**Suggested Changes to City of Lincoln Councils Allocations Policy –2025 Consultation**

| **CURRENT** | **SUGGESTED CHANGE** |
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| 1.5.6 | Information Commissioners Office contact number |  |  |
|  | 01625 545 700 |  | 0303 123 1113 |
| 4.5.1 | Residency Qualification |  |  |
|  | Currently living in supported accommodation in Lincoln and have previously lived in Lincoln for at least 24 months within the last 5 years prior to accessing supportedBe an applicant who has been accepted under homeless duty with the City of Lincoln Council or as a reciprocal arrangement with another housing organisation  | Additional bullet point added | Those Leaving Supported Accommodation who were awarded a local connection by COLC under a homeless duty to enter that accommodation/service.Be an applicant who has been accepted under section 193 (2) main housing duty with the City of Lincoln Council or as a reciprocal arrangement with another housing organisation |
| 4.6 | Existing social housing tenantsCurrently only points 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 | Additional paragraph4.6.3 | Current social housing tenants active on the housing register may be contacted if it is identified there may be a suitable match with another active tenant and a Mutual Exchange would meet both tenants housing needs. |
| 5.1.4 | Certain members of the Armed Forces community are exempt from any residency requirements, by virtue of regulations made under section 160ZA (8). These are:a. Those who are currently serving in the Regular Armed Forces or who were serving in the regular Forces at any time in the 5 years preceding their application for an allocation.  | Update to opening paragraph | Certain members of the Armed Forces community are exempt from any residency requirements, by virtue of regulations made under section 160ZA (8). These are:a. Those who are currently serving or have served in the Regular Armed Forces. |
| 5.1.5 | Assisting Homeless cases into Private Tenancy |  |  |
|  | Where the Council has assisted a homeless household to obtain a tenancy in the private rented sector to prevent or relieve their homelessness, the applicant is able to remain on the housing register in the band (and with the application date) that they were awarded prior to securing a tenancy.  The application will be suspended for the term of the private rented tenancy and will be eligible to become active within 56 days of the date of the tenancy end date, with an effective date of the date the tenancy started. This will be reviewed annually and if the applicant is assessed as having secured adequate accommodation, they may be contacted and advised that their priority is being reduced.  Please note, if you move before the end of your private rented tenancy, you may be liable for rent on two properties and an assessment of affordability will be carried out before any offer of accommodation may be made.  | Update to wording  | Where the Council has financially assisted a homeless household (who would meet the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 priority need criteria) to be housed into the private rented sector, they will have the option to remain on the housing register in the band they were awarded, with the effective date that the Homeless duty ended.    Those who would not meet the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 priority need criteria would be re-assessed on their new housing circumstance.     All those financially assisted into the private rented sector would be required to submit a change of circumstances within 14 days of their tenancy start date or the application may be closed.    Those that have received financial assistance would need to have maintained payment plans relating to all housing related debt in order to remain eligible for the register.    Please note that if an applicant is successful for a property on Homefinder while still in the fixed term of their private tenancy, they may be liable for the rent of both properties until the end of the fixed term of their private tenancy or as otherwise stated in their tenancy agreement.   |
| 5.3.1 | Band One - Homeless |  |  |
|  | Examples:* Statutorily homeless customers that have been awarded a full duty i.e. eligible, homeless, in priority need, unintentionally homeless and with a local connection.
* Homeless applicants that are in the Relief Stage and complying with their Personalised Housing Plan.
 | Wording updated  | Examples:* Homeless applicants where the City of Lincoln Council has a Duty to secure accommodation under the section 193 (2) ‘main housing duty’
* Homeless applicants that are under the Relief Duty, in priority need and complying with their Personalised Housing Plan.
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| 5.3.4 | Band One – Additional needs: General | Additional bullet point added | Add missing bullet point within the examples and add additional bullet point below:Homeless households financially assisted into the private rented sector as per section 5.1.5 of this policy  |
| 5.4.1 | Band Two - Homeless |  |  |
|  | All categories of homeless people who are not statutorily homeless.Examples:Not in priority needHomeless applicants in the prevention stage and complying with their Personalised Housing PlanIntentionally homeless with priority need (if eligible for Homefinder) | Additional bullet points added | All categories of homeless people who are not statutorily homeless.Examples:* Relief duty owed but non-priority decision reached (reviewed when duty has ended).
* Homeless applicants that are owed section 193 (4) duty to provide reasonable assistance to applicants who are Intentionally homeless from accommodation made available to meet the section 184 duty (if eligible for Lincs Homefinder).
* Homeless applicants in the prevention stage and complying with their Personalised Housing Plan.
