

Allocation Policy 2024

Brief Banding Guide

This is a summary guide and is not the Council's adopted Allocation Policy. The policy which includes full details and explanations for all of the areas covered in this guide can be accessed via <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/housing-policies-and-strategies/housing-allocation-scheme>



Band 1 –
Urgent or
exceptional
housing need to
move



Band 2 –
High housing need
to move



Band 3 –
Lower housing
need to move



BAND 1: Exceptionally Urgent Need to Move:

These are applicants with the highest need for rehousing.

Note: To be awarded any of the bands an applicant must qualify to be included on the Housing Register. This means they must meet the residential connection rule and not be disqualified under any of the other adopted rules, unless the council has agreed that discretion should be applied to waive the residential connection rule or any other qualification rule due to exceptional circumstances.

1: Emergency medical or disability need:

A Band 1 award is for applicants who are suffering sudden or severe progressive life-threatening medical conditions or disability and need an immediate move (e.g., to facilitate hospital discharge) because their current home is unsuitable (as it does not meet their medical needs and/or cannot be adapted) and poses an immediate and serious danger to the individual.

Note there is an appendix in the full policy (appendix 2) that gives more details on how a medical or disability need will be assessed and when a Band 1 award may be granted with examples that may qualify for an award of Band 1.

2: Exceptionally urgent need to move

These decisions may be made by the manager for the applications and allocations service or made by the Council's Housing Panel where it is considered that a case is extremely complicated and would benefit from being scrutinised by the Panel.

In the interests of fairness to all these applicants these circumstances are kept to a minimum. Examples of exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- a severe threat to life by others
- emergency cases whose homes are damaged by fire, flood, or other disaster may be provided with another tenancy if it is not possible to repair the existing home, or if any work to repair is to take such a long period of time that there will be serious disruption to family life
- households which, on police advice, must be moved immediately due to serious threats to one or more members of the household, or whose continuing occupation would pose a threat to the community
- cases nominated under the Police Witness Protection Policy or other similar Policies that the council has agreed to be part of
- an applicant who has an exceptional need that is not covered in the Allocation Policy. For example, where child or public protection issues require rehousing or for domestic abuse where all other options to remain in the home have been considered
- other exceptional circumstances as authorised by the Head of the Housing Service or equivalent.

For any Private Registered Provider tenant, the expectation is that, where it is safe to do so, a like for like management transfer would be granted, or an emergency decant provided whilst a suitable transfer can be arranged and therefore the majority of these cases should not need to be awarded a banding by the Council.

3: Exceptional impact of an unfit private sector property

- Private sector tenants and residents of dwellings where the council's Environmental Health team has determined 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
- Following assessment, the applicants 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, and
- The council is satisfied that the problem cannot be resolved by the landlord within six 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 living conditions that are a statutory nuisance, and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a six-month time period.

<p>4: Applicants without access at all to any of the following facilities:</p>	<p>An applicant who has accommodation (not rough sleepers) with no access to the following within their current property:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A bath or shower b) A toilet c) Running hot water supplies d) Electric/gas needed for essential activities <p>Applicants who have access to shared facilities re cooking; bathroom and toilet will not qualify under these criteria.</p>
<p>5: Statutory overcrowding or severe overcrowding by 3 bedrooms or more as defined by the bedroom standard</p>	<p>The measurement of overcrowding is set out in section 4 of the full policy.</p>
<p>6: Freeing up a social housing home that has been already significantly adapted</p>	<p>Where a tenant is living in a substantially adapted property and does not need the adaptations in their home they will be awarded band 1 in order to release the adapted home if the adaptations are assessed as being needed by an applicant listed as being in urgent need of the adaptations in the applicant's property</p>
<p>7: Armed Forces who meet the following criteria</p>	<p>Applicants with urgent housing need and have access to no other accommodation who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Are serving (and will soon leave) the regular forces and are suffering from serious injury, illness, mental ill health, or disability which is attributable to the person's service b) Has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the MOD following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service or c) Is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service <p>For this purpose "the regular forces" and "the reserve forces" have the meanings given by section 374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006.</p>
<p>8: Care Leavers</p>	<p>A care leaver who meets the criteria is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a care leaver who does not originate from Stevenage but has been placed into foster care or residential care in Stevenage and has been resident in Stevenage for five continuous years and meets the requirements for housing under the Leaving Care Act 2000 as being an eligible, relevant or former relevant person aged 18-21 (24 if in full time education).



