they have applied for, to arrange for an accompanied viewing. They will then be offered the property.

Applicants will usually be contacted within **3 working days** of the bid cycle closing. If an applicant cannot be contacted following multiple attempts the next person on the shortlist will be contacted. It is, therefore, important that all applicants ensure they are contactable or else they may lose out on a property they have applied for.

Applicants have up to **2 working days** to decide whether to accept the offer of accommodation. If no response is received after **2 working days** then the next person on the shortlist will be offered the property. If the applicant refuses the offer, the property will be offered to the next person on the shortlist, and so on until the property is let.

The Partnership reserves the right to carry out an assessment on applicants to ensure the particular property is appropriate for their needs before contacting them or making an offer. If, following such an assessment, the scheme partner deems the property not to be suitable for the applicant, then it will be offered to the next applicant on the short list.

Offers of accommodation may be withdrawn if it is found that the information supplied by the applicant was incorrect or if they are deemed to be unsuitable to be a tenant due to their behaviour (eg they have accrued rent arrears that were not previously known about).

3.10 REFUSALS OF OFFERS OR NON BIDDING

If an applicant refuses 3 offers, (unless homeless, see section 2.14), they will be asked to attend an interview regarding their housing requirements. If a Partner considers such refusals were made unreasonably by the applicant, the application will be re-considered and Partners reserve the right to change the banding date to the date of the most recent unreasonable refusal. We will contact the applicant to offer support and assistance and verify their circumstances.

All applicants in Band 1 will be monitored regularly to establish if any suitable properties have been advertised. If eligible properties have been advertised the applicant may be interviewed to establish why they have not bid, and their assessment may be reassessed (see Section 4.4 on Partnership Decisions)

Applicants who do not make any bids against vacancies will be monitored and contacted to determine the reason. This will assist Partners in ascertaining if any assistance is required to participate in the scheme.

3.11 FEEDBACK ON LETTINGS

An important part of the Scheme is the need to give applicants feedback on allocated properties. This will help applicants make an informed evaluation of their housing options. Partners will provide feedback, on the website detailing the results of the social rented properties that have previously been advertised. The information provided for each property will be:

- Property size and type
- The location
- The number of bids
- Band of the successful applicant
- Application or banding date of the successful applicant
- Any local connection to the district or partnership

The partners will never include any personal details of the successful applicants in the feedback. This feedback is very important to applicants as it will help to identify which property types and areas are the most popular and so where their best chances are of making a successful bid. It will also allow applicants the knowledge of whether they would be better served by pursuing one of the alternative options to social housing we will be promoting through the scheme.

Feedback information may also be available at remote locations and in partner offices.

3.12 PROPERTIES EXCLUDED FROM THE SCHEME

The Partnership reserves the right to exclude certain properties and housing schemes from the Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Examples of where this may occur include (but are not limited to) where a property is needed urgently to deal with an emergency. Specialist accommodation for older people may also be let outside the CBL Scheme for example extra care schemes for the elderly.

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In exceptional circumstances properties may be withdrawn from an advertising cycle or scheme, those applicants who may have already expressed an interest in any such property will be notified of the reasons why.

The majority of vacant social housing properties in the Partnership area will be let through the CBL Scheme.

3.13 PROPERTY TYPES

The Policy covers the letting of a range of property types throughout the area. These properties range from bed-sitting rooms to six bedroom houses. All properties will be advertised, stating who can bid for them.

Individual Housing Providers always endeavour to make the best possible use of their stock in terms of size and suitability when setting the criteria for eligibility. For example, ground floor flats may be reserved for people with a disability. Housing Providers may also choose to exercise some discretion and invite bids from couples with 1 child for a 3 bed house if, for example, a particular village or area only has 3 bed houses.

The Partnership can amend the bid criteria of previously advertised properties to widen the eligibility and enable successful bids to be made.

Any local letting criteria will be specified on the advert: **see section 3.17.**

3.14 SHELTERED HOUSING

Sheltered Housing is accommodation designed specifically for people of retirement age. Residents pay an additional charge as well as the rent, for services provided by a Warden/Support Co-ordinator. In exceptional circumstances, younger people may be considered if they require the support of the scheme support co-ordinator and cannot be housed in any other type of accommodation.

The Partners may have different age restrictions for sheltered housing. The minimum age for each sheltered property will be clearly stated in each advert.

Partners may carry out a needs and risk assessment for applicants who bid for sheltered housing properties to ensure the services provided are appropriate to their needs. This will be done as part of the offer process. Also see Section 2.7.

3.15 LOCAL CONNECTION

To ensure local housing needs are met, properties advertised through this Scheme will be labelled as available to applicants with a local connection to either, North Kesteven, City of Lincoln, West Lindsey or all of the Central Scheme. The relevant local connection requirement will be clearly detailed in the property advert. However, some properties will be advertised without a local connection requirement so that all applicants can be considered.

