

## [Guide to the amendments to Brent's Housing Allocation Scheme](#)

**Brent's new Housing Allocations Scheme became effective from 3 February 2014. The scheme was amended again in November 2014. This guide summarises the changes to the current published scheme.**

If you are already registered for housing with Brent, or are planning to make an application, your priority on the housing list may now be different to a previous award.

The aims of the new policy are to meet local priority needs and make the best use of Brent's limited social housing stock. The new policy aims to be fairer to all, by ensuring that the relatively few residents who are in the most housing need wait a much shorter time than before for an allocation of public rented housing.

We have published a summary of the Scheme that is brief and easy-to-read, and contains a table of the Band Reasons within Band A-C of the Scheme. The following points are provided in addition to the summary, to walk through some of the changes that have been made.

You can find full details of the new Housing Allocations Scheme at [www.brent.gov.uk/housing/finding-a-home](http://www.brent.gov.uk/housing/finding-a-home)

### **How might the changes affect me?**

#### **No recognised housing need (formerly "band D")**

The bands are A, B and C. There is no longer a band D.

If you were previously in Band D, you are now no longer eligible to bid for social housing on Locata. You can use your Locata "LIN" number to access your personal online housing options and housing advice.

#### **Length of residence in Brent**

If you haven't lived in Brent continuously for the last 5 years you will not usually be eligible to bid for social housing on Locata, but you can use your Locata "LIN" number to access your personal online housing options and housing advice. The residency criteria will apply to newly accepted homeless households from February 2015.

#### **Earnings, financial means and capital assets**

The new scheme sets out rules that make it clear what levels of earnings and capital would disqualify you from an offer of social housing. We advise those that are over the threshold on their housing options, especially the various low cost home ownership options - your Locata "LIN" number will enable you to access these.

#### **Living outside Brent**

If you live outside Brent you are no longer eligible for Brent's housing register – existing applications will be cancelled and new applications will not be processed.

(The exceptions to this rule are where you were assisted to move by Brent, e.g. under our homelessness duty or by our social services teams.)

### **Overcrowding assessment**

The Locata standard for overcrowding is replaced by the national bedroom standard, except that non-dependent family members aged 21 or over will usually no longer be considered as part of a household and will therefore not qualify for a separate bedroom. Under the new rules:

- If you have two children, a girl and a boy, they will not qualify for a bedroom each until one of them reaches the age of 10, where previously it was age 7.
- Same sex siblings will no longer qualify for a separate bedroom, regardless of their age.

### **Overcrowded by 1 bedroom**

If you need to move because you are one bedroom short you will no longer receive priority for social housing, but you can use your Locata “LIN” number to access your personal online housing options and housing advice.

### **Overcrowded by 2 or more bedrooms**

If you need to move because you are more than one bedroom short your priority for social housing Band C Any children in your household aged 21 or over will not count towards the bedroom calculation unless they need to live with you either to give or receive care (e.g. if they have learning difficulties or if they look after a disabled adult in the family).

### **Medical and/ or welfare need to move**

Only if your current housing conditions are severely adversely affecting one or more members of your household will you receive priority for social housing under the new scheme. If we assess your need to move as severe you will be placed in band B. Emergencies qualify for band A. If your need to move is comparatively variable, slight or moderate you will no longer receive priority for social housing, but you can use your Locata “LIN” number to access your personal online housing options and housing advice.

### **Unsanitary conditions**

If the council’s private sector housing team has reported that your home poses a “category 1 hazard”, the problem cannot be resolved by your landlord within 6 months, and continuing to live there poses a considerable risk to health, you may qualify for band C.

### **Serving and ex-armed forces**

If you serve in the armed or reserve forces, or have left within the last 5 years, or you need to leave MoD accommodation because your spouse or partner died in service, and you have urgent housing needs, you may qualify for band B.

### **Homeless households**

The scheme aims to be fair to all types of applicant, so if you approached the council as homeless and we placed you into suitable accommodation, you will not be treated more favourably than those who, through no fault of their own, are living in unsuitable conditions. All approved homeless applicants living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council will be in Band C, regardless of the type of temporary accommodation they are residing in i.e. B&B, Hostel, assured short hold tenants of a housing association such as Genesis etc

## **Homeless households accepted after 9th November 2012**

If you apply as homeless under the new Localism Act 2012 rules that allow councils to end the homelessness duty with an offer of private sector accommodation, you will move to band D once an offer of suitable accommodation is made.

## **Adoption & fostering**

If we agree to a recommendation from social services that you need to move in order to foster or adopt you will qualify for band A.

## **Special quotas**

Young care leavers and people agreed for 'move-on' from residential and supported housing schemes will qualify for band B.

## **Under occupiers**

If you are a council or housing association tenant moving to smaller accommodation you will qualify for band A (formerly A or B). If you are an RP tenant, the Council must have a reciprocal agreement with your landlord.

## **Sheltered housing for older people**

If you are over 60 and would benefit from moving to sheltered housing (e.g. because it would help you to keep your independence for longer), you will qualify for band B (formerly C).

## **What are my options if I don't qualify for social housing?**

We want to help you find the right home. This might be advice that will enable you to stay where you are, or help you to move within the private sector or to another part of the country. To make it simpler for you, we have put lots of useful information on [www.locata.org.uk/brent](http://www.locata.org.uk/brent) (click the "housing options" section of the Locata website).

## **What amendments to the scheme were agreed in November of 2014?**

A number of amendments were agreed by Brent Council's Cabinet in November 2014. A timetable for implementing these amendments has been produced, along with which applicants will be impacted.

- 1 An applicant's choice to bid on advertised properties that are smaller than their assessed need will be made more clearly available to households requiring 2-bedroom properties
- 2 We will be making an increased number of Direct Offers to applicants, using the Councils discretion, rather than only in exceptional circumstances
- 3 Underoccupiers will be allowed to include children aged over 21 years on their transfer application if they want to.
- 4 We have reinstated a quota working with Voluntary Sector organisations
- 5 An additional 5-years waiting time is given to applicants who satisfy the criteria for 'working', and the criteria are clearly set out. Applications for the additional waiting time can be made if your housing application is already live.
- 6 Adult children that are included in an application will be expected to share a bedroom with a sibling of the same sex.

- 7 Applications from overcrowded households will be awarded Band C priority (previously Band B)
- 8 Households who accept a Qualifying Offer will retain their band C priority.
- 9 The residency criteria will now be applied to all accepted homeless households. Previously they were exempt from needing to meet the residency criteria.
- 10 'Auto-bidding' will be introduced and applied to homeless households that have been waiting the longest time. This means that in some situations, Locata will place bids for applicants who are not bidding.

### **Contact us**

You can use your Locata "LIN" number to find personalised housing options and advice. You can also e-mail us with your questions at **Rehousing-[Generic@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Rehousing-Generic@brent.gov.uk)** or by telephoning **020 8937 2000**, and we will talk to you about your housing options or give you an appointment for housing advice.