BAND 2 – High Priority, Statutory Housing Need to Move:

These are applicants that have been awarded Band 2 priority based on their assessed high housing need.

Note: To be awarded any of the bands an applicant must qualify to be included on the Housing Register. This means they must meet the residential connection rule and not be disqualified under any of the other adopted rules, unless the council has agreed that discretion should be applied to waive the residential connection rule or any other qualification rule due to exceptional circumstances.

1: Homeless applicants who are owed one of the following duties by Stevenage Council only

- the Main Housing Duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996, or
- a relief duty under Section 189B (2) where the applicant is, at the point of that 189B duty being accepted, considered likely to be in priority need and unintentionally homeless, whether a decision to that effect has been made or not, and the applicant is accommodated in interim temporary accommodation.

<p>2: Severe medical or disability impact:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where an applicant (or a member of their household) is living in accommodation with a severe, long term, medical conditions (chronic or progressive) or severe disability that means they urgently need to move because their home is assessed as being highly unsuitable and is directly detrimental to the applicants’ physical or mental health. • Where an applicant’s (or a member of their household) housing is unsuitable because of severe medical reasons or because of their disability. The applicant (or member of their household) is not housebound, but their current housing is exacerbating their health conditions. <p>Note there is an appendix in the full policy (appendix 2) that gives more details on how a medical or disability need will be assessed and when a Band 2 award may be granted with examples that may qualify for an award of Band 2.</p>
<p>3: Existing Stevenage Council tenants who:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will move into a smaller property releasing a high demand property • occupy a house and wish to move to a general needs flat • occupy a two-bedroom bungalow or elderly persons flat and wish to move to a one bedroomed bungalows or into specialist accommodation for older persons <p>Note the Council will assess whether a property that could be released is a high demand property and if so whether to award Band 1.</p>
<p>4: Existing Stevenage Council tenants who:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Has succeeded to the tenancy of a property which was specially built or substantially adapted for a person with a disability and they do not need this accommodation (see the succession policy for further information). b) Has an identified need for adaptations to their current property and there is another property with these adaptations already fitted. This will only apply when the applicant has been assessed by an Occupational Therapist and excludes minor adaptations i.e., grab rail. <p><i>Note: many of these moves will be achieved through the Council initiating a management transfer and where this action is taken the transfer will not be carried out under this allocation policy.</i></p>
<p>5: Overcrowded by 2 bedrooms as defined by the bedroom standard set out in this policy</p>	<p>This group is defined as applicants overcrowded by 2 bedrooms who are living in the Stevenage area as defined under this Policy’s overcrowding standard.</p>

<p>6: Succession to a tenancy</p>	<p>The applicant is a statutory or discretionary successor to a tenancy and is required to move to a smaller property. Note successors who are downsizing or are required to move to a smaller property will not be allowed one more bedroom than their housing need (as per the previous policy before this revised 2024 policy).</p>
<p>7: Unsatisfactory housing conditions or fitness</p>	<p>Private sector tenants that Stevenage Borough Council has determined that the property poses a serious category 1 hazard under the Health and Safety fitness rating and the Council's assessing officer is 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, and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a 6 month time period, and the household are not able to resolve their own housing problem by moving to alternative private sector accommodation.</p>
<p>8: Ready to move on from Council accredited supported housing scheme</p> <p>(except for the Haven YMCA and Housing First – See Band 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An applicant is in a Council accredited supported housing in the Stevenage area, and • Is ready to move to independent settled housing on the recommendation of the support worker or equivalent; and • The applicant is in need of medium to long term rather than short term ongoing tenancy support; and • That support package has been assessed and is in place.