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To be considered as having a local connection to a local authority area or Central Scheme one of the following must apply, applicants must:

- Be currently resident in any partner district and have been so for at least the last SIX months,
- Have previously lived in any partner district area for a continuous period of TWELVE months (whilst aged 18 or over) in the last FIVE YEARS,
- Have family members who are currently resident in any partner district. Family members are defined as parents or guardians, adult children or brothers or sisters who have lived here continuously for the last FIVE YEARS,
- Have their current main place of permanent work in any partner district for a continuous period of TWELVE months.

Proof will be required in all of the above cases. Applicants will be sent confirmation of which area(s) they have a local connection to.

This local connection definition does not apply to Local Lettings Policies or Section 106 agreement, **See Section 3.17**

In cases of determined homelessness (ie: applicant(s) issued s184 homelessness decision letter), the applicant(s) will only have ONE local connection and that will be with the authority area where the housing duty has been accepted.

Serving members of the Armed Forces, are not responsible for the transient nature of their employment, local connection can therefore be gained through their current residency, location they currently work from and their residency prior to their service.

In respect of ex-serving members of the Armed Forces, or bereaved spouses/civil partners, their residency and employment for up to 5 years from date of discharge from service will be taken into account.

In exceptional cases the Lincs Homefinder Review Panel has the discretion to award an application a local connection to either an individual Partner or to the Partnership as a whole.

3.16 DIRECT LETS

The majority of available properties will be advertised and open for eligible households to place bids through the Choice Based Lettings Scheme. However, there are circumstances where a property may be let outside of the scheme by a direct letting.

This may be done for a variety of reasons and examples include:

- Households accepted as homeless who have previously failed to bid for properties that were available and suitable for their needs,
- Existing tenants who need to be re-housed as a result of proposed redevelopment or because major work is required to their existing property, which would be unreasonable to carry out until it was empty,

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- Existing tenants who need to move because of a violent incident or the threat of violence that is likely to be carried out, and enforcement action has not resolved the matter,
- The renewal of a flexible-secure tenancy
- In some instances where a Partner has entered into a reciprocal arrangement with another housing provider,
- Higher levels of supported accommodation are needed or are no longer needed, such as extra care schemes.

Each of the Partners will make reasonable efforts to assist other agencies that are required to help re-house people. This includes witness protection work undertaken by the Police where, in some cases, very limited information may be available before an offer of housing is made. These will be carefully recorded and monitored by each Partner to ensure that they are dealt with appropriately and consistently.

Applicants who are eligible for direct lettings will normally be made one offer of suitable accommodation. If they do not accept the property the relevant partner may decide to make no further offers to them. They will be able to request a review of any decision on the suitability of a property or a decision not to make a further offer.

Properties let through direct lettings will not be advertised through the CBL scheme, but information will normally be made available to indicate that the letting took place. This will not be done if there is good reason, such as the need to re-house someone threatened with violence.

3.17 LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES AND SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

Local Lettings Policies are usually introduced to meet a particular local need and have an overall positive effect on estates. For example, if an estate had a high level of anti-social behaviour, applicants who bid for the advertised property would have a criminal check completed to ensure they were suitable for the property.

There are a number of Local Lettings Policies throughout the area. To be considered for a property within one of these schemes, the applicant would have to meet the criteria listed in the advert. For example applicants may need to have children over a certain age. Suitable applicants for tenancies will be selected from those who bid for the properties and invited for interview with the Housing Provider, the Council or Police. Selection will be based on the interview, employment, current accommodation and the history of the applicants.

When new developments are advertised restrictions may have been set on the development by the Planning Department of the Local Authority, these are known as Section 106 agreements. These are legal agreements between local authorities and developers, which are linked to a planning permission.

For example, the Planning Department may restrict a new development in a village by stating that only people with a local connection to that village can be housed in the available properties. In cases where restrictions have been placed on a development, properties will be advertised appropriately.

3.18 MANAGING RISKS

The primary aim of the Partnership is to maintain balanced and stable communities. In working towards this vision, the Partnership recognises that all people have a right to a home that is more than just somewhere to live. However, there will always be people who are more difficult to integrate into mainstream housing.

It is important to manage the needs of individual applicants with the needs and rights of neighbours and the local community. In order to manage risks to individuals and communities a multi-agency approach must be taken, the Partnership will therefore work closely with the Police, Social Care, Probation, Health and voluntary agencies.

For example, securing accommodation for a high-risk offender will be done in consultation and with the approval of the appropriate agencies and special arrangements will apply in cases where an applicant is considered by the Multi Agency Public Protection Panel Arrangements (MAPPPA). In order to achieve this there may be occasions when the applicant with the highest priority in the scheme may not be offered a particular property. In such cases they will be written to by the relevant Partner explaining the reasons why this has happened.

