



Bassetlaw District Council HomeFinder Choice Based Lettings Policy

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SECTION 1 - Introduction and Overview

1.1 Introduction

This is the Lettings Policy of Bassetlaw District Council and is managed on it's behalf by A1 Housing Bassetlaw Ltd.

This policy:

- Ensures that properties are allocated fairly
- Meets the Council's legal obligations
- Allocates housing to people in need
- Gives applicants choice and control over where they wish to live

1.2 Overview

The Lettings Policy is based on five main principles

1.2.1 Access

Access to the Council's housing register is available for anyone aged 18 and over. This is explained in Section 2 of the Policy.

1.2.2 Lettings Bands

Applicants with similar needs for housing are grouped into 1 of 5 Lettings Bands that are used for deciding who will get a new tenancy. These are explained in Section 4 of the Policy.

1.2.3 Advertising

Vacant properties are advertised openly so that anyone accepted onto the Housing Register can request the tenancy. This is explained in Section 5 of the Policy.

1.2.4 Offers

A new tenancy is offered to the applicant who is top of the list of applicants who have put their name forward for the property. This is explained in Section 5 of the Policy.

1.2.5 Feedback

We will provide applicants with regular feedback on the results of allocations of vacant properties to allow them to make informed decisions and choices in the future.

1.3 Choice of Accommodation

Under Section 167 (1A) of the Housing Act 1996 it is Bassetlaw District Council's policy to allow applicants as wide a range of choice of accommodation as possible.

This will contribute to building more settled, viable and inclusive communities by increasing tenant satisfaction with the properties they occupy.

It is the intention to advertise vacant properties to enable applicants to bid for any property in which they are interested.

Choice may be restricted by different property types in accordance with the applicant's household characteristics to ensure the best use of the available accommodation. These restrictions are outlined in Section 3 – Lettings Criteria of this policy.

In exceptional circumstances an applicant may have their choice of accommodation limited where this is not in the best interests of the applicant or the local community. This is covered in SECTION 6 - Exclusion and Suspension from the Housing Register and other Restrictions

Equalities Statement

Bassetlaw District Council and A1 Housing are committed to the Equality and Diversity agenda and welcome all customers equally irrespective of age, sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or religion or belief of any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

We will aim to offer high quality homes appropriate to the personal needs of an applicant and their family members.

We will work with individuals and community groups to ensure we provide full equal opportunities for all our current and future customers.

SECTION 2 - Acceptance onto the Housing Register

2.1 Registration

The Council operates an Open Housing Register. Anyone aged 18 years and over can apply to go on the Housing Register.

2.2 Qualification for Acceptance on to Housing Register

Applicants are entitled to make one application on the Housing Register. On receipt of an application the Housing Register will be checked to identify any possible duplication of applications and the applicants are required to clarify their housing needs. If their circumstances change they may amend the application or register a new application.

2.3 Identification and Verification

To ensure applicants are assessed correctly the following information is required to confirm the identity and eligibility of all members of the household requiring re-housing.

One document from each of the following two sections must be provided for all applicants and any member of their household aged 16 years and over.

For children aged under 16 years a single proof of identity is required such as a Child Benefit Book or formal notification of benefit.

2.4 Proof of Identity

- Passport - any nationality
- UK Birth Certificate – full or short form acceptable including those issued by UK authorities overseas, such as Embassies, High Commissions and HM Forces.
- UK issued Driving Licence England/Wales/Scotland/Northern Ireland/Isle of Man; either photo card or paper.
- EU National Identity Card (EU countries only)
- HM Forces ID Card (UK)
- Adoption Certificate (UK)
- Benefit Book / Formal notification of Benefit
- National Insurance Card (UK)
- NHS Card (UK)
- Marriage/Civil Partnership Certificate

2.5 Proof of Address

- Financial Statement** e.g. pension, endowment, ISA
- Bank/Building Society Statement*
- Utility Bill* electricity, gas, water, telephone – including mobile phone contract/bill
- TV Licence**
- Addressed Payslip*
- Credit Card Statement*

- Mortgage Statement**
- Rent Statement
- Benefit Statement* e.g. Child Allowance, Pension
- Insurance Certificate**
- Council Tax Statement (UK)**
- Work Permit/Visa (UK)**

* Documentation should be less than three months old.

** Issued within past 12 months.

Where it is unclear that a child is a permanent member of the household and lives with the applicant you may be asked to provide further proof of access to the child. Acceptable proof will include:

- Adoption certificate
- Letter from Head Teacher
- Access arrangements form
- Court Order - Access arrangements.
- Court Order – Legal Guardianship

Applications are assessed before being accepted onto the Housing Register. In some circumstances the application may be suspended or refused. See Section 6 for a detailed explanation.

2.5 **Age**

Applicants must be at least 18 years of age.

Applicants aged 16 or 17 years will also be accepted in the following circumstances:

- they have been accepted as Homeless and in Priority Need by Bassetlaw District Council or
- they have a Floating Support Package through Supporting People or
- they have another Support Package

The Support Package must be formalised with A1 Housing in line with the agreed protocol between Bassetlaw District Council, A1 Housing and the Support Package provider. The support package must be in place as a condition of allocation of a property and must include appropriate guarantee of the tenancy including rent payments.

Applications from a couple one of whom is under 18 years of age will be registered as a single person application in the name of the older applicant. The application will be amended to a joint application on the 18th birthday of the second applicant on request retaining the original date of application.

2.6 **Qualifying Persons**

The Council will fulfil its obligations under the current statutory provisions to ensure only “qualifying persons” are accepted onto the housing register. The Council cannot accept applications from persons who are not “qualifying persons” as

defined under Section 160A of the Housing Act 1996. This is covered in detail in Section 6.

2.7 Current Residence

Applicants are accepted into one of the Housing Register Bands A – D if they have a local connection to the Bassetlaw District Council area. That is if:

- They live in the area as their principal and main home or
- Are in paid employment in the area for at least 16 hours per week or previously lived in the area for a continuous period of 12 months within the last 5 years at the time of application or
- Are currently serving in Her Majesty's Forces and enlisted from the Bassetlaw District Council area

Applicants who do not live or work in the Bassetlaw District Council area will be accepted into Housing Register Band E.

2.8 Declaration of Interest

In order that we treat all applicants fairly any applications from employees of A1 Housing, or Bassetlaw District Council, A1 Housing Board Members, Bassetlaw District Council Elected Members and their close relatives must be disclosed on the application form.

These applications will be processed in the normal way but offers of accommodation will not be released without the approval of a Principal Officer of A1 Housing.

The definition of a close relative will include an applicant's

- spouse or partner
- parent or parent in law;
- son or daughter;
- son in law or daughter in law
- stepson or stepdaughter
- brother or sister
- aunt or uncle
- grandparent.

2.9 Property Ownership

Applicants under the age of 60 years who own a residential property or have a financial interest in it (whether or not they occupy it as their home) will only be accepted into Housing Register Band E.

2.10 Change of circumstances

A change in an applicant's or their household's circumstances may affect their qualification for acceptance onto the Housing Register and will result in a re-assessment of their application.

Where a change in an applicant's circumstances entitles them to move from Housing Register Band E to Band A – D the date of the application will be amended to the date of qualification to the new Band.

Where an applicant qualifies for Bands A or B their effective application date will be the date when they qualify for the Band.

The application date for Bands C, D and E will be the date of receipt of the application.

Where an applicant is in Band A or B but subsequently moves to Bands C or D the application date will revert to the original date of application.