* Those in supported accommodation under a positive notice, where the homeless relief duty has ended and are not in priority need (reviewed after 6 months).
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| 5.4.4 | Band Two – Additional needs: general  | Additional Bullet points added | Add 2 additional bullet points* Armed Forces community that meet the criteria set out in section 5.1.4 of this policy.
* Homeless households financially assisted into the private rented sector as per section 5.1.5 of this policy
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| 5.5.1 | Band Three |  |  |
|  | Example: Homeless applicants that are assessed as being intentionally homeless  | Wording updated  | Example: Homeless applicants that are owed section 190 (2) duty to provide accommodation to applicants who are intentionally homeless (if eligible for Lincs Homefinder).  |
| 5.10.1 | Length of time in a priority band |   |  |
|  | Applicants in Bands One and Two will normally be given 180 days preference for rehousing through the choice based Allocations scheme. If the customer has failed to bid for a property they may lose their priority preference and be placed in Band Three.Where the Council has a duty to secure accommodation for a statutorily homeless applicant they will be considered for a direct offer of accommodation as soon as a suitable property has been identified. | Wording updated  | Applicants who are placed into Band One due to their urgency to move, will be expected to bid across the city unless specific areas have been agreed with a senior manager, this will be reviewed annually and may be extended with approval from a Senior Manager. If the customer has failed to bid for a suitable property within a year of their effective date, they may have their banding reduced to Band Three for a period of 6 months with an effective date of the date the decision is made. Any applicant who is unable to bid for themselves and do not have any friends/family or support to assist with bidding should contact the housing solutions team to be added to the assisted bidding list.Where the applicant has been awarded a Main Homelessness Duty, they will be considered for a direct offer of accommodation as soon as a suitable property has been identified. |
| 5.11 | Priority Limit Extension |  | This section has been removed |
| 5.11.1 | An applicant may request an extension of their priority award. All requests for extensions will be considered after the applicant has been in the priority bands for over 150 days.  |  | This section has been removed |
| 5.11.2 | The decision on whether to extend the priority award will be determined by: * If there has been a change in the customer’s circumstances since the priority was awarded
* Whether the customer has been bidding for accommodation
* Whether the customer has any support needs relating to their rehousing
* The number of properties being advertised that are suitable for the applicant’s needs
* The level of demand for suitable properties
* The position for properties the applicant has expressed an interest on
* If the customer has completed reasonable actions required by them as part of their Personal Housing Plan under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018.
 |  | This section has been removed |
| 5.11.3 | Notification of the decision of whether to extend the priority award will be sent to the customer and the customer has a right to request a review of the decision if it is not to extend their priority. | 5.10.2 Number amended to fit in with above changes and wording updated | Upon completion of the annual review, applicants will be notified of the decision of whether to extend the priority award. The applicant has a right to request a review of this decision.  |
| 5.12 | Bedroom Requirements | Numbering updated 5.11  | Bedroom RequirementsAll numbering from 5.12 to 5.12.8 to become 5.11 to 5.11.8 |
| 6.1.2  | Adapted properties are normally offered to customers requiring the adaptations, as assessed by an Occupational Therapist. The Council may advertise such properties as giving preference to applicants that require the adaptations. | 6.1.2 text highlighted added | Adapted properties are normally offered to customers requiring the adaptations, as assessed by an Occupational Therapist. The Council may **advertise or direct match** such properties as giving preference to applicants that require the adaptations. |
| 6.1.3 | Sheltered accommodation and older persons schemes are normally offered according to the following criteria: * Applicants in need of supported accommodation who fulfil any determined assessment criteria, this will be determined, where appropriate by a sheltered housing needs assessment, to assess individual needs and independence and the ability of the sheltered service to meet those needs
* Applicants or their partner are 60 years or over, taking into account the requirements of the scheme and community.
 | 6.1.3Wording updated to Independent Living Accom  | Independent Living accommodation and older persons schemes are normally offered according to the following criteria: * Applicants in need of Independent Living  accommodation who fulfil any determined assessment criteria, this will be determined, where appropriate by an Independent Living  Assessment. The households care and support needs will be assessed along with the ability of the scheme/service to meet those needs.
* Applicants or their partner are 60 years or over, taking into account the requirements of the scheme and community.