An integral part of managing risks is to ensure that appropriate support networks are in place and are regularly monitored and reviewed by the Partners involved. Any successful bid will be deferred if the relevant agencies have not provided a relevant Care Plan/Risk Assessment to manage the risk.

3.19 LOCAL COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership actively works with the Local Community Safety Partnership in addressing a range of issues that impact upon community safety. These issues include drugs misuse, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse amongst others. The Partnership reserves the right to liaise with the Local Community Safety Partnership when considering any exclusion, letting or other issues which have an impact upon community safety.

3.20 ALLOCATIONS TO EMPLOYEES AND RELATIONS

The Scheme's application form requires applicants to declare if they or a member of their household are either a member of staff/Councillor/Board Member or related to a member of staff/Councillor/Board Member of any Partner within the Scheme.

In such cases there will be stringent procedures and checks in place to ensure the application is processed in accordance with this Policy and other applications. A Senior Officer will check the processing and assessment. Prior to any offer of accommodation being made to such an applicant the relevant Partner will notify their appropriate Director or Head of Service for approval.

3.21 ADAPTED PROPERTIES

Some properties have been specially adapted for people with disabilities or other special needs eg stairlift, level floor shower. In order to make best use of the housing stock, the partners will always attempt to match such properties to applicants who require these adaptations. Details of any adaptation will be included in the advert and priority will be given to applicants who have been assessed as requiring them.

3.22 RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENTS

These can be of benefit to housing organisations where the supply of properties is insufficient to meet a particular housing need and other options such as mutual exchange are unlikely to be successful. They are also used to assist households who have been accepted as homeless, but either need or wish to live elsewhere

Each of the partners may enter into a reciprocal arrangement with another Council or registered social landlord that is not part of the scheme.

3.23 TENANCY TYPES

The type of tenancy offered to an applicant may differ between Partner organisations. This is because not all Partners are governed by the same legislation. The type of tenancy offered could be;

- A Council Introductory Tenancy,
- A Housing Association Starter Tenancy,
- An Assured Shorthold Tenancy,
- A Secure Tenancy,
- An Assured Tenancy,
- A Flexible Tenancy,
- A Family Intervention Tenancy,
- A non-secure Tenancy.

The type of tenancy to be offered will normally be included in the advert and will be discussed in further detail with the successful applicant before any final decision is made to accept the tenancy.

Joint tenancies will be offered to:

- a) Married couples, unmarried couples and same sex partnerships, provided that both are named on the application form, unless both parties request the tenancy to be granted in a sole name, stating their reasons;
- b) Adults living together as friends, providing that satisfactory documentary evidence is produced confirming that they have shared a home continuously for the previous 12 months or both names have been included on the application, since the date of registration;
- c) Applicants and their live-in carers, where the Council considers it to be justified.

Final Version

In all other circumstances, single tenancies will be offered to the lead applicant.

In cases relating to persons from abroad, the tenancy will only be granted to the individual who is eligible. Whilst the ineligible person cannot be granted a tenancy they can be taken into account in the size of the accommodation to be allocated.

3.24 WITHDRAWING OFFERS AND ADVERTS

Occasionally, a Partner may be required to withdraw a property advert, circumstances for this may include:

- if it becomes apparent that the property will be let through direct lets in accordance with this policy (**see section 3.16**) or
- The current tenant of the property being advertised has withdrawn their notice terminating their tenancy of that property, so the property is no longer available,
- Significantly incorrect information had been advertised in respect of the property or applicants eligibility for that property.

Reasons for the withdrawal of any property adverts will be publicly available.

In exceptional circumstances a senior officer of a Scheme Partner may authorise the withdrawal of an offer. Circumstances may include, but is not limited to:

- where it is clear that an applicant is not capable of understanding the responsibilities associated with being a tenant or they do not clearly understand what they are signing when we ask them to sign a tenancy agreement or associated paperwork.
- The current tenant of the property being advertised has withdrawn their notice terminating their tenancy of that property, so the property is no longer available
- Where an applicant has failed to respond to contact from a Partner **within 2 working days**.

3.25 TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

Existing Council and Housing Association tenants in need of rehousing can make an application to join the Lincs Homefinder Scheme. Tenants must have been in their current home for at least 12 months.

In exceptional cases tenants will be allowed to register if they have been in their current home for less than 12 months but each of these cases will be considered on an individual basis by the Lincs Homefinder Review Panel.

3.26 VOIDS REPAIRS/UPGRADES – CUSTOMER CHOICE

Each Partner has a minimum lettings standard for empty properties. Applicants should refer to the appropriate Partner for further information on these.

There are occasions where additional improvements to a property over and above the minimum standard are required. In such cases, it is likely that these will be carried out after the new tenant has moved in. Wherever possible, the new tenant will be given choice regarding colour, design, finish, etc.

