

Paul Shipway Witness Statement - Appendix 6



Barnet Council

The Housing Allocations Scheme September 2013

Approved 24 September 2013

ANNEX 1 – BARNET HOUSING BANDS

Band 1: Urgent Need to Move due to Reasonable Preference PLUS additional priority and a local connection ⁸	
	Summary Guide of Criteria ⁹
Emergency medical or disability Reasonable preference category S.167(2)(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where an applicant's condition is expected to be terminal within a period of twelve months and rehousing is required to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care. • The condition is life threatening and the applicant's existing accommodation is a major contributory factor. • The applicant's health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it is likely to become life threatening. • The applicant has severe mobility issues, is housebound and is unable to leave their accommodation without assistance. They have an assessed need to move to accommodation that meets their needs. • The applicant is a wheelchair user who is unable to use their wheelchair within their current accommodation and has an assessed need to move to wheelchair suitable accommodation. • The applicant's accommodation is directly contributing to the deterioration of the applicant's health such as severe chest condition requiring intermittent hospitalisation as a result of chronic dampness in the accommodation and the condition of the property cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time – usually 6 months. • Where overcrowding in the property leaves the applicant at risk of life threatening infection.
Exceptional Circumstances Welfare and Hardship Criteria Reasonable preference category S.167(2)(e)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency need to move determined by the Council and authorised by the Head of Housing Options or equivalent.
Exceptional need to move Reasonable preference category S.167(2)(e)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants who need to move due to domestic abuse, extreme violence or extreme harassment. • Extreme violence or harassment will be verified by the Police and/or other agencies as necessary. This may include where a move is necessary to protect a witness to criminal acts.

⁸ As defined in paragraph 3.4 of this scheme

⁹ This summary guide of criteria does not represent an exhaustive list of all applicants entitled to reasonable preference

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed in exceptional circumstances due to significant problems associated with the tenant’s occupation of a dwelling in the social or private rented sector and there is a high risk to the tenant or their family’s safety if they remain in the dwelling/area. For social housing tenants transfers will be to properties of the same size or smaller if they are under-occupying and type where required, but locations or areas are likely to change. <p>Examples of exceptional circumstance cases are given in the policy at paragraph 3.9</p>
<p>Disability need to move on hardship grounds Reasonable preference category S.167(2)(d)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is any applicant who needs to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which he or she, or a member of their household, has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces
<p>Release of adapted property Reasonable preference category S.167(2)(e)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a tenant is willing to transfer to a suitable non adapted property and is releasing an adapted house or designated older persons property.
<p>Statutory Overcrowded Reasonable preference category S.167(2)(c)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants who are statutorily overcrowded
<p>Acute Overcrowding Reasonable preference category S.167(2)(c)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a household is 3 bedrooms short of the bedroom standard outlined in Annex 2.
<p>Private sector properties insanitary or unfit. Those living in insanitary conditions where the conditions pose an ongoing and serious threat to health; Reasonable preference category S.167(2)(c)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector tenants and residents of dwellings that the Council’s Private Sector Housing Team has determined that the property poses a category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (e.g.: crowding and space, excessive cold or risk of falls) and the Council are satisfied that the problem cannot be resolved by the landlord within 6 months and as a result continuing to occupy the accommodation will pose a considerable risk to the applicant’s health. This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of roof, or have living conditions which are a statutory nuisance, <u>and</u> there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a 6 month time period. A private sector property either owned or rented where a statutory notice has been issued by the environmental health department that an unfit property is to be demolished under the Housing Act 2004.
<p>Under-occupation Reasonable preference category</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a secure Council tenant will release a home with two or more bedrooms by moving to a property with fewer bedrooms than they currently have.

S.167(2)(e)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing association tenants who will release a home with two or more bedrooms are eligible if their landlord agrees that the vacated property can be used for a nomination by the council
Major works or demolition Reasonable preference category S.167(2)(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a council tenant has to move either temporarily or permanently whilst major works are undertaken or where their home is due to be demolished
Foster carers referred by the Council's Children's Service Reasonable preference category 167(2) (d) or (e)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster carers approved by the Council whose housing prevents them from being able to start, or continue, to provide foster care.