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| 6.2 | Properties suitable for customers with pets | 6.2Title changed  | Written Permission required  |
| 6.2.1 | If an applicant or tenant wishes to keep a pet in a Council home they require written permission. The Council’s Pet Policy contains further details. | 6.2.1Wording updated  | Examples: If an applicant or tenant wishes to keep a pet in a Council home written permission will be required, your tenancy could be at risk if you do not have permission. Property adverts will advise which properties may be suitable to keep a pet. The Council’s Pets, Medical Assistance Dogs & Emotional Support Animals Policy contains further details.If an applicant wishes to keep and charge a mobility scooter in a council home/building, written permission will be required. If you do not have permission your tenancy could be at risk. The Councils Mobility Scooter policy contains further details.  |
| 6.4.3 | Vacancies will be advertised in the following ways:  * Lincs Homefinder Website – www.lincshomefinder.co.uk The Council’s website directs users to this website to 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 – Registered Providers may advertise vacancies in their reception areas
* Dispersed office locations – the Council and Registered Providers may circulate a list of vacancies to assist with access should any applicant approach then for information
 | 6.4.3Wording updated  | Vacancies will be advertised in the following ways:  * **Lincs Homefinder Website –** www.lincshomefinder.co.uk

 The Council’s website directs users to this website to allow applicants to view available properties and apply ‘on-line’ for properties of their choice. Access to the website is available with any internet enabled device and/or by accessing the open access computers at City Hall.    |
| 7.4.1 | Withdrawal of offers |  |  |
|  | In exceptional circumstances an offer may not be made or may be withdraw, this may include but is not limited to:  * it is clear that an applicant is not capable of understanding the responsibilities associated with being a tenant or they do not understand what they are signing
* current tenant of the property being advertised has withdrawn their notice terminating their tenancy of that property, so the property is no longer available
* applicant has failed to respond to three contact attempts from a Partner
* Partner or landlord believes the property is unaffordable from the onset.
* Identifying information that affects the application
 | Added ‘n’ onto the word withdraw to make it withdrawn and added 6 additional bullet points | * A property is assessed as unsuitable to meet the applicants needs following an assessment/inspection from an Occupational Therapist or other professional.
* A property is deemed to be unsuitable due to any risks posed to or from the applicant within the vicinity of the property/area.
* The applicant fails to engage with the offer process and/or displays unacceptable behaviour.
* A transfer visit is failed due to the property not being kept up to standard and/or in line with their tenancy agreement.
* If the applicant attempts to gain entry to the property before the accompanied viewing, either whilst the previous tenant is still there, the property is vacant, or contractors/work force are repairing the property.
* The property is required for an alternative use in an emergency or exceptional circumstance
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| 11 | Direct Allocations of City of Lincoln Council Accommodation |  |  |
| 11.1 | In some circumstances it may be necessary to directly match an applicant to a suitable property. This means that the applicant may not be able to bid for properties such as homeless applicants. If this applies, we will notify the applicant direct. | 11.1 highlighted text in bold added | In some circumstances it may be necessary to directly match an applicant to a suitable property. This means that the applicant may not be able to bid for properties such as homeless applicants **with discretion from a senior manager**. If this applies, we will notify the applicant directly. |
|  |  | New paragraph added 11.4 | In some circumstances it may be necessary to set properties to be direct matched. Examples of these could be:* Large properties (4+ bedrooms)
* Adapted Properties (e.g. stairlifts, through floor lifts)
* Extra Care Scheme vacancies
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| 16.1 | Ombudsmen details |  |  |
|  | Post – Housing Ombudsman Service, Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange Square, London, E14 9GE |  | The Local Government Ombudsman is independent of all government departments, councils and politicians.  The Ombudsman examine 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 Local Government Ombudsman.    Contact details for the Ombudsman Service are:  Website – [www.lgo.org.uk](https://www.lgo.org.uk/)  Telephone – 0300 061 0614  Post – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH |
| Appendix A | Definitions | Added positive notice | **Positive notice –** A positive notice is normally referred to when an applicant is leaving supported accommodation and have abided by the licence agreement, paid their rent and engaged with the service.  |
| Appendix C | Property Eligibility TableNote: Children under 1 will not normally be considered in the bedroom calculation for the size of property required | Added details of case by case basis for households not included | Note: Children under 1 will not normally be considered in the bedroom calculation for the size of property required, those who household type/size is not listed in these tables will be considered on a case by case basis. |
| Appendix D | Bypassing Reasons | Added additional bypass reasons | Pets – Certain properties either council or housing association vacancies may be advertised where pets are not permitted e.g. high rise flats (Jarvis House, Shuttleworth House, Trent View)Family composition – Certain properties may be advertised for a maximum number of adults and/or children within the household or with specific age requirements. Assisted into Private Rented Sector– This may be used to bypass an applicant if they have been financially assisted into the private rented sector to end our homeless duty and are still within their initial fixed term.  |