It is the applicant's responsibility to inform A1 Housing directly of any change in their or their household's circumstances.

SECTION 3 - Lettings Criteria

The Lettings Criteria are the rules that are used to determine the properties for which applicants may apply.

3.1 General Needs Accommodation

General Needs Accommodation includes properties designated for the use of single persons, couples and families and includes flats, maisonettes and houses.

3.2 Senior Citizen Designated Accommodation

The Council has designated accommodation for the use of applicants aged 60 years and over. Applications for this accommodation are accepted from applicants of at least 60 years of age. For joint applicants at least one must have reached the age of 60 years.

Applicants aged 60 years and over (including couples where one applicant is aged 60 years and over) must register for either General Needs accommodation or Senior Citizen accommodation but not both. Applicants aged 60 years and over may be considered for the Non Senior Citizen Designated accommodation but the same rules of eligibility as those under 60 years of age will apply, for example on ownership of property.

Where an applicant reaches the age of 60 and wishes to change from requesting General Needs Accommodation to Senior Citizen Accommodation cannot bring forward waiting time accrued before their 60th birthday. A pre-existing application will therefore be re-dated for allocation purposes to the date of the oldest applicant's 60th birthday.

3.3 Choice of Accommodation Criteria

The size and type of property we will normally offer you will depend on the size and type of your household as shown in the following table.

SENIOR CITIZEN DESIGNATED ACCOMMODATION		
	Single Person	Couple
Senior Citizen designated Flat		
Bedsit	✓	
1 Bed	✓	✓
2 Bed	✓	✓
Bungalow		
1 Bed	✓	✓
2 Bed	✓	✓

SENIOR CITIZEN DESIGNATED ACCOMMODATION		
	Single Person	Couple
Senior Citizen Designated Sheltered Flat *		
Bedsit	✓	
1 Bed	✓	✓
2 Bed	✓	✓
* Preference is given to applicants with a Support Need assessed by A1 Housing's Supported Housing Service.		

GENERAL NEEDS ACCOMMODATION				
	Single Person	Couple	Family 1 or more Child / Children	Family 3 or more Children
Flat or Maisonette				
Bedsit	✓			
1 Bed	✓	✓		
2 Bed	✓	✓	✓	
3 Bed		✓	✓	✓
House				
2 Bed		✓	✓	
3 Bed		✓	✓	✓
4 Bed				✓

Where it has not been possible to allocate the property to any qualifying applicant from Housing Register Bands A – D the property will be offered to any Band E applicant who would normally qualify for that type of property in accordance with the table above.

3.4 Re-advertising of Properties

In the absence of a qualifying applicant from Bands A – E properties will be re-advertised for a second time.

After the second advertisement:

- For Senior Citizen designated properties. In the absence of Senior Citizen applicants from Bands A – E the property will be allocated to Band A – E applicants in the following order:

- Applicants aged over 50 years of age
- Applicants aged 40–50 years
- Other suitable applicants

Applicants will be considered firstly in order of their Band (ie Band A, B and B etc) and then the applicant's position within that Band

- For General Needs properties. In the absence of an applicant from Bands A – E who would normally qualify for the property (ie couples or families for a house) bids will be considered from applicants who would not normally qualify for that type of property.

3.5 Definition of Eligibility

3.5.1 Minimum age for any offer of a property

We will not normally offer a property to an applicant aged under 18 years.

However applicants aged 16 or 17 years will be accepted in the following circumstances:

- They have been accepted as Homeless and in Priority Need by Bassetlaw District Council or
- They have a Floating Support Package through Supporting People or
- They have another Support Package

The Support Package must be formalised with A1 Housing in line with the agreed protocol between Bassetlaw District Council, A1 Housing and the Support Package provider. The support package must be in place as a condition of allocation of a property and must include an appropriate guarantee of the tenancy including rent payments.

3.5.2 Senior Citizens

Senior Citizens include an applicant aged 60 years and over. In the case of couples at least one applicant must be aged 60 years and over.

3.5.3 Persons

Where a person has applied for re-housing solely for himself or herself they are classed as a single person.

3.5.4 Couples

Where two applicants have applied for accommodation together they are classed as a couple. Couples include applicants who are married or have a civil partnership or intend to live together on a permanent basis. Couples do not currently have to share the same accommodation. There is no distinction between opposite and same sex relationships.

3.5.5 Families

The definition of a family includes:

- Where a household includes a child aged under 18 years who lives with the applicant on a permanent basis
- Where a household includes a family member aged 18 years and over who currently lives with the applicant and intends to do so on a permanent basis
- Lone parent families are treated the same as two parent families
- There is no distinction between opposite and same sex relationships
- Where a single applicant has child care responsibilities but the child does not live with the applicant on a permanent basis they may be classified as a family. The applicant must demonstrate that the child lives with them at least three nights every week and there is a clear and formal agreement for these arrangements.

3.6 Conditions for Allocations of Properties

Applicants holding a tenancy with a registered social landlord (that is a Council, ALMO, Housing Association or other "Not For Profit" organisation) will not be considered for a property within the first year of the tenancy.

Applicants may register an application immediately after the commencement of their tenancy but will not be allocated another property within the first 12 months of their current tenancy.

3.7 Change of Circumstances

A change in an applicant's or their household's circumstances may affect their qualification for acceptance onto the Housing Register and will result in a re-assessment of their application.

Where a change in an applicant's circumstances entitles them to move from Housing Register Band E to Band A – D the date of the application will be amended to the date of qualification to the new Band.

Where an applicant qualifies for Bands A or B their effective application date will be the date when they qualify for the Band.

The application date for Bands C, D and E will be the date of receipt of the application.

Where an applicant is in Band A or B but subsequently moves to Bands C or D the application date will revert to the original date of application.

It is the applicant's responsibility to inform A1 Housing directly of any change in their or their household's circumstances.

Where information that affects an application is received by A1 Housing, which affects the basis of an offer, which has been made to the applicant the offer, will be suspended whilst this is investigated. The offer may subsequently be withdrawn or cancelled.

3.8 Amendment of a Housing Application

Where a relationship between joint applicants subsequently breaks down each applicant will retain the original housing application date. Any added partner to an application will only have a new housing application backdated to the creation of the application in joint names.

A single person housing application can be amended to a couple or family application at the request of the applicant if:

- The applicant and their partner have married or have a civil partnership, proof of which will be requested
- The applicant and their partner have been living together as a couple for at least 12 months at the same address proof of which will be requested
- The applicant now has a child that is living with them on a permanent basis proof of which will be requested
- Where a single applicant has taken on child care responsibilities but the child does not live with the applicant on a permanent basis they may be classified as a family. The applicant must demonstrate that the child lives with them at least three nights every week and there is a clear and formal agreement for these arrangements.

The application will be amended to a Joint Housing application retaining the additional application date and any subsequent tenancy granted as a joint tenancy.

If a relationship subsequently breaks down the original applicant will retain the original housing application date and the added partner will have a new housing application backdated to the creation of the application in joint names.

Where a housing application has been amended it will be re-assessed on the basis of the change of circumstances and may result in a change of the applicant's Housing Register Band.

SECTION 4 - Lettings Bands and Allocation of Tenancies

4.1 Lettings Bands

The Council will have five Housing Register Needs Bands.

To go onto the Housing Register applicants will complete a Housing Application form which will provide the information necessary to assess their need for re-housing. Applications will not be accepted unless the applicant completes the application form in full. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant and the registration date will be amended to the date the fully completed form is returned.

Applicants with similar needs for housing are grouped into 1 of the 5 Lettings Bands which best describes their circumstances.

