



Housing Allocations Scheme



North
Northamptonshire
Council



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www.northnorthants.gov.uk

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction and Overview	4
1.1 Introduction	4
1.2 Aims and Objectives	5
1.3 Legislative Framework	5
1.4 Scope of the Scheme	6
1.5 Statement on Choice	6
1.6 Equality and Diversity	7
1.7 Data Protection	7
1.8 Fraudulent Activity	8
1.9 Declaration of Interests	8
2. Registration and Assessment	9
2.1 How to Apply	9
2.2 Household Members	9
2.3 Household Medical Needs	11
2.4 Household Pets	11
2.5 Assessment and Verification	12
2.6 Change of Circumstances	12
2.7 Communication	12
2.8 Cancellation	13
2.9 Service Standards	13
3. Eligibility Criteria	14
3.1 Subject to Immigration Control	14
3.2 Not Subject to Immigration Control	14
4. Qualifying Criteria	15
4.1 Homeowners	15
4.2 Local Connection	15
4.3 Unacceptable Conduct	18
4.4 Age Qualification	20
4.5 No Housing Need	20
4.6 Property Refusals	20
4.7 Exceptional Circumstances	21

5.	Priority Banding Criteria	22
5.1	Band A	22
5.2	Band B	26
5.3	Band C	29
5.4	Band D	31
5.5	Band Demotion	32
5.6	Band Effective Date	32
6.	Property Eligibility Criteria	33
6.1	Household Composition	33
6.2	Pregnancy	34
6.3	Family	34
6.4	Accessible	35
6.5	Bungalows	35
6.6	Sheltered	36
7.	Property Shortlisting and Allocations	37
7.1	Advertisements	37
7.2	Local Lettings Plan	37
7.3	Community Contribution Criteria	38
7.4	Autobid and Manual Bidding	38
7.5	Homelessness Duties	39
7.6	Highest Bidder	39
7.7	Offers	39
7.8	Direct Offers	40
7.9	Refusals	41
8.	Right of Review, Appeals and Complaints	42
8.1	Requesting a Review	42
8.2	Formal Review Decision	42
8.3	Landlord Reviews	42
8.4	Compliments, Comments and Complaints	42
Appendix A	Glossary	44
Appendix B	Accountability	47

1 Introduction and Overview

1.1 Introduction

All local housing authorities are required by law to have a housing allocations scheme to determine how social housing is allocated within their area. North Northamptonshire Council (the “Council”) has adopted a choice-based lettings scheme (“Keyways”) for this purpose. This scheme sets out the rules, criteria, and procedures that determine how social housing, including affordable rent, is allocated in North Northamptonshire to eligible and qualifying applicants with an established housing need.

Like many areas nationally, North Northamptonshire is facing increasing demand for social housing that far outweighs supply. In this context, the scheme offers eligible and qualifying applicants some choice in bidding for a home, while giving reasonable preference to those in the greatest housing need and with a local connection to North Northamptonshire.

Keyways provides a single access point to good quality affordable housing and aims to make the task of applying for social housing as simple as possible. On a regular basis, the Council and housing associations operating in North Northamptonshire (“Keyways landlords”) will advertise their vacant properties online at www.keyways.org.uk. Properties are then allocated in accordance with this scheme.

The scheme is available to new applicants and existing social rented housing tenants needing to transfer to another tenancy with their current or another social landlord. The accommodation allocated through the scheme is primarily for social and affordable rent, which is owned and managed both by the Council and Keyways landlords. Occasionally, private rented and low-cost homeownership properties are also made available.

Properties are advertised from 00:01 on Thursday to 23:59 on Tuesday. Applicants can express an interest in up to five properties that meet their requirements, which means that they will be included on the shortlist for those properties. If applicants do not express an interest in a property, they will not be considered when it is allocated. Applicants are advised to bid on properties only after satisfying themselves of their suitability. Bids on properties that are later refused may incur a penalty in line with 7.9.

Some applicants will be subject to autobid in line with 7.4, which means that the software will automatically place bids after midnight on Tuesday when all other bids have been placed. This is typically reserved for applicants who have an urgent housing need, are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or have limited time to remain in their current accommodation. The purpose of autobid is to ensure that these applicants do not miss any opportunities to secure suitable housing as quickly as possible, thereby improving their housing prospects and addressing their immediate housing needs effectively.

When a property is shortlisted, it is usually offered to the applicant with the highest band and the longest waiting time, which is defined in 5.6 as the band effective date. Applicants will only be contacted if successful, and they can view their bid outcome through their online account.