Band 2 Need to move – Reasonable Preference plus Community Contribution and a local connection¹⁰	
	Summary of Criteria
Homeless Households owed a full homeless duty under section 193(2) or 195(2). Reasonable Preference categories s167(2) (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who are owed a duty under section 193 (2) Or 195 (2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65 (2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) -- This means households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and in priority need Note for cases owed a full homeless duty by any other Council they will receive a reduced preference for not having a local connection to Barnet Council (until they acquire a local connection with the borough).
Overcrowded by the Bedroom standard. Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(c)	Where a household is 2 bedrooms short of the bedroom standard outlined in Annex 2.
Applicants living in unsatisfactory housing lacking basic facilities. Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(c)	<p>Applicants without access at all to any of the following facilities. No access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a bathroom or kitchen an inside WC hot or cold water supplies, electricity, gas or adequate heating <p>Applicants who occupy a private property which is in disrepair or is unfit for occupation and is subject to a Prohibition Order and recovery of the premises is required in order to comply with the Order as defined by Section 33 of the Housing Act 2004.</p> <p>Applicants who only have access to shared facilities in</p>

¹⁰ As defined in paragraph 2.4 of this scheme

	shared accommodation will not qualify under these criteria.
Medical grounds Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(d)	Where an applicant's housing is unsuitable for severe medical reasons or due to their disability, but who are not housebound or whose life is not at risk due to their current housing, but whose housing conditions directly contribute to causing serious ill-health.
Hardship or welfare need to move for care or support Reasonable Preference category s167(2) (c) and (d)	Those who need to move to give or receive care that is substantial and ongoing. Those who need to access social services facilities, and are unable to travel across the Borough. Those who need to take up (or continue) employment, education or a training opportunity that is not available elsewhere <u>and</u> who do not live within reasonable commuting distance.
Housing need due to age Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(d)	Older or disabled applicants seeking Retirement or Extra Care or Sheltered Plus housing
Ready to move on from Council accredited supported care schemes Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(c)	An applicant is ready to move to independent settled housing on the recommendation of the support worker or equivalent. The applicant is in need of medium to long term rather than short term ongoing tenancy support. That support package has been assessed and is in place.
Move on from Care Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(c)	A care leaver is ready to move to independent settled housing and is genuinely prepared for a move to independent living. They possess the life skills to manage a tenancy including managing a rent account. The care leaver is in need of either a long term or medium term tenancy support. That support package has been assessed and is in place.
Discretionary Succession	Where the Council has agreed to grant a tenancy under clause 3.26 of this policy.
Existing Foster carers approved by the Council willing to provide care for an additional child Reasonable preference category 167(2) (d) or (e)	Where a Foster carer already providing a home for at least one foster child offers to provide care for an additional foster child

Band 3 : Need to move – Reasonable Preference BUT no Community Contribution and a local connection¹¹

Summary of Criteria

Applicants in this Band will have the same element of housing need / Reasonable Preference as those applicants in Band 2 BUT will not have the Community Contribution or Working Household award as defined section 3 part 3 of the policy. Once a Community Contribution or Working Household award is given, the applicant will be moved into Band 2.

Band 4: Reduced Priority : Need to Move - Reasonable Preference but with Reduced Priority

Summary of Criteria

Applicants owed Reasonable Preference but who have been given reduced priority but are owed, or are likely to be owed, the main homelessness duty under Housing Act 1996 Part VII) 193(2).

No local connection

Unspent housing or welfare benefits convictions

Rent or other housing arrears

Income or assets exceeding the limits set out in paragraph 6.7

Breaches in tenancy conditions

Customers in this band have reduced preference and are extremely unlikely to be offered social housing but may be helped to find a home in the private rented sector.