There is a Single Housing Register and existing A1Housing tenants will have their request for re-housing assessed on the same basis as other applicants on the Register.

4.2 Targets

Targets for allocation of properties to Bands A – D will be reviewed by A1 Housing on a regular basis to ensure they remain fair and equitable. The purpose of targets is to ensure that applicants in these Bands have an opportunity for re-housing whilst giving preference to applicants in housing need in accordance with the requirements of the Housing Act 1996.

The targets will

- Provide guidance for allocation throughout the year and will not be rigidly applied on an individual property basis
- Be reviewed by A1 Housing to reflect the number of properties that have become vacant, the number of housing applicants on the Housing Register and their relative need for re-housing
- Be set separately for Senior Citizen and General Needs Accommodation

It is recognised that in some areas and for some properties there is a small turnover of accommodation and it may not be possible to ensure allocations meet the targets at a local level.

Applicants in Band E are those with no local need for re-housing. There will be no target for allocation to this Band and they will be allocated accommodation where there are no applicants from Bands A – D.

4.3 Allocation of properties

The allocation of individual properties will be carried out under the control of the Service Manager - Housing who will ensure that the targets set out in the Policy are met.

BAND A - Applicants with SEVERE / URGENT housing needs

BAND B - Applicants with HIGH housing needs

BAND C - Applicants with SOME housing needs

BAND D - Applicants with LOW housing need

BAND E - Applicants with NO housing need

Properties will be advertised with the Applicant Band that will be given preference in the allocation of the property. If the property cannot be allocated to a suitable applicant in the preferred Band the property will then be offered to the next suitable applicant in order of the priority bands.

For example if the preferred band is Band B and there are no suitable applicants it will then be offered in the following order to Band A, Band C and Band D.

4.4 BAND A - Applicants with SEVERE / URGENT needs for re-housing

A1 Statutorily Homeless

An applicant is prioritised where, following assessment by Bassetlaw District Council under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002, they are found to be statutorily homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless.

A2 Statutorily Unfit for Human Habitation

An applicant is prioritised where following, assessment by Bassetlaw District Council, the applicant's property is subject to a prohibition order, emergency action, demolition order or clearance under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System of the Housing Act 2004.

A3 Statutorily Overcrowded

An applicant is prioritised where, following assessment by Bassetlaw District Council, the applicant's property is statutorily overcrowded under Part X of the Housing Act 1985.

A4 Immediate Threat of Severe Violence or Threat to Life

An applicant is prioritised where there has been severe violence or threat to life including:

- Domestic abuse by a partner or someone else that lives with them or an ex partner where the abuse occurs in the property. (This provision applies to all victims irrespective of sex and type of relationship)
- Racial and other harassment of Council tenants. This applies where a tenant or a member of their household is subject to hate crime (ie they are targeted because of their personal circumstances including race, sex, sexuality, religion, disability, mental health)
- Anti social behaviour affecting a Council tenant. This applies where it is necessary to re-house a tenant on a permanent basis because it is no longer reasonable for them to remain in their home or re-house them on a temporary basis whilst action is being taken

In all cases it is the Council's policy to tackle the perpetrator and support the victim in their own home. If this is not reasonable and action is being taken that is likely to resolve the problem temporary accommodation will be offered. Permanent re-housing will only take place where action supporting the victim in their own home or temporary re-housing is not appropriate.

A5 Temporary accommodation for major works

An applicant is prioritised where their current Council property requires major repair works and it is not possible to complete these whilst the tenant continues to occupy the property. In these circumstance temporary re-housing will be offered and the tenant expected to return to their original property at the completion of the works.

A6 Emergency circumstances

An applicant is prioritised where there are emergency circumstances which means they can no longer live in their current Council property. In these

circumstance temporary re-housing will be offered and the tenant expected to return to their original property at the completion of the works.

A7 Severe Medical needs in accordance with terms of reference of the Medical Panel

An applicant will be prioritised where, following assessment by A1 Housing's Medical Panel in accordance with its terms of reference, the applicant is found to have severe medical needs for re-housing. This will include where an applicant or member of their family has a medical problem where re-housing is essential to improve the quality of life or health

A8 A need for a substantially adapted property

An applicant will be prioritised where, following assessment by A1 Housing's Medical Panel in accordance with its terms of reference, the applicant or a member of their family has severe mobility needs and:

- They are unable to reach essential facilities in their home and a move to a different property would solve these problems
- They are unable to get in or out of their current home without severe difficulty

4.5 Position within the Band

An applicant's position within Band A is determined by the date at which Band A status was granted, ie the date when the applicant qualified for Band A. Offers of accommodation will be made by date order of the status date.

If two or more applicants have the same Band A status date the applicant with the earliest original housing application registration date will be offered the property first.

4.6 Time Limit on Priority

Priority is granted to enable applicants to be re-housed as quickly as possible to resolve their severe and urgent needs and is not intended to allow applicants to access a restricted choice of accommodation.

Priority is given to applicants for an initial period of two months.

Once the applicant has been granted a Band A status A1 Housing will provide advice and assistance on how to bid for properties and the review process if they have not been re-housed within 2 months.

Applicants are expected to consider and bid for as wide a range of housing and areas as possible. Once priority is granted the applicant will be advised of the accommodation and areas that are considered suitable for their needs and for which they are expected to bid. Bassetlaw District Council will make this decision in the case of Homeless priority applicants (A1) and by A1 Housing for other priority applicants (A2 – A8).

If the applicant has not accepted an offer of accommodation at the end of this period the application will be reviewed by A1 Housing taking into account the properties which became available for which the applicant was expected to bid, the

bids made by the applicant and whether any offers were made to the applicant. Where an applicant has been awarded a priority under category “A1 Statutorily Homeless” by Bassetlaw District Council’s Housing Needs Team the review of the priority will be taken in conjunction with the Housing Needs Team.

The following options will be considered:

4.7 Applicant refusal of a suitable property

This applies where the applicant has refused the offer of one or more properties for which they have bid. If any of the properties are considered suitable by A1 Housing the priority will be cancelled and the application re-assessed and moved to the relevant Band.

4.9 Applicant failure to bid

This applies where:

- There has been a range of properties for which it was reasonable for the applicant to bid and they have failed to do so or
- They have restricted their bids to a limited number of properties

And as a result of this has not received an offer of a property.

In these cases A1 Housing will start to bid for a suitable property on the applicant’s behalf. If a bid is successful and the applicant subsequently refuses the offer, the priority will be cancelled and the application re-assessed and moved to the relevant Band.

4.10 Applicant has bid unsuccessfully

This applies where:

- An applicant has bid for a wide range of properties that have been available but has been unsuccessful in these bids

In these cases the priority status will be extended for a further two months at the end of which the priority will be reviewed.

4.11 Lack of suitable properties

This applies where:

- The applicant requires a specific type of property or their priority has been restricted to a specific area and
- There have been no properties available that meet these requirements or the applicant has bid unsuccessfully

In these cases the priority status will be extended for a further two months at the end of which the priority will be reviewed.

4.12 End of priority status

Where an applicant with a priority has failed to accept an offer of a suitable property their priority status will be removed and their application will be re-assessed and placed in the appropriate Lettings Band. The factors leading to the priority status will not be taken into account in the re-assessment.

4.13 **BAND B - Applicants with HIGH housing needs**

B1 A1 Housing Tenants releasing a high demand property

An applicant will be given Band B priority status where they are an existing Council tenant and their move would release a high demand property for the use of another applicant. A high demand property is defined as a house or a bungalow with two or more bedrooms.