4 REVIEW OF DECISIONS

4.1 REVIEW OF DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS OR OFFERS

All applicants have the right to ask for a review of a decision, if they consider they have been unfairly or unreasonably treated having regard to the provisions of this Lettings Policy. For example, a decision about:

- Exclusion or removal from the Housing Register,
- Type of property applicant is eligible for,
- Suitability of accommodation offered,
- Information that has been taken into account when assessing the Housing Register application,
- The band into which they have been placed,
- Any instances of an application being “passed over”,
- Any decision taken in relation to their Registration,

Initial requests for reviews will be dealt with by the organisation within the Partnership that has been mainly dealing with that application, ie: the organisation that has notified the applicant on the issue they would like to be reviewed.

Such requests for a review should be addressed initially to the Housing Needs Manager, preferably in writing, unless previously involved in the decision. In some circumstances the request will be referred to the Housing Manager, for a review of a decision.

Requests for a review will be acknowledged within 2 working days and the applicant will be notified of the review decision, within 5 days of receipt of all relevant information. If an applicant is unhappy with the initial review decision they should notify the Housing Manager, in writing, within 21 days of receipt of that decision, requesting a second review.

If still unhappy with the outcome of review, the case may be passed to the Lincs Homefinder Review Panel, where it will be considered by a partner not involved in the original decision making

If the applicant is still unhappy, they have the right to have their case considered by the Ombudsman see *Section 4.4*

4.2 HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

Requests for reviews of decisions made in respect of an applicant's homeless application are subject to procedures outside of this scheme, applicants should contact the Local Authority dealing with their homeless application for further information.

4.3 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Each organisation within the Partnership has a formal Complaint's Procedure, please refer to **APPENDIX F** for contact details.

Partners individual complaint's procedures will apply for complaints arising other than those relating to the assessment and administration of applications within the scheme as detailed in *Section 4.1*

4.4 OMBUDSMAN

The Local Government Ombudsman is independent of all government departments, councils and politicians. The Ombudsman examines complaints without taking sides.

In most cases the complainant must have pursued the matter through the Council's own complaints procedure before a complaint can be considered by the Ombudsman

Contact details for the Local Government Ombudsman are

- Email advice@lgo.org.uk
- Telephone 0300 061 0614
- Text 'call back' on **0762 480 4299**.
- Fax us on **024 7682 0001**.
- Write to the **Local Government Ombudsman**,
PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH.

From 1 April 2013 all complaints regarding the landlord functions of local authorities will be dealt with by the Independent Housing Ombudsman to ensure greater consistency across the social housing sector.

4.5 PARTNERSHIP DECISIONS

All Partners will aim to deal with individual enquiries at the initial point of contact including correspondence from Members of Parliament. Where necessary the Partners will meet to agree an appropriate response or decision(s).

The Lincs Homefinder Partnership Review Panel will meet on a regular basis to consider the following:

- Managing Risks,
- Exclusions from the Scheme,
- Requests for Reviews (once Partner has undertaken initial review in accordance with **Section 4.1**),
- Applications that would normally be passed over at point of offer but have a significant change of circumstances,
- To award a Local Connection, in exceptional circumstances,
- All other cases that warrant consideration.

5 MONITORING AND REVIEW

5.1 THE SCHEME

In order to ensure that the Scheme is achieving its aims of being as open and accessible as possible to all members of the community the Partnership will monitor the following:

- The number of applicants on the register by band each quarter
- The number of allocations in the financial year (cumulative) each quarter
 - By property type (and bedrooms),
 - Separate listings for general needs and sheltered housing,
 - Whether Homeless, transfer or general,
 - Whether restricted (i.e. eligibility criteria advertised),
 - Bids overlooked,
 - Made to out of area applicants,
 - How many allocations by banding,
 - Properties let outside of the scheme,
 - Local connection with Partners and Scheme,
- Applicants who have made a bid and been “Passed over” due to a housing related debt,
- Property Feedback for each allocation as follows weekly:
 - Address of property,
 - No of beds,
 - Type,
 - General / Sheltered,
 - Property band,
 - No of bids,
 - Refusals,
 - Successful applicant bid,
 - Application/banding dates,
 - Local connection with Partners or Scheme.
- List of all properties let by the scheme for current financial year each quarter,
- Refusals and number of complaints about the scheme each quarter,
- Non bidders, customer satisfaction & performance against service standards annually,
- The numbers accessing help to bid through the assisted list and the reasons for being on the assisted list each quarter,
- Monitoring will also take place to test equality of access and opportunity, and levels of satisfaction across:
 - All ethnic groups using the scheme,
 - Applicants on the assisted list.

5.2 THE LETTINGS POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually to:

- a) Ensure that every application is dealt with fairly and consistently in accordance with Partners Equal Opportunities Policy and relevant legislation,
- b) Ensure that priority is given to those in the most housing need. For example: overcrowded, poor or unsatisfactory housing arrangements, urgent medical, social or financial difficulties,
- c) Give adequate priority to homeless people, whilst maintaining a balance between the needs of the homeless and other applicants in housing need,
- d) Ensure performance meets local and national performance indicators that will be made available and reported to the Lincs Homefinder Partnership Board or other relevant bodies, as required.