A variety of tenancies may be granted following a successful nomination, including introductory, starter, secure, assured shorthold, or fixed-term tenancies. Most applicants can decide which properties and tenancy types they wish to express an interest in. However, the type of tenancy offered to applicants will sometimes depend on other factors such as their current tenure and landlord, location, property type, and landlord of the prospective property. Once an applicant has accepted the property allocated to them through the scheme, their application will be set to ‘housed’. Should the applicant seek rehousing at a later date, a new application will be required, and the assessment process will start again.

The Council has engaged with a diverse range of stakeholders, including landlords, existing applicants, social housing tenants in North Northamptonshire, partner agencies, and other interested groups to inform the development of the scheme.

The scheme will be monitored and reviewed as necessary to ensure it continues to meet local needs, responds to changes in the local housing market, and remains legally compliant. The Council reserves the right to make minor amendments to the scheme using the delegated authority of the Assistant Director of Strategic Housing, Development and Property Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing, subject to demonstrating that these changes will help the Council continue to meet its strategic housing objectives.

The Council will publish data on housing demand and property allocations through the Keyways website, ensuring that no personal details are disclosed under any circumstances.

In addition to this scheme, the Council also provides a housing options service, which primarily focuses on the prevention and relief of homelessness and provides advice on a range of alternative housing options, including mutual exchange, private renting and low-cost homeownership. Detailed information is available at www.northnorthants.gov.uk.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

- Ensure compliance with the Council's statutory obligations by providing high quality, affordable housing to those most in need while promoting sustainable tenancies and thriving communities.
- Offer individuals seeking housing clear and transparent information about the availability of social housing in North Northamptonshire, enabling them to make realistic, informed, and affordable housing choices.
- Assist Keyways landlords in maximizing the efficient use of housing stock in North Northamptonshire. This includes ensuring that larger homes, specialist housing, and homes adapted for disabilities are made available to those who need them most.
- Support Keyways landlords in managing their prospectives effectively by ensuring that homes can be let quickly and their tenants are given the best chance to maintain their tenancies in the long term.
- Help prevent homelessness, fulfil the Council's statutory homelessness duties, and minimise the use of temporary accommodation.
- Ensure and promote equality of opportunity in accessing safe, secure, and affordable housing. This includes supporting local people in housing need as well as individuals who do not satisfy a local connection to North Northamptonshire, such as those who have served in the armed forces, care leavers, those fleeing domestic abuse, and individuals seeking employment opportunities.

1.3 Legislative Framework

The scheme operates within a legislative framework directly applicable to the Council and requires housing associations to 'cooperate to such an extent as is reasonable in the circumstances in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's scheme'. The primary legislation governing the allocation of social housing is Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended. References to legislative sections within the scheme are contained within this Act.

This legislation mandates that the Council make all allocations and nominations in accordance with a published scheme that determines priorities among housing applicants and outlines the procedure to be followed when allocating housing. The Council must determine the relative priority awarded to applicants, which is particularly crucial given the high demand and limited availability of social housing.

The law, as it applies to local housing authorities, requires that reasonable preference for housing be given to those in specific categories as set out in the Act. Applicants with reasonable preference must have an

advantage in accessing housing over those who do not, though this does not guarantee absolute priority. The eligibility and qualifying criteria outlined in the scheme will still apply. The statutory reasonable preference categories in section 166A(3) of the Act include:

- People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7).
- People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3).
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability); and
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)

The Council can grant additional preference to applicants with reasonable preference who also have exceptional or urgent housing needs. Special provisions exist for additional preference for armed forces personnel with specific needs as detailed in 5.1.

The Council can include other local priorities alongside the statutory reasonable preference categories, as long as these do not dominate the scheme. Overall, the scheme must operate to give reasonable preference to statutory categories over those who do not fall within these categories.

In addition to the primary legislation, the scheme takes full account of the associated statutory codes of guidance and instruments and has been designed to be compatible with other relevant legislation. In developing the scheme, the Council has considered relevant strategies and its corporate plan.

A summary of the scheme is available free of charge to anyone who requests a copy. It can be downloaded free of charge from the Council or Keyways websites. If requested, a paper copy can be provided for a reasonable fee, which will be confirmed at the time of request.

1.4 Scope of the Scheme

Allocations within the scheme are defined as the selection of a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of Council accommodation or the nomination of a person to be a starter or assured tenant of housing association accommodation. The scheme does not apply to the following lettings:

- Succession of tenancy
- Assignment of a tenancy through mutual exchange
- Assignment of a tenancy to a person who would be qualified to succeed to the tenancy
- Assignment of a tenancy in pursuance of a relevant court order
- Transition from an introductory to secure tenancy
- Changes from sole to joint tenancy and vice versa
- Temporary decants to complete repairs
- Lettings made by housing associations outside of the service level agreement
- Properties leased to partner agencies such as support providers

1.5 Statement on Choice

The Council operates a choice-based lettings system and to support choice, available properties within North Northamptonshire will be advertised on the Keyways website.