Band B priority status will be given if the applicant:

- Currently occupies a house and they wish to move to either a flat, a senior citizen designated flat or a senior citizen designated bungalow
- Currently occupies a two bedroomed bungalow and they wish to move to a one bedroomed senior citizen designated flat or a one bedroomed senior citizen designated bungalow

B2a A Bassetlaw District Council successor tenant who will move to smaller accommodation

An applicant may be given Band B priority status if they have succeeded to the tenancy of a property and are willing to move to a smaller property. (A1 Housing will reserve the right to take legal action to re-possess the property in accordance with the Housing Act 1996, for example due to under occupation).

B2b An applicant without a right of succession to a Bassetlaw District Council tenancy

An applicant will be given Band B priority status if they would have qualified to succeed to the tenancy of the property at that time if there had not previously been a succession and they would not normally qualify in accordance with the Choice of Accommodation Criteria in Section 3 of the Lettings Policy for the type of property which they currently occupy.

If the applicant is not re-housed within two months A1 Housing may take legal action to repossess the property.

Applicants with no rights of succession where this section does not apply will not be granted a Band B priority status but will qualify for Band C status in C10 Insecure Accommodation. A1 Housing has the right to take legal action to re-possess the property.

B3 A1 Housing tenant who will release a property with substantial adaptations where no longer needed by the household

An applicant may be given Band B priority status when:

- a tenant is occupying Council property which was specially built or substantially adapted for a person with a disability and the accommodation is no longer needed or
- a tenant has succeeded to the tenancy of Council property which was specially built or substantially adapted for a person with a disability and they do not need this accommodation

If the applicant is not re-housed within two months A1 Housing may take legal action to repossess the property.

B4 A1 Housing tenant who will release senior citizen accommodation where no longer needed by applicant (see also B1)

An applicant may be given Band B priority status when:

- A tenant has succeeded to the tenancy of Council property which is designated for use by a Senior Citizen and they do not qualify for this accommodation in accordance with the Choice of Accommodation Criteria in Section 3 of the Lettings Policy.

If the applicant is not re-housed within 2 months A1 Housing may take legal action to repossess the property.

B5 Multiple Housing Need

An applicant will be given Band B priority status when they qualify for three or more need categories from Band C of the Lettings Policy.

B6 Release identified supported accommodation in accordance with a formal protocol between Service Providers, Bassetlaw District Council & A1 Housing

An applicant will be given Band B priority status when their re-housing would release a unit of supported accommodation provided within the Bassetlaw District Council area. This provision will apply where:

- There is a formally agreed protocol between the Service Provider, Bassetlaw District Council and A1 Housing that define the circumstances under which priority housing is appropriate
- The supported accommodation is in the Bassetlaw District Council area
- The agreed quota for the number of cases to be re-housed in the year has not been exceeded

Applicants are expected to consider and bid for as wide a range of housing and areas as possible. Once priority is granted the applicant will be advised of the accommodation and areas that are considered suitable for their needs. This decision will be made by A1 Housing in consultation with the Service Provider.

B7 Multi Agency Public Protection Agreement (MAPPA) - formally identified and agreed cases

An applicant may be given Band B priority status when their re-housing has been requested by a Level 1 MAPPA referral in accordance with the formal protocol agreed by MAPPA, Bassetlaw District Council and A1 Housing.

B8 Duties under the Childrens Act 1989

An applicant may be given Band B priority status when their re-housing has been requested by a Nottinghamshire County Council referral under the Children's Act 1989 in accordance with the formal protocol agreed by Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw District Council and A1 Housing.

B9 High medical need in accordance with terms of reference of the Medical Panel

An applicant will be given Band B priority status when, following assessment by A1 Housing's Medical Panel in accordance with its terms of reference, the applicant or a member of their family is found to have a high medical need for re-housing.

This will include:

- A medical problem where re-housing could substantially improve the quality of life or health of the applicant and / or
- Mobility needs where they are unable to reach essential facilities without severe difficulty in their home and a move to a different property would solve these problems
- They are unable to get in or out of their current home without substantial difficulty or assistance of others

B10 Hospital discharge where no suitable temporary or permanent accommodation

An applicant may be given Band B priority status when their re-housing has been requested by the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Nottinghamshire County Council in accordance with the formal protocol agreed by the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw District Council and A1 Housing.

4.14 Position within the Band

An applicant's position within Band B is determined by the date at which Band B status was granted, ie the date when the applicant qualified for Band B. Offers of accommodation will be made by date order of the status date.

If 2 or more applicants have the same Band B status date the applicant with the earliest original housing application registration date will be offered the property first.

4.15 Time Limit on Band B Status

Band B status is granted to enable applicants to be re-housed as quickly as possible to resolve their high housing needs and is not intended to allow applicants to access a restricted choice of accommodation.

Band B status is given to applicants for an initial period of two months.

Once the applicant has been granted a Band B status A1 Housing will provide advice and assistance on how to bid for properties and the review process if they have not been re-housed within two months.

Applicants are expected to consider and bid for as wide a range of housing and areas as possible. Once priority is granted the applicant will be advised of the accommodation and areas that are considered suitable for their needs and for which they are expected to bid.

If the applicant has not accepted an offer of accommodation at the end of this period the application will be reviewed by A1 Housing taking into account the properties which became available for which the applicant was expected to bid, the bids made by the applicant and whether any offers were made to the applicant.

The following options will be considered:

4.16 Applicant refusal of a suitable property

This applies where the applicant has refused the offer of one or more properties for which they have bid. If A1 Housing considers any of the properties suitable the priority will be cancelled and the application re-assessed and moved to the relevant Band.

4.17 Applicant Failure to bid

This applies where

- There has been a range of properties for which it was reasonable for the applicant to bid and they have failed to do so or
- They have restricted their bids to a limited number of properties or

In these cases A1 Housing will start to bid for a suitable property on the applicant's behalf.

If a bid is successful and the applicant subsequently refuses the offer the Band B status will be cancelled and the application re-assessed and moved to the relevant Band.

4.18 Applicant has bid unsuccessfully

This applies where:

- An applicant has bid for a wide range of properties that have been available but has been unsuccessful in these bids

In these cases the Band B status will be extended for a further two months at the end of which the Band B status will be reviewed.

4.19 Lack of suitable properties

This will apply where:

- The applicant requires a specific type of property or their priority has been restricted to a specific area and
- There have been no properties available that meet these requirements or the applicant has bid unsuccessfully

In these cases the Band B status will be extended for a further two months at the end of which the Band B status will be reviewed.

4.20 End of priority status

Where an applicant with a priority has failed to accept an offer of a suitable property their priority status will be removed and their application will be re-assessed and placed in the appropriate Lettings Band. The factors leading to the priority status will not be taken into account in the re-assessment.

4.21 BAND C - Applicants with SOME housing needs

An applicant will qualify for Band C if any of the following conditions apply:

C1 Families with children aged 10 years or under in a 2nd floor flat or above

The applicant has a dependent child aged 10 years or under who live in a flat or maisonette where the main access to the property is at 2nd floor level or above.

Applicants who are pregnant or who have a child aged 10 years or under will not normally be allocated a flat at 2nd floor level or above.

Where an applicant's youngest child becomes 11 years old the applicant will cease to receive this qualification.

Where applicants bid for a property above 1st Floor they will cease to receive this qualification.

C2 Senior Citizens aged 60 and over in a 2nd floor flat and above

The applicant or partner is aged 60 years and over and live in a flat or maisonette where the main access to the property is at 2nd floor level or above.