¹¹ As defined in paragraph 2.4 of this scheme

ANNEX 2

SIZES OF HOMES

- The number of bedrooms you need depends upon the size of your family.
- The chart shows the size of home that we consider you need.
- A single parent is counted as a single person and an unborn baby is counted as a child.
- Single people without children are usually offered studios.
- Single bedrooms will be used for one person not sharing (for example a single parent).
- Double bedrooms will be used for two people sharing (for example two children sharing)
- Where a single parent has a child under the age of one they will be offered a flat with one double bedroom.
- Two children of the opposite sex under ten will be expected to share a bedroom.
- Some retiring staff are contractually entitled to one bedroom more than they need.
- Council or Housing Association tenants trading down from properties with three or more bedrooms may choose a property with one bedroom more than they need
- Sometimes Housing Associations adopt different criteria for determining the number of bedrooms a household requires.

SIZE OF FAMILY	SIZE OF PROPERTY
Single person	Bedsit/single person home- with single bedroom
A couple without children	1 bedroom
Two adults of the same sex and generation for example, flat sharers, or two brothers	1 bedroom
A couple expecting a child or with a child, including an adult son or daughter.	2 bedrooms
A couple with two children of the same sex	2 bedrooms
Two adults of opposite sex who do not live as a couple, for example, brother and sister	2 bedrooms
A couple with two children of opposite sex and both under ten	2 bedrooms
A couple with two children of opposite sex one of whom is over ten	3 bedrooms
A couple with three children	3 bedrooms
A couple with four children (all of the same sex or two of each sex)	3 bedrooms
A couple with two children of the opposite sex under ten and one dependant relative (for example, widowed mother)	3 bedrooms
A couple with four children (three of one sex and one of the opposite sex)	3 or 4 bedrooms depending on the age of the children

A couple with more than four children	4 bedrooms
A couple with three children and one dependant relative	4 bedrooms
*This does not apply to parents/children	

ANNEX 3

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION: HOW PRIORITY IS AWARDED

Community Contribution

People who play a part in making their neighbourhood strong, stable and healthy – those who help make it a good place to live, work and play – are valuable people. They are the backbone of their community, and the Council believes such people should be allocated social housing to continue contributing to sustaining local communities in the area where they contribute.

The Community Contribution priority scheme is a Barnet Council policy which gives the main applicant or partner increased priority for housing when they have reasonable preference and qualify under the community contribution criteria described below. These applicants will be placed in Band 2 by virtue of this award.

Community Contribution Awards – How they work in practice

Community contribution can only be awarded to the main applicant or their partner.

Applicants or their partners and all household members must have a *current positive residence history* to qualify for a Community contribution award.

1. No on-going culpable involvement in anti-social behaviour or criminal activities.
2. No breaches of tenancy within the last 3 years
3. No outstanding lawfully recoverable housing-related debt over £100.
4. Not have an outstanding unspent conviction

Increased priority for housing is given to those applicants who demonstrate a commitment to contribute to the Borough's economic growth as working households or who make a contribution by their contribution within communities.

Applicants or their partners awarded community contribution must also fulfil the eligibility criteria in section 3 of the housing allocations scheme.

Applicants can access increased priority for housing in five ways;

1. Working Households

This policy aims to support the economic growth of Barnet.

We want to encourage people who can, to work and want to raise levels of aspiration and ambition. We will offer increased priority to applicants who are working but are on a low income and will therefore find difficulty in accessing outright Home Ownership or Low cost low Ownership. Applicants who have reasonable preference can receive increased priority to Band 2 by virtue of their "working" status.

Definition of Working Households

Households where the applicant or their partner is in employment.

For the purposes of this Allocations Policy employment is described as having a permanent contract, working as a temporary member of staff or being self-employed. Applicants will only qualify if the worker has been employed for 6 out of the last 12 months. Applicants who are on maternity leave but remain in employment can also qualify for this award. Verification will be sought at point of application as well as point of offer under the same terms. Applicants must provide payslips, P60, bank statements or a verifying letter on headed paper in order to qualify.

2. Volunteering

Households where the main applicant or their partner is volunteering.

Volunteers must have been volunteering for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and continuously until the point of offer. Volunteering must be for a not-for profit organisation that is registered with the Volunteer Centre Barnet or recognised by the Council, or a charity that is registered with the Charity Commission or is funded by the Council or another local authority or a faith based community group or organisation. Tenants and Residents Associations which are constituted are classified as not-for-profit organisation. They must be registered with Barnet Council or a Registered Social Landlord to qualify.

