



Property Pool Plus

The Councils of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral jointly operate a housing allocations scheme known as Property Pool Plus. This features a common allocations policy which was introduced in July 2012 with the launch of the Property Pool Plus choice based lettings scheme.

Since Property Pool Plus was introduced there are many aspects of the scheme which now need to change. This is due to a number of developments including:

- New powers and requirements under the Localism Act 2011.
- A new Government Code of Guidance on local authority housing allocations.
- New regulations regarding Armed Forces personnel.
- The Welfare Reform Act 2012.

These developments mean that we need to change our policy to keep it up to date and ensure it is fair and transparent. We have proposed a number of changes to the Property Pool Plus policy which we hope will improve the scheme, and your opinions on these changes are important to us. This survey seeks your views on those changes which are considered significant.

You might find it helpful to read the policy alongside the survey. To help you, the survey questions have also been referenced to the relevant policy pages. A draft version of the policy can be viewed at www.propertypoolplus.org.uk so that you can see how the proposed changes would be incorporated.

We would welcome the views of the residents of the five Council areas who use Property Pool Plus and of any organisations or professionals with an interest in the scheme. Your views are important to us and the responses received from this survey will be reported to the Cabinets of each Council when they consider whether or not to approve the changes.

The survey will be open for 12 weeks and will close on 6th April 2014
Thank you in advance for your time.

ABOUT YOU

1. To help us make best use of the information you provide, please tell us which of the following best describes you? **Please X one box only**

- Member of the public
 Applicant on the Property Pool Plus Register
 Local Authority Councillor
 Representing a Registered Housing Provider
 Representing a support/ Plus Register advocacy organisation
 Other (please tell us in the box below)

2. Please also tell us which Local Authority Area you live in? **Please X one box only**

- Halton Knowsley Liverpool Sefton Wirral Other

Other: please tell us in the box below

PLEASE X ONE BOX ONLY FOR EACH STATEMENT ON THIS PAGE

PEOPLE WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR THE HOUSING REGISTER: Reference Draft Policy Pages 9 - 13, Section 3.2.2

The Localism Act allows councils to decide who can and cannot join the register. In addition to excluding those aged under 16 years we are proposing that the following are not allowed to join:

- 3. **Where an applicant has been housed under the scheme, or by a participating scheme landlord, in social housing during the past 12 months, and their housing circumstances have not changed.**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 4. **Those who have previously behaved in an unacceptable manner which would make them unsuitable to be a tenant of a social landlord.**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 5. **Rent arrears and/or housing related debt equal to or greater than 8 weeks gross rent.**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 6. **Eviction from a social housing tenancy in the last 2 years.**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 7. **Abandonment of a social housing tenancy in the last 2 years.**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 8. **The Applicant or member of their household has within the last 2 years displayed conduct likely to cause significant nuisance or annoyance within the locality (Anti-Social Behaviour).**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
- This would also include the following groups**
- 9. **The Applicant or member of their household has within the last 2 years been convicted for using the premises or allowing them to be used for immoral or illegal purposes (e.g, the manufacture, sale or supply of drugs).**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 10. **Abusive behaviour toward staff**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 11. **Failure to maintain an existing social housing property in a reasonable condition.**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 12. **Disqualification under rent arrears and/or housing related debt may be waived if an agreed payment plan has been maintained for 12 months, even if the debt is higher than 8 weeks gross rent.**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 13. **Disqualification under rent arrears and/or housing related debt may be waived if the rent arrears have accrued solely as result of the housing benefit under occupation deduction provided the applicant actively bids for smaller properties.**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 14. **The length of time an applicant remains non-qualifying is 12 months, after which time the Applicant must prove satisfactory evidence they have modified their behaviour.**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
 - 15. **High risk criminal offenders/ex-offenders who are subject to special supervision (Level 2 and 3 Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements).**
 Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

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REDUCED PRIORITY - BAND F: Reference Draft Policy Page 13, Section 3.3

16. Applicants with housing related debt equal to or greater than 4 weeks gross rent but less than 8 weeks gross rent will be awarded reduced priority (Band F) thus reducing their priority for housing but not preventing them joining the register, where they will remain until the debt is reduced to less than 4 weeks.
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
17. Applicants deemed to have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances in order to gain a priority band will be placed in reduced priority (Band F) for a period of 12 months.
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

ARMED FORCES: Reference Draft Policy Page 20, Section 5.3 & Page 24 & 25. Section 5.5

In order to reflect the Government's guidance to give Armed Forces personnel 'additional preference' we are proposing:

18. Those applicants that meet the criteria for Housing Priority Band A and who are Armed Forces personnel (or bereaved spouses or partners leaving forces accommodation) will have their priority banding date backdated by 3 months.
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
19. Those Armed Forces personnel who apply up to 3 months prior to their discharge date, or up to 12 months after discharge, and who do not qualify for priority Band A, will be assessed as priority Band B.
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

HOMELESSNESS: Reference Draft Policy Page 23 - 25, Section 5.4 & 5.5

20. Where Councils choose to help homeless applicants in Band A by offering private rented accommodation, refusal of a suitable offer will result in loss of Band A status in the same way it would in the case of refusing a social housing tenancy.
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
21. Applicants being assisted under homeless prevention initiatives (where a Council has a duty to help them) will be placed in Band B for a period of 3 months to improve their prospects of being housed before homelessness occurs.
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

BAND D - EMPLOYMENT: Reference Draft Policy Page 27, Section 5.7

22. The length of employment criteria to gain Band D has been eased. Previously an applicant would have had to be in employment for at least 9 of the last 12 months. Any applicant or member of their household who is in employment for 16 hours per week or more will be eligible for Band D.
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

LOCAL CONNECTION: Reference Draft Policy Page 27, Section 5.10

23. The criteria to establish a local connection through employment has been relaxed to include those applicants who have a 12 month employment contract or who have continuously worked in the local authority area for the last 6 months.
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

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BEDROOM STANDARD: Reference Draft Policy Page 29, Section 5.12

24. **An additional bedroom will be allowed for:**
A child with disabilities who is entitled to the care component of Disability Living Allowance at the highest or middle rate and who cannot reasonably share a bedroom;
A foster child, where it is a requirement of the Local Authority that they have a separate bedroom;
A non-resident carer who is regularly required to stay overnight to attend to an applicants personal care/health needs.
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree
25. **16 to 20 year olds of the same gender, sharing a room, as in the existing policy will not be classed as overcrowded. Such households will however be deemed eligible to bid for accommodation of a size to enable 16 to 20 year olds to have their own room.**
- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

General Comments

If you would like to make any additional comments please tell us in the box below

Thank you for taking the time to tell us your views