Where applicants bid for a property above 1st Floor they will cease to receive this qualification.

C3 Bassetlaw District Council tenants releasing at least one bedroom

Where an existing Bassetlaw District Council tenant is prepared to move to a smaller property. If an applicant subsequently applies for a property of the same or larger size this qualification will no longer apply and this may result in the applicant being moved to a different Lettings Band.

An existing Council tenant may qualify for Band B status if they release a high demand property, see qualification for B1.

C4 Insecure or shared accommodation

This applies where an applicant currently occupies a property suitable for their needs but is unable to do so on a long term basis or do not currently have separate accommodation for the entire household for their sole use. Examples will include but not be restricted to:

- Occupiers of tied accommodation where the applicant is under notice to leave
- Shorthold tenancies which are coming to an end and a Section 21 Notice has been issued - except where the applicant has broken their Conditions of Tenancy
- Applicants occupying a property without rights of succession to the tenancy
- Homeless applicants not owed a full duty under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002

- Applicants sharing accommodation and facilities with others who are not part of their household eg living in lodgings, House in Multiple Occupation (HIMO), with friends or relatives
- Relationship breakdown where former partners are sharing the same accommodation but living as separate households
- Split households. Applicants who are living apart in self contained accommodation - requiring accommodation together
- Applicants currently in Her Majesty's Prison who have not been formally excluded from the Housing Register.

C5 Poor condition of property

Where, following assessment by Bassetlaw District Council, the applicant's property is considered to be prejudicial to health as defined by multiple Category 2 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System of the Housing Act 2004.

Once these hazards have been removed the applicant will cease to receive this qualification.

C6 Cramped but not statutory overcrowding

Where an applicant has inadequate bedroom space but is not assessed as statutorily overcrowded according to the following criteria. A claim of cramped living conditions will generally only be considered where it is the result of natural growth ie children from the relationship including long term foster children and adopted children.

- A child aged under 1 year of age does not need their own bedroom and can share a bedroom with their parents.
- A child aged 1 year and over should have a separate bedroom to their parents
- A child aged under 5 years of age can share a bedroom with a child of the opposite sex
- A child aged 5 years and over is not expected to share a bedroom with a child of the opposite sex
- A child aged 11 years and over is not expected to share with another child.

The following table shows examples of where this qualification does or does not apply.

Examples of Qualification for Band C (C6)	Qualification Applies	Qualification Does Not Apply
Family in a 1 bedroomed flat with a child aged 6 months		✓
Family in a 1 bedroomed flat with 2 children aged 6 months and 3 years	✓	
Family in a 2 bedroomed property with a boy aged 4 years and a girl aged 6 years	✓	
Family in a 2 bedroomed property with a boy aged 4 years and a girl aged 2 years		✓
Family in a 2 bedroomed property with 2 girls aged 7 years and 10 years		✓
Family in a 2 bedroomed property with 2 boys aged 7 years and 12 years	✓	
Family in a 3 bedroomed property with a boy aged 7 years and a girl aged 12 years		✓
Family in a 3 bedroomed property with a boy aged 7 years and a girl aged 12 years and a girl aged 15 years	✓	

If an applicant subsequently applies for a property of the same or smaller size this qualification will no longer apply and this may result in the applicant being moved to a different Lettings Band or a bid for a property not being accepted.

C7 Applicants with a need to give or receive support

This applies to applicants who have a substantial need to move accommodation to give or receive support from a relative, friend or carer.

An applicant's qualification under this category will be determined by a Principal Manager of A1 Housing following a written request from the applicant outlining the need to give or receive support and the reasons why it cannot be provided at their current accommodation.

C8 Some medical needs for re-housing

In accordance with Terms of Reference of the Medical Panel.

Position within Band C

An applicant's position within Band C is determined by the original date of an application for re-housing. Offers of accommodation will be made by date order of the housing application.

4.22 **BAND D** - Applicants with LOW housing need

D1 Applicants with a LOW housing need

Applicants who do not qualify for any Housing Need Bands A, B or C because they have no immediate need for re-housing.

Position within Band D

An applicant's position within Band D is determined by the original date of an application for re-housing. Offers of accommodation will be made by date order of the housing application.

4.23 BAND E - All other Housing Applicants

E1 Owner occupiers who are non senior citizens

This Band applies to applicants who are aged under 60 years of age and currently own or have a financial interest in a residential property unless assessed for Band A Priority status.

This includes all owners of residential accommodation whether or not they currently occupy the property.

E2 Owner occupiers who are senior citizens who have chosen to be considered for General Needs Accommodation

This Band applies to applicants who are aged 60 years of age and over who currently own or have a financial interest in a residential property unless assessed for Band A Priority status

This includes all owners of residential accommodation whether or not they currently occupy the property.

E3 Applicants who do not live or work in Bassetlaw

Position within Band E

An applicant's position within Band E is determined by the original date of an application for re-housing.

4.24 Offers of accommodation

Properties will be allocated to Band E in the absence of **suitable applicants from Bands A – D.**

Where a property is available for allocation to Band E applicants will be ranked by the date of registration on the Housing Register. The property will be offered firstly to the applicant with the longest waiting time.

SECTION 5 - Advertising and Bidding

Vacant properties will be advertised publicly to ensure all applicants have a reasonable chance to bid for the property. Properties may be excluded from the bidding process where it is necessary to make direct allocations to applicants in extreme and urgent circumstances where an applicant's needs for re-housing cannot be dealt with through the bidding process. This could include the need to deal with a major natural disaster such as extreme flooding.

5.1 Advertising

The advertising of the properties available for allocation:

- Will be done as widely as practical to enable all applicants reasonable opportunity to bid for the tenancy of a property
- This could include advertisements listing properties through:
 - The main A1 Housing and Bassetlaw District Council offices
 - The Bassetlaw District Council Community centres.
 - A1 Housing Surgeries
 - A1 Housing's website
 - A link from Bassetlaw District Council's website to A1 Housing's website
 - Local media such as radio and press
 - Local support agencies and housing providers
 - Other local agencies such as the Library Service and Parish Councils
 - Direct Mailings to applicants unable to access other advertisement sources
 - Dedicated Telephone line
- A1 Housing will review the advertisement options and may introduce further alternatives where these can extend the accessibility, quality and breadth of the service
- Available properties will normally be advertised weekly with five calendar days given to place a bid

5.2 Bidding

- Bids will only be registered if the applicant is on the Housing Register
- Applicants will not be contacted individually if their bid is unsuccessful. However the results of the bids will be advertised on a regular basis
- Applicants can express an interest in up to a maximum of 3 properties in any single bidding cycle
- When the applicant wishes to bid for more than one property they should bid in their order of preference of the properties - that is bidding firstly for the property they would most like to live in
- Bids will be accepted from nominated representatives of the applicant. To make a bid on behalf of an applicant the representative will be required to give the Housing Application Reference Number and date of birth for the first applicant
- Bids received after the advertised closing date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances
- At the end of each lettings cycle the bids will be sorted in order of:

- Meeting the lettings criteria as stated in the property advert.
 - Application effective date for the Band
 - Application registration date
- Where an applicant has bid for more than one property and is top of the short list for more than one property they will be offered the property for which they have bid first

Priority Bands A and B Only

5.3 Applicant refusal of a suitable property

This applies where the applicant has refused the offer of one or more properties for which they have bid. If any of the properties are considered suitable by A1 Housing the priority will be cancelled and the application re-assessed and moved to the relevant Band.