Applicants can register bids for properties suitable for their needs. In specific circumstances, the Council may restrict access to bidding, place bids on behalf of applicants, or make direct offers.

While the Council aims to offer the greatest choice possible, the demand for social housing in North Northamptonshire far exceeds supply. This is further influenced by legal responsibilities to certain groups of applicants in housing need. The choice available to applicants is also affected by their priority under the scheme, their eligibility for property types, and the availability of suitable properties.

The Council provides assistance to applicants with identified support needs in using the system. When an applicant appears on multiple shortlists, the Council reserves the right to determine the property offered to the applicant.

1.6 Equality and Diversity

The Council and Keyways landlords are dedicated to fostering equality of opportunity in housing services. We are committed to implementing, maintaining, and delivering high-quality services that ensure no applicants are treated less favourably based on protected characteristics. No applicant shall be disadvantaged by the application of a rule, condition, or requirement that has a discriminatory effect and cannot be justified by law.

Allocations will be made only to eligible individuals. The scheme fully complies with the Equality Act 2010, and an equality impact assessment has been conducted.

1.7 Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 provide a statutory framework outlining the responsibilities of the Council as a data controller in the collection and processing of applicants' personal data. These regulations also define the rights of applicants regarding their data and offer them control over how their information is used in various circumstances.

The Council will, through appropriate management, ensure compliance with the GDPR, the Housing Act 1996, and the Council's Privacy and Data Protection Policy. The Council will process applicants' data lawfully and only share it when there is a lawful basis to do so.

When processing personal data, the following data protection principles will be adhered to:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Collected for a specified, explicit and legitimate purpose and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with that purpose
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary
- Accurate and kept up to date
- Not kept for longer than is necessary
- Processed securely, using technical and organisation measures
- The Council will demonstrate accountability with the first principle

Information collected from applicants, along with data gathered from third parties during an application, will be used to assess and administer requests for housing. Additionally, applicants' information may be used for purposes permitted by law, such as child protection, public protection, and the prevention or detection of fraud or other criminal activities.

Applicants have the right to access their personal data processed by the Council, including electronic and paper files. Personal data is information relating to an applicant as an identifiable individual. Requests for personal data can be made by contacting the Council's Information Governance Team.

1.8 Fraudulent Activity

Applicants must provide complete information about their circumstances and furnish supporting evidence as required. Under section 171 of the Housing Act 1996, it is a criminal offence for applicants or anyone providing information related to an application to knowingly or recklessly make false statements or knowingly withhold reasonably requested information relevant to the application.

It is also an offence if third parties provide false information, whether or not at the instigation of the applicant. This applies at all stages of the application process.

In cases where there is suspicion or an allegation of providing false information or withholding information, the application will be excluded from consideration for nominations during the investigation and until an outcome is reached. The Council reserves the right to take legal action, including prosecution under relevant legislation such as fraud, where evidence is present.

If the investigation concludes that the applicant did not provide false information or withhold information knowingly, the application will be reinstated from the date of registration, ensuring no prejudice against the applicant.

If the Council determines that an applicant, directly or through someone acting on their behalf, provided false information or withheld relevant information, the application may be disqualified. Ground 5 in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985, as amended by the 1996 Act under section 146, allows a landlord to seek possession of a property granted due to false statements by the tenant or someone acting at the tenant's instigation. In such cases, the Council will actively pursue the recovery of possession.

1.9 Declaration of Interests

Councillors, board members and employees of the Council or Keyways landlords and their relatives are eligible to apply under the scheme, however, applicants must disclose their position or relationship with the Council or landlord at the time of application. Failure to declare this information, if discovered later, may adversely affect the application or tenancy. Applicants who declare an interest will not receive preferential or detrimental treatment.

2 Registration and Assessment

2.1 How to Apply

Applicants can apply to the scheme by completing the housing application form online at www.keyways.org.uk. If assistance is required, applicants can contact the Council to arrange a telephone appointment.

Upon receipt of the application, applicants may need to provide supporting evidence. The application will only be assessed once a fully completed form and any required evidence is received.

The assessment will determine:

- Eligibility (see section 3)
- Qualification (see section 4)
- Housing need (see section 5)
- Property eligibility (see section 6)

Applicants who do not meet the eligibility, qualification or housing need criteria will not be accepted.