The Housing Needs Manager at each organisation within the Scheme Partnership is responsible for ensuring that all lettings are made in accordance with the agreed policy.

5.3 CHANGES TO LETTINGS POLICY

The Partnership will consult with a wide range of stakeholders including existing applicants on any proposed major changes to this Lettings Scheme and any implications of such changes.

5.4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Partnership is committed to equal opportunities in the provision of its housing services. It will seek to ensure that no housing applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, religion, disability, race, age, colour, ethnic or national origin, health, sexuality or other reason. This list is not intended to be exclusive but demonstrates the Partnership's intentions.

The Partnership will have regard to and implement the provisions of the Race Relations Code of Practice in Rented Housing. The Council will also abide by the Equality Act 2012.

To ensure that applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origin, sexuality or religion there is a system in place for recording allocations according to ethnic origin, whilst not enabling it to be taken into consideration at assessment or letting stages.

The Partnership subscribes to a language translation service. This service will be used to ensure that the applicants from different ethnic origin have fair and appropriate access to housing and related services.

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The Lincs Homefinder Partnership Board will ensure that the Lettings Policy, procedures and practices do not directly or indirectly discriminate, and will monitor this on a regular basis. Changes will be made if it is established that practices or procedures may be contravening relevant legislation.

The Partnership aims to promote good race relations and equal opportunity throughout the community. Copies of each organisations equalities and diversity statements are available upon request.

5.5 AUDIT TRAIL FOR LETTINGS AND INDEPENDENT AUDITING ARRANGEMENTS

To ensure a consist approach to application processing, assessment, shortlisting and lettings, the scheme will be subject to a random cross-section of audit checks within the Partnership and subject to external audit checks in accordance with each Partners organisational requirements

5.6 PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Lincs Homefinder Partnership Board will consist of a senior manager and Councillor/Board Member from each Partner Organisation and operate to agreed terms of reference. The purpose of the Board is to ensure the scheme meets its aims and objectives through regular monitoring of the scheme. The Partnership Board will meet to consider:

- Target Setting
- Performance monitoring
- Resource and Financial implications
- Budgetary monitoring

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ASBO | Anti-Social Behaviour Order |
| Adequately Housed | Living in a property that is suitable for your needs |
| Applicant(s)” | A person or persons submitting an application for Registration |
| Application | An application to be included in the scheme and considered for alternative housing |
| Area | The area of City of Lincoln, North Kesteven or West Lindsey |
| Banding Scheme | How applicants are prioritised in the scheme |
| Bid | The process of applicants saying which property they would like to live in |
| CBL | Choice Based Lettings |
| Complaints Procedure | Details on how to make a complaint and how a complaint will be dealt with |
| Council | City of Lincoln Council, North Kesteven District Council or West Lindsey District Council being the Local Authority |
| Household | People who will be moving with you |
| Housing Related Debt | Rechargeable repairs, current or former rent arrears, rent advance/deposits or homeless prevention payments |
| NFA | You have no fixed accommodation and are staying between friends |
| Lincs Homefinder Review Panel | Group of representatives from each Partner organisation |
| Lincs Homefinder Partnership Board | Group of senior Officers and Councillors/Board Members from each Partner organisation, to monitor the performance and effectiveness of the Lincs Homefinder Scheme |
| Partner | A member organisation of this Scheme |
| Partnership | Organisations listed at <i>Section 1.1</i> |
| Policy | The Choice Based Lettings Policy |
| Registration | The method of applying for housing |
| Registration Form | The form which must be completed to apply for housing |
| Repayment Agreement | An agreement made between the Partners and the applicant to repay any housing related debt |
| RSL | Registered Social Landlords, these are landlords that provide social housing |
| Rough Sleepers | Sleeping rough on the streets |
| Service Standards | The service standards set out at Section XX |
| Stakeholders | Other agencies/organisation with an interest or involvement with the scheme |

PARTNER PROFILE AND STOCK SUMMARY

CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL

Profile: The City Council provides a wide range of housing services to the residents of Lincoln including allocating the council's own properties and the Housing Association properties in the area, advising on housing options in the city, estate and property management and repairs. In addition to this the council also provides the Homelessness and Housing Advice functions for households of all tenures.

Stock Summary:

| Bedsit | Flats | | | Maisonette | | | Houses | | | | | Bungalows | | |
|------------|-------------|-------|-------|------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------------|-------|-------|
| | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 5+ Bed | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed |
| N/A | 2665 | 638 | 19 | 0 | 258 | 17 | 1 | 1791 | 1721 | 115 | 12 | 345 | 160 | 64 |
| 126 | 3322 | | | 275 | | | 3640 | | | | | 569 | | |

City of Lincoln Council, 01/04/2011

NORTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Profile: The District Council provides a comprehensive housing service to tenants and members of the public. The Housing and Property Services are responsible for all aspects of managing the Council's 3811 units of housing stock including lettings, rent collection, repairs & estate management in general. In addition it provides housing advice, homeless, housing register and shared ownership services to all clients regardless of tenure.