Band 3 – Lower Priority Need to Move:

Note: To be awarded any of the bands an applicant must qualify to be included on the Housing Register. This means they must meet the residential connection rule and not be disqualified under any of the other adopted rules, unless the council has agreed that discretion should be applied to waive the residential connection rule or any other qualification rule due to exceptional circumstances.

1: Applicants owed one of the following homelessness duties

Applicants owed any of the following homelessness duties by Stevenage Council as set out below:

- a) Applicants where the Section 189(B) Relief duty has been brought to an end and an applicant has been assessed at that point as being intentionally homeless (and hasn't been disqualified under the unacceptable behaviour disqualification rule).
- b) Applicants owed the Section 193C (4) Main duty where the Prevention or Relief duty was ended by the council due to their deliberate non-cooperation.
- c) Applicants owed a Section 189B (2) Relief duty by the Council and not considered likely to be in priority need.
- d) Applicants owed a Section 195 (2) Prevention of homelessness duty by the Council and not considered likely to be in priority need.
- e) Applicants where the Section 189(B) Relief of homelessness duty has been brought to an end and the applicant is determined to be homeless but not in priority need and therefore not owed a Main Homeless Duty.

<p>2: Insecurity that risks homelessness</p> <p><i>Note: Applicants in this category will be boosted to Band 2 after 6 months in Band 3. Their effective date for Band 2 will be the date they are boosted to Band 2 and not the date they were awarded Band 3</i></p>	<p>A pregnant applicant or applicant with a child or children who are sharing a home with family who are not part of their household and where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) They have no ownership or tenancy rights, and the arrangement is short term and very insecure and only available whilst the applicant is actively seeking an offer of social housing or alternative accommodation with friends or in the private rented sector, and b) They were owed a prevention of homelessness duty as they were assessed as likely to become homeless within 56 days, and that duty has ended because they have been allowed to remain at home whilst they bid for social housing with their Band 2 priority and it is likely that they can remain for at least a year, and a) c) The family member with the interest in the home has agreed to allow the applicant to remain for at least a year.
<p>3: Applicants over 60 who have been assessed for specialist accommodation for older persons only</p>	<p>Single applicant or couples aged 60 or over and with no other priority. The applicant wishes to move to specialist accommodation for older persons and has been assessed as suitable by Stevenage Borough Council.</p>
<p>4: Overcrowded by 1 bedroom as defined by the bedroom standard set out in this policy</p>	<p>This group is defined as applicants overcrowded by 1 bedroom who are living in the Stevenage area as defined under this Policy's overcrowding standard.</p>
<p>5: Applicants who satisfy the 'Right to Move' criteria</p>	<p>These are applicants who meet the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) Regulations 2015. This banding award applies to existing social tenants who seek to move from another council in England, and who have a need to move for work related reasons to avoid hardship. However, under this Allocation Policy, Stevenage Council will limit these moves to no more than 1% of all lettings per year.</p> <p>See annex 3 for details of how the 'Right to Move' criteria will be applied.</p>

<p>6: Former Regular Armed Forces Applicants</p>	<p><i>Note armed forces that meet the legal requirement for additional preference will be awarded Band 1.</i></p> <p>Members of the Armed Forces persons who meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) They are serving in the regular forces and will be discharged within 6 months and have served for 5 years or more, or b) They were serving in the regular forces in the last 5 years and have applied to join the housing register within that 5-year period, and c) Had been previously living in the Stevenage area immediately before joining the armed forces or since leaving <p>And d and e below must also apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) They did not leave the armed forces as a result of a dishonorable discharge, and e) They do not own or have a legal interest in any other property <p>For this purpose “the regular forces” and “the reserve forces” have the meanings given by section 374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006.</p>
<p>7: Specific supported housing schemes subject to an annual quota</p>	<p>Haven YMCA supported housing scheme</p> <p>Housing First schemes</p> <p><i>These schemes are subject to an annual quota and will be let through direct lets.</i></p> <p><i>Outside of quota residents are still able to bid for appropriate accommodation.</i></p>