2.2 Household Members

Applicants must include persons who normally reside with them or are expected to reside with them as household members. All household members who will live in any future property must be listed on the application for assessment purposes. Only one application per applicant and household member is allowed at any time. If applicants wish to include household members who are not currently residing in the UK, the application may be registered. However, allocation together will not occur until the household has been reunited in the UK.

Eligible household members include:

- Partner or spouse (must be a joint applicant if eligible)
- Dependent children
- Adult sons and daughters
- Other adults dependent on the applicant or joint applicant

Other individuals will only be considered under exceptional circumstances, such as providing or receiving substantial care, with supporting evidence. The Council will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a person can be included as a member of the household.

Household Member	Criteria
Dependents	A dependent child is defined as being aged 0-15 years, or 16-18 years and attending or enrolled in full time approved non-advanced education or training. The Council typically expects applicants to receive child benefit any dependent children. In determining whether a dependent child can be considered as a member of the household where there is shared parental responsibility, the Council will consider whether there is a sufficient degree or permanence or regularity to constitute normal residence as a member of the household. The Council may also consider the demand for and supply of accommodation, as well as any

	under occupation which may result where a child spends part of the week with one parent and part of the week with another. Factors that the Council will consider include: • Who has main parental responsibility • Principal home of the child • Registered address with GP, school or nursery • Frequency and length of residence at the applicant's property • Availability of other reasonable accommodation • Any court order pertaining to the child's residency Where there is no court order in place, the Council may require the name, address and contact details of the other person with shared parental responsibility to determine their dependency upon the applicant. If a child has no suitable accommodation with either parent, then both parents can include the child on their application until such time as suitable housing for the child has been secured. At this time, the other parents' application will be reassessed accordingly. For clarity, in shared parental responsibility arrangements, only one family property will be offered for the child.
Non-Dependents	Non-dependents are defined as children of the applicant and/or joint applicant who do not meet the criteria of dependents. A non-dependent is typically aged 18 years or older or aged 16-17 and not enrolled in full time non-advanced education or training. For households with non-dependents capable of living independently, the Council will assess the needs of the entire household. The Council may refuse to include non-dependents in the application if the housing needs cannot be met through existing housing supply. Non-dependent household members, including adult sons, daughters, or extended family members, may be required to apply for housing separately. Children living with their parents while serving in the armed forces or attending university may be included on the application as their parental home is considered their principal residence. In cases where a non-dependent cannot live independently, such as due to disability or severe learning difficulties, family accommodation may be provided if it benefits the household's well-being.
Children in Care	Children in compulsory or voluntary care can be included in an application, provided there is written confirmation from social services that the children will live permanently with the applicant. The Council will also consider court orders, such as special guardianship. Applicants currently fostering children may include foster children in their application if there is a degree of permanence or a pending adoption application. Written confirmation from social services regarding the fostering arrangement or adoption application will be required to inform the decision.
Carers	Applicants or household members requiring a full-time residential carer, as evidenced by social services or a primary healthcare professional, may

	include the carer on their application. Individuals providing substantial long-term care to another person, necessitating cohabitation to deliver care, may also be included on the application. Care needs that cannot be met by visiting carers must be verified by social services. The care needs must be substantial, such as a requirement for personal care with basic daily activities (e.g. dressing, feeding, bathing, toileting) or an inability to live independently certified by a medical professional.
Split and Non-Traditional Households	The Council will consider applications from households where the main and joint applicants do not currently reside at the same address or from non-traditional households, such as friends sharing. When deciding whether to accept applications from non-traditional households, the Council will consider factors including the relationship between applicants and the demand for and availability of the required property type and size. If accepted, both applicants must meet the eligibility and qualifying criteria. The priority awarded to the application will be based on the housing circumstances of the applicant in the highest priority band. Where the housing need could be resolved by the household member moving into accommodation currently occupied by another household member, priority will not be awarded.

2.3 Household Medical Needs

Applicants, joint applicants, or household members with a permanent physical disability, mobility problem, medical condition, or mental health condition must provide relevant medical evidence for consideration in their application. The Council may contact the applicant for further information regarding the condition to determine qualification, band priority, and suitable property types.

In some cases, the Council may seek independent medical advice to assess whether the current home negatively impacts the health and mobility of any household member and to determine the extent of this impact. This advice will also inform decisions about appropriate accommodation and necessary adaptations.

If specific adaptations are required, the application will be updated accordingly. Households needing specific adaptations will only be considered for accommodation that meets their needs from the outset.

Recognising that individual circumstances vary, the Council acknowledges that the priority banding criteria cannot encompass every situation. Exceptional banding decisions related to medical issues outside the normal criteria will be made by a Senior Housing Allocations Officer.