Stock Summary:

| Bedsit | Flats | | | Maisonette | Houses | | | | Bungalows | | |
|----------|------------|-------|-------|------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 3 Bed | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed |
| N/A | 84 | 325 | 6 | 12 | 3 | 298 | 1411 | 49 | 310 | 1287 | 24 |
| 2 | 415 | | | 12 | 1761 | | | | 1621 | | |

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Profile:

ACIS GROUP LIMITED

Profile:

Stock Summary

| Bedsit | Flats | | | Maisonette | Houses | | | | Bungalows | | |
|----------|------------|-------|-------|------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 3 Bed | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed |
| N/A | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 487 | | | 66 | 1925 | | | | 1109 | | |

LINCS HOMEFINDER – PRIORITY BANDINGS

BAND 1

| REF | BAND CRITERIA | ASSESSMENT/ EVIDENCE |
|------|---|--|
| 1.1 | Homeless Households – Accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need | Homeless Decision Letter (S184) issued by a Partner organisation |
| 1.2 | Enduring Rough Sleepers | Verification to be agreed together with accepted support package from relevant agency |
| 1.3 | Urgent Medical Applicants who have a permanent medical condition, illness or disability and as a result are unable to continue occupation in their current accommodation | Housing Needs/Options Team - Confirmed by an Officer using an agreed criterion. |
| 1.4 | Urgent Welfare Needs | Housing Needs/Options Team - Assessment taking into account level of support by relevant agency |
| 1.5 | Approved ADHAC Cases | Housing Needs/Options Team - Determination from ADHAC |
| 1.6 | Applicants who have succeeded to a tenancy but current property is not suitable | Housing Needs/Options Team, as determined by Section 87 Housing Act 1985 and Section 17 Housing Act 1988 |
| 1.7 | Applicant(s) with Statutory Overcrowding | Housing Needs/Options Team - Homevisit |
| 1.8 | Applicants lacking 2 or more bedrooms - for permanent members of household as their main residence | Housing Needs/Options Team - Evidence of Current Accommodation - Evidence of household |
| 1.9 | High Level of Disrepair (not applicable if caused through willful neglect/damage by the applicant) | Private Sector Renewal Team - Copy of Prohibition Notice or Compulsory Purchase Order |
| 1.10 | Existing RSL tenants occupying an adapted property, where the adaptation is no longer required AND there is a demonstrated need for that adaptation and property | Housing Needs/Options Team - statement from tenant - analysis of demand - subject to regular review |
| 1.11 | Applicants with a combination of 2 “Band 2” Needs (excluding applicants who have deliberately worsened their circumstances) | Housing Needs/Options Team |

BAND 2

| REF | BAND CRITERIA | ASSESSMENT/ EVIDENCE |
|------|--|---|
| 2.1 | Homeless Households – likely to be assessed as unintentionally homeless but not in priority need | Housing Needs/ Options Team - Applicants will have to have participated in a housing options interview with Partner organisation |
| 2.2 | Households threatened with Homelessness within 12 weeks through no fault of their own with no legal redress and likely to be priority need if actually homeless. | Housing Needs/Options Team To determine likely to be in priority need and unlikely to be resolved, applicants will have to have participated in a housing options interview with a Partner organisation |
| 2.3 | Those with formal discharge notice of leaving the Armed Forces | Applicants will have to have participated in a housing options interview with a Partner organisation |
| 2.4 | Medical Need - Households which include a person (or persons) whose illness or disability is made worse by their present home and who need a move to improve the effect on their medical condition or mobility . | Housing Needs/Options Team Confirmed by an officer using an agreed criterion. |
| 2.5 | Applicant(s) WITH dependant children or pregnant lacking access to essential facilities, or sharing facilities with a household not moving with applicant (if awarded 2.8 will not apply) | Housing Needs/Options Team Homevisit and/or proof of residency |
| 2.6 | Tenants of partnership Council/RSL accommodation under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms and prepared to move to smaller property leaving vacant possession | Housing Needs/Options Team |
| 2.7 | Applicants currently occupying supported accommodation that is no longer required due to ability to maintain more independent accommodation | Housing Needs/Options Team Confirmation from support agency and appropriate referral |
| 2.8 | Applicant(s) lacking 1 bedroom - a medical need for additional bedroom - household with permanent residency of child(ren) | Housing Needs/Options Team - Evidence of Current Accommodation - Evidence of household - Medical evidence |
| 2.9 | Established family forced to live separately due to housing conditions (previously having lived together as a household) | Housing Needs/Options Team - Evidence of previous address |
| 2.10 | Financial Difficulties - Experiencing financial difficulties that could be resolved through move to alternative accommodation eg: essential expenditure exceeds income or in receipt of maximum local housing allowance and pays a top up | Housing Needs/Options Team - Financial Assessment of income and essential expenditure - applicant has undertake income maximisation and/or money advice |