Volunteering must be for a minimum of 10 hours per month.

Evidence required for voluntary work.

A letter on the organisation's headed paper from the manager responsible for volunteers confirming the applicant's involvement in a minimum of 10 hours per month of voluntary work for at least 6 months. This person must not be related to the applicant in any way.

3. Training or Education

Households where the main applicant or their partner is in training or education.

We want to encourage people to move closer to gaining paid employment by gaining employability skills and becoming job ready. This may be achieved by attending higher or further education or by accessing a longer vocational course of study or engaging in a programme of work-related training courses. In all cases the course of study must lead to achieving accredited qualifications and / or certification by a registered awarding body.

Study or training may be undertaken at a range of recognised institutions and organisations such as: Further Education College; registered Private Training Provider; registered Voluntary Sector Organisation or University.

To be eligible for the vocational training qualification a person must initially access a recognised Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service to develop an agreed action plan and to be signposted to relevant training providers. Candidates must be working towards gaining employment in a vocational occupation.

A person must have been studying or training against the eligible criteria and definition outlined, for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and continuously until the point of offer. Applicants eligible for out-of-work related benefits must also be registered with Job Centre Plus and accessing mainstream job brokerage provision, thus actively seeking work. This training must be in addition to, or supplementary to any mandatory training required and may be undertaken in conjunction with volunteering to gain further knowledge and experience.

Some people undertaking training are not actively seeking work. Where the Benefits Agency can confirm that the applicant is not required to actively seek work because of their circumstances, for example they have caring responsibilities, their training can be recognised in this policy.

All training must be a minimum of 10 hours a month.

Evidence required for Training element

Further/higher education candidates must supply evidence of:

- letter from college or university confirming participation in course of study for period of 6 months

For vocational training award the following evidence must be provided:

- certificate or letter from a registered awarding body for the course or by a recognised training provider as evidence of gaining a recognised vocational qualification or successfully completing accredited work-related training (over a continuous period of at least 6 months)

4. Ex service personnel

Applicants or their partner, who have served in the British Armed Forces and lived in Barnet for at least 6 months immediately prior to enlisting, will qualify for a community contribution award automatically, with the exception of those who have been dishonourably discharged. This includes people who have served in the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and British Army.

Service with the armed forces will be confirmed with the Royal British Legion.

5. Registered Foster Carers

We recognise the contribution that Barnet foster carers make towards ensuring that children in Barnet's care receive a good service. In order to qualify for a community contribution award under this policy, applicants will require a letter from the council's Children's Service confirming that they have been approved as a Barnet foster carer and that they are in a position to take one or more placements.

6. Carers

An applicant or their partner who is receiving carers allowance for caring for a person who is in receipt of DLA higher rate will qualify for the community contribution award under this policy.

7. People with disabilities and older residents

Whilst many older people and those with disabilities work or volunteer, there may be circumstances in which frailty or a disability prevents this, or means that the full eligibility criteria set out above can not be met. Housing Officers will consider such cases on an individual basis and use their discretion to award a community contribution where they consider this is appropriate.

8. Young people

Generally young people (applicants aged 25 and under) will be required to meet the full community contribution criteria outlined above. However housing needs officers will have discretion with regard to the length of time a young person has been in employment. In addition where a young person is able to participate in volunteering and is not in employment or training the number of hours per month required is 20 hours.

Young people referred by Children's Services

In some circumstances a young person in supported housing may not have a full current positive residence history. Where the scheme manager is satisfied that the young person is no longer in breach of their tenancy agreement or licence and is complying with the conditions of the tenancy Housing Officers will consider such cases on an individual basis and use their discretion to award a community contribution where they consider this is appropriate.

Where a young person has been referred by Children's Services the following will qualify for community contribution award:

- Firm offer and proof of acceptance onto formal study or training as set out in paragraph 3 above
- In employment
- Volunteering for 20 hours per month. Volunteering defined in paragraph 2 above