2.4 Household Pets

Applicants must include any pets to be rehoused with them on their application and are responsible for updating the application with any changes, including the addition or removal of pets. During the assessment of the application, the Council will determine whether the applicant is permitted to bid on

properties advertised by landlords that do not allow pets. This decision will be made on a case-by-case basis.

2.5 Assessment and Verification

To assess and verify applications, the Council may make additional enquiries with current and former landlords and other relevant agencies. A home visit or office interview may also be arranged, and the Council will contact the applicant to schedule an appointment.

Verification includes checks on the applicant's full circumstances, including but not limited to eligibility, qualification, housing need, property eligibility and community contribution. Circumstances will be verified at the point of application and at the point of nomination before any formal offer.

Where supporting documentation provided is in another language, applicants must provide the original document along with a certified translated copy, at their own expense. The documents should be certified by the translator. The Council may obtain a translation at its own expense if fraudulent activity is suspected.

Before any formal offer of tenancy, landlords will conduct a tenancy assessment, including an affordability assessment, to verify the applicant's circumstances. Applicants who fail verification checks or affordability assessments will not be offered a tenancy for the nominated property, and their application may be reassessed accordingly.

2.6 Change of Circumstances

Applicants must inform the Council of any changes in the circumstances of any person included in their application, as this may affect their eligibility, qualifying status, priority band, or property eligibility. Such changes include, but are not limited to:

- Change in eligibility status
- Change in assets or savings, including homeownership or beneficial interest in a property
- Accrual of new housing related debt
- New criminal convictions
- Change of address
- Change of contact details
- Household members leaving or new members joining
- Change in a household members health or well-being

If the Council later discovers a change in circumstances that has not been disclosed, this may result in the application being cancelled, an offer of accommodation being withdrawn, or possession action being taken to recover a property allocated under the scheme.

Applicants are responsible for notifying the Council of any changes in their circumstances that may impact their application. Applications can be reassessed by the Council at any time.

Annually, all applicants are required to complete an online review to ensure that the number of applicants accurately reflects the demand for housing in North Northamptonshire. This review also confirms that applicants still wish to remain on the scheme and that their details are accurate and up to date.

2.7 Communication

Once all necessary enquiries have been completed and the application has been processed, the Council will contact the applicant to inform them of the following:

- If they are not eligible or do not qualify to under the scheme, including the reasons for this decision and their right to request a review
- If they have been accepted under the scheme, and whether they are on autobid or can start placing bids for properties through their online account
- Their unique housing reference and login details
- The priority band in which they have been placed
- The date on which the application was placed in the priority band (the effective date)

2.8 Cancellation

If an applicant fails to complete their application, provide requested information, or complete their annual review within 28 days, the application will be cancelled, and they will need to reapply if they would like an application to be considered in the future. The Council may also cancel an application if the applicant:

- Becomes ineligible for allocation
- Requests cancellation of their application
- Has been rehoused by a landlord
- Moves without informing the Council of their new address
- Provides false or misleading information
- Refuses an offer of suitable accommodation
- Fails to qualify
- Fails to place bids on suitable properties within six months (priority band may be reviewed instead)

This is not an exhaustive list and the Council may cancel an application for other reasons where it is deemed reasonable to do so in the circumstances.

2.9 Service Standards

Upon receiving an application, the Council will strive to meet the following service standards within 30 working days:

- Notify the applicant of the outcome or request additional information
- Provide a decision on the application after receiving a fully completed submission, including all relevant supporting information
- Confirm amendments to the application following the submission of a change in circumstances by the applicant
- Communicate the outcome of our assessment following an annual review

The Council reserves the right to make minor amendments to the scheme using the delegated authority of the Assistant Director of Strategic Housing, Development and Property Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing, subject to demonstrating that these changes will help the Council continue to meet its strategic housing objectives.

3 Eligibility Criteria

Under section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, the Council must consider whether applicants are eligible for an allocation of accommodation. This relates to some people who may have been living abroad or who do not have permanent permission to remain in the UK. Only applicants that are eligible can be accepted under the scheme.

3.1 Subject to Immigration Control

A person that is subject to immigration control will be eligible for an allocation of accommodation if they fall within a category of persons that have been prescribed as eligible by regulations made by the Secretary of State.

3.2 Not Subject to Immigration Control

A person that is not subject to immigration control will be eligible for an allocation of accommodation unless:

- Their only right of residence is one which has been prescribed as not resulting in eligibility by Regulations made by the Secretary of State; or
- They are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area or excluded from the requirements of the Habitual Residence Test by Regulation 6(2) of the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Regulations 2006).

4 Qualifying Criteria

The Council will only allocate accommodation to those who it defines as being ‘qualifying persons’ within the parameters of section 160ZA of the Housing Act 1996. An applicant must qualify under each of the requirements set out below to be considered a qualifying person.