5.4 Applicant Failure to bid

This applies where:

- There has been a range of properties for which it was reasonable for the applicant to bid and they have failed to do so, or
- They have restricted their bids to a limited number of properties, or

In these cases A1 Housing will start to bid for a suitable property on the applicant's behalf. If a bid is successful and the applicant subsequently refuses the offer the Band status will be cancelled and the application re-assessed and moved to the relevant Band.

5.4 Applicant has bid unsuccessfully

This applies where:

- An applicant has bid for a wide range of properties that have been available but has been unsuccessful in these bids

In these cases the Band status will be extended for a further two months at the end of which the Band status will be reviewed.

5.5 Offers to All Bands

- Applicants will be considered for an offer for any property for which they have bid successfully
- Applicants will only be made one offer of a property at a time. Once an applicant has been made an offer they will not be able to bid or be considered for other offers of accommodation until the current offer is refused
- The successful bidder will normally be contacted within 48 hours of the close of bids. Applicants should ensure that at the time of bid A1 Housing has up to

date contact details for the applicant, or their nominated representative, who has bid on their behalf. If A1 Housing is unable to contact the successful bidder within 48 hours this could result in the bid being withdrawn and the property being offered to the next suitable bidder.

- As part of the offer we will provide details of the property and make arrangements to view it as quickly as possible. Applicants are expected to decide whether to accept or refuse the offer within 48 hours of viewing the property. If applicants do not inform A1 Housing of their decision within this period the offer may be withdrawn and the property allocated to the next suitable bidder.

SECTION 6 - Exclusion and Suspension from the Housing Register and Other

6.1 Restrictions

Applicants can be excluded from the Housing Register under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002. An exclusion from the Housing Register is where A1 Housing decides that it should not re-house the applicant under these Acts. In this case the applicant is removed from the Housing Register and will not be considered for re-housing.

A suspension from the Housing Register is where an applicant retains their presence on the register but is not offered re-housing.

A restriction is where a decision is made that it is inappropriate to offer a particular type of property or area, for example if there is concern that this may expose other people or the applicant to unacceptable risk.

6.2 Exclusion from the Housing Register

6.2.1 Qualifying Persons

A1 Housing will meet the obligations under the current statutory provisions to ensure only "qualifying persons" are accepted onto the housing register. Applications cannot be accepted from persons who are not "qualifying persons" as defined under Section 160A of the Housing Act 1996.

People who are subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1996 are not a qualifying person and cannot be registered.

6.2.2 Housing Act 1996 Section 160A

A1 Housing reserves the right to refuse to register a housing application, cancel an application or re-house an applicant under the Housing Act 1996 Section 160A.

This can include but will not be restricted to:

- Council or other tenants evicted for a breach of their conditions of tenancy (whether by them or a member of their household)
- Applicants or a member of their household convicted of a serious criminal offence that would be in substantial breach of the Council's tenancy conditions if they were a Council tenant

Examples of unacceptable behaviour will include but will not be restricted to:

- Malicious damage to or neglect of a property
- Using or allowing the use of a property for illegal or immoral purposes
- Violence or aggression towards staff or agents of A1 Housing and Bassetlaw District Council

An applicant's right to a review is set out in Section 9 of the Policy.

6.2.3 Suspension from the Housing Register

A suspension from the Housing Register is where an applicant retains their presence on the register but is not offered re-housing.

6.2.4 Satisfactory Conduct of a Current Tenancy

Applicants who are tenants of Bassetlaw District Council, another Local Authority, an ALMO or a Registered Social Landlord or other Not For Profit organisation are expected to conduct their tenancy satisfactorily in accordance with their Tenancy Conditions.

A1 Housing will check this once an application form for the Housing Register has been received. Checks will be repeated before allocation of a property.

Applicants who have recently left a tenancy with Bassetlaw District Council, another Local Authority, an ALMO or a Registered Social Landlord or other Not For Profit organisation will also have the conduct of their tenancy checked.

Where A1 Housing has concerns about the tenancy this will be discussed with the applicant. The application or any offer will be suspended whilst this takes place. If it has not been possible to conclude an investigation within seven calendar days, the offer of accommodation will be withdrawn and the application suspended until the investigation is concluded.

An applicant's right to a review is set out in Section 9 of the Policy.

6.2.5 Debts and arrears

Debts and arrears owed to Bassetlaw District Council, another Local Authority, an ALMO or a Registered Social Landlord or other Not For Profit organisation in respect of a housing tenancy must normally be cleared before an offer can be made.

A1 Housing expects current or former tenants to have a clear payment record in respect of their rent account and any other housing related debts. This will include but not be restricted to:

- Current tenant rent accounts for dwellings or other properties
- Former tenant rent accounts for dwellings or other properties
- Outstanding debts for Court Costs
- Outstanding debts for rechargeable repairs

It will be the applicant's responsibility to provide any proof of a clear account requested by A1 Housing in respect of their application for re-housing.

A1 Housing will take into account the payment history of the applicant(s) on the Housing Application. Where the application is in a sole name account

will also be taken of the applicant's spouse or partner payment history. An application cannot be registered in a sole name to avoid the spouse or partner taking responsibility for their current or former debts or arrears.

Applicants who owe debts will have their application suspended from the Housing Register.

Applicants who feel they have special and unusual circumstances that A1 Housing should take into account can make a special debt application.

Applicants will have to explain

- What their special circumstances are
- What is unusual about their case
- What efforts they have made to pay the debt
- How they intend to clear the debt and ensure their rent is paid in future.

A special debt application is unlikely to be approved unless the applicant has already made a repayment arrangement and have started to comply with it.

Following receipt of a special debt application a Senior Officer of A1 Housing will consider this. The applicant will be informed in writing of the decision and this will include:

- If the special debt application is rejected what the applicant needs to do in the future to lift the suspension
- If the special debt application is agreed what the applicant needs to do for them to be considered for re-housing. Where an agreement to lift the suspension is in place A1 Housing will check that this has been adhered to before any allocation takes place. If an applicant has failed to meet the Terms of the Agreement then the application will again be suspended.

An applicant's right to a review of either the decision not to lift suspension or the conditions the applicant is required to meet to lift the suspension is set out in Section 6 of the Policy.

6.2.6 Anti Social Behaviour

Any applicant, or member of their household, against whom legal or other enforcement action is currently being taken for anti social behaviour will have their application suspended and will not be eligible for an offer of accommodation.

Legal or other enforcement action will include but not be restricted to:

- Damage to a Council home
- Action taken under the Terms of a Tenancy agreement at Notice of Seeking Possession, Notice of Possession Proceedings or Notice To Quit or equivalent and above
- An Anti Social Behaviour Order, Injunction or other legal proceedings
- Conviction for an arrestable offence affecting the well being of their current neighbourhood

- An Acceptable Behaviour Contract

Where an application has been suspended A1 Housing may subsequently consider whether to exclude the applicant from the Housing Register.

Where an applicant has been suspended they will be informed in writing by a Senior Officer of A1 Housing and advised of the conditions that must apply for the suspension to be lifted.

An application will only be removed from a suspended status where there has been a review of the suspension and it is agreed that the conditions no longer apply. Applicants can apply for a review of the decision to suspend the application immediately after being informed of the decision. If this review is unsuccessful the applicant can apply for further reviews at intervals of no less than 12 months.

An applicant's right to a review of this decision is set out in Section 9 of the Policy.