Final Version

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|------|--|--|
| 2.11 | Applicants with a combination of 3 “Band 3” Needs (excluding applicants who have been found intentionally homeless or to have deliberately worsened their circumstances) | Housing Needs/Options Team - Assessment |
| 2.12 | Applicant(s) with “Band 1” housing needs but who have deliberately worsened their circumstances, time limited award (up to 6 months) | Housing Needs/Options Team Assessment |
| 2.13 | Applicant(s) with “Band1” housing needs but who (or member of their household) have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour in accordance with Section 2.12 | Lincs Homefinder Review Panel Assessment inc copy of any enforcement . Eg: demotion of tenancy, ABC |

BAND 3

| REF | BAND CRITERIA | ASSESSMENT/ EVIDENCE |
|------|--|--|
| 3.1 | Homeless Households - Accepted as homeless but intentionally homeless | Homeless Decision Letter (S184) issued by a Partner organisation |
| 3.2 | Threatened with Homelessness within 12 weeks through no fault of their own with no legal redress. Applicants will have to have participated in a housing options interview | Housing Needs/Options Team determine unlikely to be in priority need and unlikely to be resolved |
| 3.3 | Medical Need - Households which include a person (or persons) whose illness or disability is made worse by their present home and who need a move to improve the effect on their medical condition or mobility . | Housing Needs/Options Team Confirmed by an officer using an agreed criterion. |
| 3.4 | Welfare Needs - need to move to provide/receive support - Applicants living separately wishing to live together but unable to do so due to housing conditions (previously have not lived together as a household) - Isolation - no local shops or facilities, limited access to public transport and has no use of own transport during the day | Housing Needs/Options Team - confirmation from support provider and receiver - previous joint address |
| 3.5 | Applicant(s) WITH NO dependant children lacking access to essential facilities, or sharing facilities with a household not moving with applicant (if awarded 3.6 will not apply) | Housing Needs/Options Team - Homevisit |
| 3.6 | Applicant(s) lacking 1 bedroom - inc. household with proven regular overnight access of child(ren) | Housing Needs/Options Team - Evidence of Current Accom - Evidence of household - Letter from main carer |
| 3.7 | Tenants of partnership Council/RSL accommodation under-occupying by 1 bedroom, prepared to move to smaller property leaving vacant possession | Housing Needs/Options Team |
| 3.8 | Employment - need to move to improve access permanent employment | Confirmed of offer of employment, no reasonable access to transport or access cost is prohibitive |
| 3.9 | Level of Disrepair (not applicable if caused through willful neglect/damage by the applicant) | Private Sector Renewal Team -Copy of inspection/assessment |
| 3.10 | Applicant(s) with "Band 2" housing needs but who have deliberately worsened their circumstances, time limited award (up to 6 months) | Housing Solutions Team |
| 3.11 | Applicant(s) with "Band 2" housing needs but who (or member of their household) have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour in accordance with Section 2.12 | Lincs Homefinder Review Panel Assessment inc copy of any enforcement . Eg: demotion of tenancy, ASBO |

BAND 4

| REF | BAND CRITERIA | ASSESSMENT/ EVIDENCE |
|------------|---|--|
| 4.1 | Applicant(s) adequately housed but expressing desire to move or for social housing | Housing Needs/Options Team |
| 4.2 | Applicant(s) that are financial able to resolve their own housing needs | Housing Needs/Options Team - Financial Assessment |
| 4.3 | Applicant(s) with “Band 3” housing needs but who have deliberately worsened their circumstances, time limited award (up to 6 months) | Housing Needs/Options Team |
| 4.4 | Applicant(s) with “Band 3” housing needs but who (or member of their household) have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour in accordance with Section 2.12 | Lincs Homefinder Review Panel Assessment inc copy of any enforcement . Eg: demotion of tenancy, ASBO |

PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY**Type and size of property usually allocated to applicants on the Housing Register**