4.1 Homeowners

Applicants, including household members, must declare whether they own a home or have a legal interest in any land or property in the UK or abroad. A home under the scheme is defined as a freehold or leasehold property, including shared ownership, lodges, caravans on holiday or static sites, or boats with moorings.

Homeowners, including joint homeowners, will not qualify unless they have an urgent housing need as defined by priority Band A or Band B and possess insufficient equity, capital or assets (including land) to resolve their housing difficulties. Applicants needing to move on medical grounds must first explore adapting their current home before qualifying under these circumstances.

Applicants with beneficial interest or home rights in a property are classified as homeowners and are exempt under the scheme. Homeowners who have sold or transferred their property in the UK or abroad within the last five years and received or would have received equity of £16,000 or more will be excluded under the scheme for five years from the date of sale.

Household income levels and savings, including any deliberate depreciation of savings, may be considered where an applicant has an urgent housing need and could resolve their circumstances with their income or savings. This includes cases where a homeowners property is subject to a compulsory purchase order. Passported benefits and non-contributory disability benefits are excluded from income considerations.

Any lump sum received by a member of the armed forces as compensation for an injury or disability sustained in active service will be disregarded as savings.

4.2 Local Connection

Applicants who do not establish a local connection to North Northamptonshire will not qualify under the scheme. A local connection is established if any permanent member of the household meets any of the criteria outlined below unless otherwise stipulated.

Local Connection	Criteria
Residence	Applicants must be currently resident in North Northamptonshire at both the point of application and the point of nomination. Additionally, their five-year address history must include at least two years of past residency in North Northamptonshire. Residency may be verified through tenancy references, electoral roll records, information held by any local authority, or third-party databases such as Experian, and will be verified at the point of application and nomination. This applies to individuals currently living in institutions, hospitals, or serving custodial sentences outside North Northamptonshire, provided they were resident in North Northamptonshire for at least two out of the last five years before entering the institution, hospital or custody.

	Applicants placed into accommodation by another local authority outside North Northamptonshire as a discharge of any homeless duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 will not qualify until all homelessness duties have expired (e.g. two years if discharged through the private sector) and they have established an additional two years of residency. Such applicants will require a total of four years residency before meeting this criterion.
Employment	The main or joint applicant must be regularly employed in North Northamptonshire at the point of application and the point of nomination. For the purposes of this criterion, regularly is defined as working 16 hours per week or more, with either a permanent contract (having passed any probationary period) or a demonstrated work history of at least six months, with no reason to believe the arrangement will end. Self-employed applicants or those whose profession require them to work outside North Northamptonshire occasionally must demonstrate that their employment has primarily been based in North Northamptonshire for a minimum of six months prior to application and at the point of nomination. Applicants on maternity or sick leave who remain employed will qualify under this criterion if there is no reason to believe their employment will cease.
Immediate Family	Family members currently residing in North Northamptonshire (parent, sibling or child only) must have lived in the area continuously for a minimum of five years prior to the application. Residency may be verified through tenancy references, electoral roll records, or information held by any local authority database. Relationships may be verified by birth certificates or information held on any local authority database.
Armed Forces	Certain members of the Armed Forces community are exempt from any residency or local connection requirements, by virtue of regulations made under section 160ZA(8) of the Housing Act 1996 which prevents local authorities from applying a local connection test to disqualify such applicants. These are: • Those who are currently serving in the Regular Armed Forces or who were serving in the Regular Forces at any time preceding their application. • Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the Regular Forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their Service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service. • Serving or former members of the Regular or Reserve Armed Forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service. • Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who need to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence.
Right to Move	Current social housing tenants in England who are employed or who have been offered permanent employment in North Northamptonshire and who need to move to avoid hardship. Evidence will be required.