6.2.6 Keeping a A1 Housing Property in Satisfactory Condition

An existing Bassetlaw District Council tenant must keep their current property in a satisfactory condition before A1 Housing will offer the tenant another property.

The application may be suspended where the property is in an unsatisfactory condition.

Where an applicant has been suspended they will be informed in writing by a Senior Officer of A1 Housing and advised of the conditions that must apply for the suspension to be lifted.

An applicant's right to a review of this decision is set out in Section 9 of the Policy.

6.2.7 Right To Buy Applications

Where an applicant who is a current tenant of Bassetlaw District Council applies to purchase their property under the Right to Buy Scheme their application will be immediately suspended. The application will continue to build up time on the waiting list but will not be considered for allocation whilst ever the RTB is still current.

Where an applicant cancels their RTB the housing register application will be returned to the active Housing Register.

If the applicant purchases their property all existing applications will be cancelled from the Housing Register.

Applicants may subsequently re-apply to go on the Housing Register following the purchase of their property and will be re-assessed in accordance with the Housing Register Policy and their current housing circumstances.

6.2.8 Inappropriate re-housing

A1 Housing reserves the right not to offer a particular area, type of property or a specific property requested by the applicant where this is considered not to be in the interest of the applicant, the local community or A1 Housing.

Examples of circumstances where this will apply will include, but not be restricted to, if the applicant:

- Requests an area where they may be unable to sustain a tenancy from lack of support
- Requests a property that is too small for their family circumstances and this would lead to an unacceptable overcrowding or cramped living conditions of the property including non statutory overcrowding
- Has specific needs for disability adaptations and the property does not meet these requirements
- Has previously been involved in a breach of tenancy conditions in an area
- Has been involved in anti social or criminal behaviour in an area
- Has been involved in actions that, if they were a Council tenant, would have been a breach of A1 Housing's conditions of tenancy
- This list is not exhaustive and all cases will be assessed on an individual basis

A1 Housing may also decide that it is in the best interests of the applicant that they only be offered a particular area, type of property or a specific property. Where this applies the applicant will be advised in writing of the reasons for this decision.

An applicant's right to a review of this decision is set out in Section 9 of the Policy.

SECTION 7 - Removal of an Application from the Housing Register

An application for re-housing will be removed from the Housing Register in the following circumstances. This will end the right of an applicant to be offered re-housing on this application.

Cancellation of an application will happen when the applicant:

- Is not a "qualifying person" as defined under Section 160A of the Housing Act 1996
- Is excluded from the Housing Register under Section 160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996.
- Has requested that the application is cancelled
- Has accepted the tenancy of a Bassetlaw District Council property
- Has become a joint tenant with an existing Bassetlaw District Council tenant
- Has accepted the tenancy of another Local Authority, an ALMO or a Registered Social Landlord or other Not For Profit organisation
- Succeeds to the tenancy of an A1 Housing property
- Has purchased a social housing property under the Right To Buy scheme
- Has purchased a property under a Shared Ownership scheme
- Has completed a Mutual Exchange of tenancies
- Has failed to respond to the annual review of the Housing Register
- Has failed to respond to other correspondence relating to the housing application
- Is an existing Council tenant and has requested and received major adaptations to their current property. (The applicant will be advised of the implications for their request for re-housing as part of the Adaptations process. Minor adaptations up to the limit specified in the Adaptations Policy will not affect the Housing Application)
- Is an existing Bassetlaw District Council tenant and has terminated their tenancy

Applicants are entitled to submit a fresh housing application after an application has been removed from the Housing Register and this will be assessed in accordance with their current housing circumstances.

SECTION 8 - Discretion in Application of the Policy

Bassetlaw District Council has delegated the operation of the lettings policy to A1 Housing Bassetlaw Ltd. A1 Housing has discretion to deviate from the Policy on the grounds of fairness and good housing management.

Discretionary decisions can be taken by an authorised A1 Housing Senior Officer on the following grounds:

- To make an offer to an applicant other than the one whose bid is first
- To withdraw a property from the Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Scheme for direct allocation to an applicant
- To make a direct allocation of a property in an Extra Care Scheme following referral from Adult Social Care and Health Team of Nottinghamshire County Council
- To withdraw a property from the Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Scheme
- To waive the Lettings Policy in exceptional circumstances
- To make decisions where the Lettings Policy does not cover adequately an applicant's special circumstances
- To suspend an applicant from the Housing Register
- To exclude an applicant from the Housing Register
- To agree terms for the lifting of the suspension of a housing application
- To not make an offer to an applicant in special circumstances
- To suspend the offer of accommodation pending further investigation
- To withdraw an offer to an applicant in special circumstances
- To apply restrictions to an applicant's right to be considered for a particular area or property type where this is not in the best interests of the applicant, a member of their household or the community
- To accept an applicant who is assessed as in Band E into another band where failure to do so would cause hardship to the applicant or their family

An applicant's right to a review of a decision affecting their application under this section is set out in Section 9 of the Policy.

SECTION 9 - Administration of the Policy

9.1 Right to Information and Appeal/Review of an Application

Applicants have a right to request information about their application including how their application is being treated and how long it is likely to be before they are offered accommodation.

Applicants will have the right to a single review of the operation of the Lettings Policy on their application for re-housing.

A1 Housing will follow the requirements of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

Applicants have a right to be:

Informed in writing if A1 Housing:

- reduces their preference for re-housing or
- suspends an applicant from the Housing Register or
- refuses to re-house them because of unsuitable behaviour

The applicant will have the right to:

- be informed in writing of the decision and of the reasons for this decision
- request a review of a decision
- submit information in support of their appeal against the decision
- be informed in writing of the decision of the review and the grounds for it

The review will be conducted in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 under A1 Housing's Review Procedure (a copy of which is available on request).

The request for a first stage review must be made within 21 days of notification of the original decision.

A Senior Officer (who did not make the original decision) will then review the decision. The applicant will be notified in writing of the decision within 15 working days of receipt of the request for a review.

If the applicant remains dissatisfied with this decision they can request a second stage review. The request must be made within 21 days of the notification of the first stage review. A more Senior Officer will conduct this review. The applicant will be notified in writing of the decision within 15 working days of receipt of the request for a review.

The decision of the second stage review will be final and applicants will not be able to re-appeal the decision of the review.

Applicants may not request another review unless there is a substantial and significant change in their circumstances from when the original review was requested.

9.2 False Statements and Withholding Information

This scheme falls within the provisions of Part VI of the Housing Act 1996. Section 171 of the Act states:

- (1) A person commits an offence if, in connection with the exercise by a local housing authority of their functions under this Part –*
- (a) he knowingly or recklessly makes a statement which is false in material particular, or*
 - (b) he knowingly withholds information which the authority have reasonably required him to give in connection with the exercise of those functions*

A1 Housing is the local housing authority's mechanism for discharging it's functions under Part VI of the Act.

Where false information is found to have been given, the applicant may also be excluded from registration on the Housing Register or removed from the Housing Register.

Where false information has resulted in the applicant obtaining accommodation, A1 Housing may bring possession proceedings for recovery of the property.

SECTION 10 – Other provisions

10.1 Assignments and Successions of a Tenancy

A1 Housing will consider all requests for assignments and successions of tenancies in accordance with the current statutory position.

Requests for assignments of tenancies and successions of tenancies will be granted in accordance with the Housing Act 1985 as amended.

10.2 Mutual Exchanges

A1 Housing will allow mutual exchanges in accordance with the Housing Act 1985 as amended.

10.3 ANNUAL reviews of the Housing Register

The Council/A1 Housing will carry out **ANNUAL** reviews of the Housing Register. Failure to respond to the review will result in the application being cancelled.