When letting properties, consideration is given to making the best use of the housing stock, general availability of the property type, local conditions and the applicant(s) urgency for re-housing. It is important that applicants check each property advert for household eligibility before making a bid, as there may be variations between Partners. The Partnership will not allow any offer of tenancy to applicant(s) that will lead to statutory overcrowding upon the creation of a tenancy

| PROPERTY SIZE | HOUSEHOLD COMBINATION CONSIDER FOR AN OFFER |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Bed-sitter | Single person |
| 1 bed flat | Single person or couple |
| 2 bed flat 2 bed maisonette | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant(s) who are pregnant or with one child, or 2 children of same sex, or children of opposite sex under the age of 7yrs. • Applicant(s) with a proven medical need for a carer to sleep over on regular basis. • Applicant(s) with proven (letter from main carer) regular overnight access to child(ren) • Couple • Single persons (though priority may be given to those with a need for 2 bedrooms) |
| 3 bed flat 3 bed maisonette | Applicant(s) with up to 4 children. |
| 1 bed house | Single person or couple |
| 2 bed house | Applicant(s) who are pregnant or with one child, or 2 children of the same sex, or 2 children of opposite sex under the age of 7yrs. |
| 3 bed house | Applicant(s) with 2 or more children. Some Partners may consider those with 1 child |
| 4 bed house | Applicant(s) with 3 or more children |
| 1 bed bungalow | Single Person or Couple aged 60+ yrs (age restriction may vary between Partners) or with a medical need for ground floor accommodation. (For designated, sheltered schemes applicants must require supported accommodation). |
| 2 bed bungalow | Applicant(s) over 60+yrs (age restriction may vary between Partners) or with a medical need for ground floor accommodation. Eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A medical need for a carer to sleep over on a regular basis. • Applicant or couple, with another resident family member residing with them - E.g. son, daughter, brother, sister, parent. • Couple. • Single persons (though priority may be given to those with a need for 2 bedrooms) (For designated, sheltered schemes applicants must require supported accommodation). |
| 3 bed bungalow | Applicants with a medical need for ground floor accommodation and require 3 bedrooms. |
| Specially adapted properties | E.g. dwelling with a stair lift, level floor showers, wheelchair access. Households with a proven need for the particular adaptation, having regard to the usual household letting criteria. |

Grounds for Possession

Where the Partnership is satisfied that an applicant, or member of the applicant's household is guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant (earlier paragraph 2.3), they may consider grounds that would have entitled a housing authority to a Possession Order under schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985, if they had been a tenant.

These include:

1. Rent arrears;
2. Breach of tenancy conditions;
3. Conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance, annoyance or is anti-social to persons in the locality;
4. Conviction for using the property for an immoral or illegal purpose;
5. Conviction for an arrestable offence committed in the property or in the locality of the property;
6. Under-occupation of the property following the breakdown of a relationship, due to violence or threats of violence;
7. Deterioration in the condition of the property;
8. A false statement that induced the landlord to grant the tenancy;
9. The charging of or paying a premium on an exchange of a tenancy;

PARTNER CONTACTS FOR COMPLAINTS

ACIS Group Limited

Post: Acis Group Limited, Acis House, Bridge Street, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire,
DN21 1GG
Email: info@acisgroup.co.uk
Tel: 0800 027 2057

City of Lincoln Council

Post: City of Lincoln Council, City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln, LN1 1DD
Email: housing@lincoln.gov.uk
Tel: 01522 873641

North Kesteven District Council

Post: Complaints Officer at FREEPOST NKDC
Email: Complaints@n-kesteven.gov.uk
Tel: 01529 414155 or 01522 699699

West Lindsey District Council

Post: Customer Services, West Lindsey District Council, Marshall's Yard,
Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, DN21 2NA.
Email: customer.services@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Tel: 01427 676676

Final Version

If you require this information in another language or format please contact your local council, contact details are provided below.

Polish

Jeśli potrzebuje Pan/Pani otrzymać te informacje w innym języku, należy skontaktować się ze swoją lokalną radą. Dane kontaktowe podane są poniżej.

Russian

Если эта информация требуется вам на другом языке, обратитесь в местную администрацию. Контактные данные приведены ниже.

Slovak

Ak budete potrebovať tieto informácie v inom jazyku, kontaktujte svoj miestny úrad. Kontaktné údaje sú uvedené nižšie.

Bengali

আপনার যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন ভাষায় দরকার হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আপনার স্থানীয় কাউন্সিলের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন। যোগাযোগ করার তথ্য নচি দেওয়া হয়েছে।

Czech

Jestliže potřebuje tyto informace v jiném jazyce, prosíme, kontaktujte Váš místní úřad, viz níže uvedené kontakty.

Latvian

Ja jums nepieciešama šī informācija citā valodā, lūdzu, sazinieties ar savu vietējo pilsētas padomi. Kontaktinformācija norādīta zemāk.

Lithuanian

Jei ši informacija Jums reikalinga kita kalba, prašom kreiptis į vietinę savivaldybę, kurios kontaktinė informacija yra pateikta toliau.

City of Lincoln Council

Property Shop
City Hall
Beaumont Fee
Lincoln
LN1 1DD
01522 873777

North Kesteven District Council

Council Offices
Kesteven Street
Sleaford
NG34 7EF
01529 414155

West Lindsey District Council

Home Options Team
Guildhall
Marshall's yard
Gainsborough
DN21 2NA
01427 676676

If you would like a copy of this in large, clear print, audio, Braille or in another language, please contact your local council, contact details are provided above.