Current Tenants	Current social housing tenants in North Northamptonshire who reside in a property managed by a Keyways landlord and where the application is supported by the landlord.
Homelessness Duty	Applicants owed a homeless duty by the Council as specified in the reasonable preference categories outlined in section 166A(3)(a) and (b) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended): • Main Duty - section 193(2) • Relief Duty - section 189B • Prevention Duty - section 195(2) • Power to secure for non-priority and not intentionally homeless - section 192(3) • Priority need but intentionally homeless – section 190(2)
Care Leavers	Applicants who are defined as an eligible child, relevant child or a former relevant child. • “eligible child” has the meaning given by paragraph 19B of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 • “relevant child” has the meaning given by section 23A(2) of the Children Act 1989. • “former relevant child” means a person aged under 25 who falls within the meaning given by section 23C(1) of the Children Act 1989.
Domestic Abuse	Applicants who are or have been a victim of domestic abuse carried out by another person, who needs to move for reasons connected with that abuse, including from accommodation initially occupied on a temporary basis. Domestic abuse has the meaning given by section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
Legal Agreement Site	Applicants who satisfy an established local connection to a section 106 or village exception site, as defined in relevant legal agreements, and do not meet any other local connection criteria. This criterion must be met at the point of application and the point of nomination. Applicants accepted under this criterion will only be eligible to bid on properties within the village site to which they satisfy a connection.
Special Circumstances	In exceptional circumstances, as approved by a Senior Housing Allocations Officer, the Council will accept applicants who cannot demonstrate a local connection as outlined above. These circumstances may include: • Applicants needing to move to provide or receive essential care and support in North Northamptonshire. • Applicants who were resident in North Northamptonshire for two years or more before moving to supported housing outside the area to prevent homelessness. • Applicants who cannot live in the area in which they have a local connection and need to move elsewhere for reasons of rehabilitation or personal safety, such as those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or the National Crime Agency Relocations Team (NCA).

4.3 Unacceptable Conduct

Applicants including household members will fail to qualify under the scheme if they have previously exhibited behaviour that led to the loss of a tenancy or could have resulted in such action by the landlord. Circumstances that may lead to disqualification under the scheme include, but are not limited to, the criteria outlined below.

Non-Qualifying Reason	Criteria
Housing Related Debt	Applicants with outstanding housing related debt for a residential tenancy within the last five years totalling more than the equivalent of two months' rent liability will fail to qualify under the scheme. Housing related debt includes current or former rent arrears (excluding support costs), recharge arrears, or court costs against a social or private tenancy. The two month rent liability threshold will be defined using the rent liability figure at the applicants current or most recent address. Cumulative debt within a five year period exceeding this threshold will result in the applicant failing to qualify. All housing related debt included in an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA), Debt Relief Order (DRO), or Bankruptcy Order (BO) will be considered outstanding for 12 months from the date of issue. IVA payments must be adhered to and remain active. Applicants owed a homeless duty by the Council with any housing related debt exceeding the above threshold will be assessed and may be exempt from this criterion under exceptional circumstances. If accepted, an appropriate repayment plan must be established, with payments initiated and consistently maintained. This is to demonstrate to the Council and prospective landlords that the applicant is actively and responsibly addressing any outstanding debts.
Serious Breaches of Tenancy	Applicants will fail to qualify if there is evidence of a serious and deliberate breach of a social or private tenancy within the last five years. Such breaches are considered serious when, had the applicant been a tenant of the local authority, the authority would have been entitled to a possession order under section 84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any grounds detailed in Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Act, with the exception of Ground 8. This includes: • Rent arrears • Breach of tenancy agreement • Nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, including anti-social behaviour • Illegal or immoral use of the property • Damage or neglect • Conviction for an arrestable offence committed in the locality of the premises • Domestic abuse • Making a false statement to gain a tenancy Applicants evicted from a social tenancy for subletting or abandoning a property, or knowingly renting a property that is being sublet, within the last five years will also fail to qualify under this criterion.

Criminal Convictions	Applicants must declare any offence that is not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012). Applicants will fail to qualify where the conviction is relevant to rehousing. Such offences include, but are not limited to: • Violent offences, including assault occasioning Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), explosions and riots. • Harassment, threats of violence, or intimidation, including racially motivated and domestic abuse offences. • Offences relating to offensive weapons (firearms and certain offences involving knives). • Offences against property, including offences under the Theft Act 1968 such as robbery and burglary, and offences under section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1981 involving destroying or damaging property. • Drug-related offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, including the restriction of production and supply of controlled drugs and possession of controlled drugs with intent to supply. • Sexual offences. • Offences under Part 2 of the Serious Crime Act, including encouraging or assisting the commission of the above offences.
Antisocial Behaviour	Applicants must declare any involvement in antisocial behaviour for which they have been subject to formal warnings or enforcement action. Applicants will fail to qualify if their antisocial behaviour is relevant to rehousing. This includes, but is not limited to: • Closure Orders issued due to antisocial behaviour in or near the applicant's current or former property. • Civil Injunctions such as injunctions preventing nuisance or annoyance. • Criminal Behaviour Orders. • Noise Abatement Notices served under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. • Community Protection Warnings and Notices. • Convictions for breaching any of the above. • Additional enforcement actions or prosecutions under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Antisocial behaviour also includes actions where an applicant has interfered with security and safety equipment or tampered with the landlord's electricity supply (including to communal blocks).
Unacceptable Behaviour	Applicants will fail to qualify if they have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards any officer, official agent, or property of the Council or landlord. This includes receiving any warning letters from the Council or any landlord, as well as criminal or civil action. Unacceptable behaviour includes but is not limited to verbal and physical abuse, intimidation, violence and/or threats of violence in any form, harassment, damage, defacement or graffiti upon any property.