Applicants who have not responded to the review within 21 days will have their application cancelled and their name removed from the Housing Register.

10.4 Review of the operation of the Lettings Policy

The Council will undertake periodic reviews of the Lettings Policy.

SECTION 11 - Assessment of Medical Need for Re-housing

An assessment of an applicant's needs for re-housing on medical grounds will be delegated to A1 Housing's Medical Panel.

The composition and operation of the Medical Panel will be in accordance with the Terms of Reference that are agreed by A1 Housing and Bassetlaw District Council.

Assessments of Support Needs for the allocation of sheltered accommodation under Section 3 of the policy will be carried out by A1 Housing's Supported Housing Service in accordance with their Needs Criteria.

11.1 Terms of Reference of the Medical Panel

Assessment of medical needs for re-housing is delegated by the Council to A1 Housing's Medical Panel.

The Medical Panel will consist of a Senior Officer of A1 Housing and a suitably qualified medical advisor for example a General Practitioner, Registered Nurse or Occupational Therapist.

11.2 Referral to the Medical Panel

Requests for consideration by the Medical Panel can be made by the applicant or someone acting on their behalf.

A1 Housing will supply a Self Assessment Form that must be completed in full to allow the Medical Panel to assess the applicant's needs for re-housing.

11.3 Assessment of Medical Need for Re-housing

The Medical Panel may make an assessment of the applicant at the meeting or may defer the assessment for further reports or information that it sees fit. The Medical Panel may also defer a decision for re-assessment after a period of time where this is appropriate to the applicant's medical condition.

Where an applicant has deliberately or recklessly worsened their housing condition and consequently now qualifies for priority that would not previously have been given they will not be entitled to additional priority.

Where an applicant with a pre-existing medical condition has taken the tenancy of A1 Housing or other social landlord they will not be entitled to any enhancement for re-housing or priority re-housing on the basis of this medical need. Where there is a subsequent significant change in medical circumstances the applicant may apply for a re-assessment by the Medical Panel.

Where the applicant has been assessed by the Medical Panel a re-assessment of the applicant will not take place unless there has been a significant change in the applicant's circumstances.

Applicants with a recognised medical need for re-housing may be awarded Band A, Band B or Band C status according to the severity of their need for re-housing.

A re-assessment will not be carried out where an applicant has previously been awarded a Band A or B status but has failed to bid for a suitable property and has been removed from the Band (under section 4 of the Lettings Policy).

The applicant will be informed in writing of the decision of the Medical Panel and its reasons.

Where an applicant has been awarded a Band A priority for re-housing the Medical Panel will identify the minimum standard of basic facilities required for the applicant's re-housing needs. Where an applicant bids successfully for a property these standards will be taken into account in determining whether the property is suitable for the applicant.

11.4 Criteria for Assessment for Re-housing on Medical Grounds

The assessment will take into account:

- the applicant's medical needs
- the suitability of their current accommodation for these needs
- any alternative arrangements or adaptations that have been made to the property for the applicants needs.

Persons with similar medical needs, but currently occupying different types of accommodation, may therefore be assessed as having a different need for medical re-housing.

11.5 DEFINITION AND EXAMPLES

11.5.1 No medical housing need

If the applicant or a dependent has a medical condition but their current housing has no significant effect on it and re-housing would not lead to any significant improvement in their health.

For example:

- the current property meets the applicant's needs and can be occupied safely and with no significant effect on the medical condition of the applicant
- the main reason for the move is social and does not relate to the suitability of the property

11.5.2 Band C Qualification

If the applicant or a dependent:

- has a medical condition that is made worse by the current housing conditions and re-housing would lead to an improvement in the medical condition or

- is capable of living in their current accommodation but they have a medical condition that could be improved by alternative accommodation or
- could have their living conditions made more tolerable and the quality of life enhanced.

For example:

- the property is only partly suitable for the applicant's needs and they have difficulty with access to the basic facilities of the property
- there is some difficulty with access to the property but it is suitable inside
- the need for re-housing is reduced by alternative arrangements or adaptations to the property
- there is limited support in their current area and a move to an alternative area would provide additional support that can be received from others

11.5.3 Band B Qualification

If the applicant or a dependent:

- Has a medical condition that makes it difficult to gain access to and use safely the basic facilities of the property including the WC and bathing facilities and there is no separate sleeping accommodation that the applicant can use.

For example:

- the property is generally unsuitable for the applicants and they have difficulty with access to most or all of the basic facilities
- the applicants have sleeping and living arrangements which are on different levels and they experience significant problems in using the property
- there is minimal support in their current area and a move to an alternative area would provide significant additional support from others that could not otherwise be provided

11.5.4 Band A Qualification

If the applicant or a dependent:

- has a medical condition that makes it impossible to gain access to and use safely the basic facilities of the property including the WC and bathing facilities and there is no separate sleeping accommodation that the applicant can use

For example:

- the current accommodation is totally unsuitable for the applicant's needs and they would find it impossible to live in the property

- sleeping and living arrangements are on different levels and the applicant cannot safely move between these levels
- there is an urgent need for support that cannot be provided in their current area and can be provided by a move to a different area
- there is a significant Health & Safety Risk to the person in their current property.

11.5.5 Assessment of basic facilities of the property

Examples of the factors used to assess the medical need for re-housing include:

- ability of the applicants to manage stairs including use of any disability adaptations
- location of bedrooms and ability to access them safely including use of any disability adaptations
- location of bathroom(s) and ability of applicants to access these including use of any disability adaptations
- ability to use existing bathing facilities safely including use of any disability adaptations
- location of WC(s) in the property
- ability to use the WC(s) including use of any disability adaptations
- ability to manage access to and from the building including use of any disability adaptations
- suitability of the heating of the dwelling

11.5.6 Allocation of Accommodation

A1 Housing will maintain a list of properties that have been specifically and substantially adapted for the use of tenants with disabilities. These properties will in the first instance be offered to applicants with medical priority needs (Bands A & B).

Where an applicant has been awarded a Band A priority for re-housing the Medical Panel will identify the minimum standard of basic facilities required for the applicant's re-housing needs. Where an applicant bids successfully for a property these standards will be taken into account in determining whether the property is suitable for the applicant.

A1 Housing will assess the adapted property for its suitability for the needs of Band A applicants. The assessment will be undertaken by A1 Housing with the assistance of A1 Housing's GP, the Occupational Therapy Section of Nottinghamshire County Council and/or other agencies as appropriate.

A property will only be offered if it meets the assessed needs of the applicant.

Applicants may bid for any property that they consider suitable for their needs. Where an applicant applies for accommodation which does not meet their access needs the property may be adapted where it is reasonable and practicable to do so in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

If the property is not considered suitable for the applicant's needs it will not be allocated even if the applicant has bid for it successfully.

Where there is a shortage of suitable properties which could lead to an unreasonable delay in rehousing properties will be identified that may be suitable for adaptation for applicants with medical priority needs (Bands A & B).

11.5.7 Appeals

Applicants may make a written appeal against the decision of the Medical Panel.

Once such an appeal has been made a home visit will be carried out on the applicant and the Medical Panel will review its original decision.

If the Medical Appeal Panel's review confirms the original decision the appellant will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons for this.

There is no further right of appeal.

The applicant will retain their rights under SECTION 9 - Administration of the Policy.

11.5.8 Review

A1 Housing and Bassetlaw District Council will undertake periodic reviews of the Terms of Reference and operation of the Medical Panel.