The Council does not operate a blanket policy regarding the qualifying criteria and will consider each case on its own merit. Applicants with an urgent housing need, as defined by priority Band A and Band B, are invited to provide evidence of a change in behaviour. This evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- Proof of regular payments towards previous housing debt.
- Documentation from a support agency showing completion of training to develop the skills necessary to manage a tenancy.
- Evidence of readiness to move on from supported housing.

Completion of the above does not guarantee acceptance. The Council retains discretion to decide who will be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

4.4 Age Qualification

Applicants must be 18 years or older unless they meet one of the criteria for exceptional circumstances, which include:

- A young person accepted as being owed a statutory homeless duty by the Council following a statutory assessment under section 17 or 20 of the Children Act 1989.
- A request made by any local authority for one of their care leavers. This only applies where there is a corporate parenting responsibility and the application has been made in accordance with the principles laid out in agreed protocols with Northamptonshire Children's Trust.
- Any other circumstances deemed appropriate by the Council.

Applicants under the age of 18 cannot, by law, be granted a tenancy. However, the legal estate can be held in trust until they reach the age of 18. A trustee, approved by the Council, will be required to sign the tenancy agreement on their behalf until they turn 18.

4.5 No Housing Need

Applicants assessed as having no housing need, as defined in the priority bands (see section 5), will not qualify under the scheme.

Applicants to whom another local authority has accepted a rehousing duty or any other duty to suitably accommodate are considered to have no housing need and will therefore not qualify under the scheme except where the applicant is or has been a victim of domestic abuse carried out by another person, who needs to move for reasons connected with that abuse, including from accommodation initially occupied on a temporary basis, or is an eligible child, a relevant child or a former relevant child.

4.6 Property Refusals

Applicants who have refused two offers of suitable accommodation within any 12 month period will fail to qualify under the scheme (see 7.9). Applicants owed a homeless duty will fail to qualify after refusing one final offer of suitable accommodation.

Applicants disqualified under this category will not have a reapplication considered for 12 months from the date of the non-qualifying decision.

Applicants may request a review of this decision if there has been a significant change in their circumstances through no fault of their own, which adversely affects the household or would otherwise result in an increase in their priority band.

4.7 Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, an applicant who would not ordinarily qualify under the scheme but has an urgent housing need (defined by being awarded Band A or Band B under 5.1 and 5.2) may be accepted under the scheme. This will be determined by a panel of Senior Housing Allocations Officers and other professionals may be invited to contribute to the panel and decision making process where appropriate.

The Council retains the discretion to address individual cases with exceptional circumstances. This includes, for example, circumstances related to the wider armed forces community.

5. Priority Banding Criteria

The Council assigns each application a level of priority for housing using priority bands A, B, C and D. Applicants in Band A are given the highest priority for rehousing. Only applicants who meet the eligibility and qualifying criteria will have their housing need assessed.

Some of the banding criteria include an autobid feature, as explained in 7.4. Other applicants will be required to bid manually. Each banding criterion will specify which bidding mechanism is applicable.

5.1 Band A

The Council will place an applicant into Band A if they meet one or more of the criteria outlined below. Band A priority is only awarded subject to approval by a Senior Housing Allocations Officer.

Additionally, the Council may award Band A status to applicants in emergency circumstances not covered by these criteria. In such exceptional cases, the Housing Allocations Manager or their delegated representative has the discretion to determine whether a particular case meets this threshold.

Band Reason	Criteria
Homeless Main Duty (Autobid)	The applicant is owed a section 193(2) Main Duty by the Council because they are assessed as eligible, homeless, in priority need, unintentionally homeless and establish a local connection as outlined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). There are additional conditions associated with this criterion (see 7.5).
Hospital Discharge (Autobid)	The applicant or a member of their household cannot be discharged from a hospital or rehabilitation centre due to the lack of accommodation, or their current accommodation has been deemed hazardous to their health and the situation cannot be rectified to enable them to continue living there. Additionally, they must be accepted by the Council as being capable of sustaining their own independent accommodation with or without support.
Severe Medical Need (Autobid)	The applicant or a member of their household must have a permanent medical condition or disability and remaining in the current property poses a major and direct contributory factor to a severe and life-threatening risk. This criterion will only apply where the current property cannot be made suitable or adapted within three months. It is expected that this criterion applies to a few exceptional cases only, specifically where: • A household member is receiving palliative care • A household member is unable to escape their current property in an emergency due to being permanently housebound Applicants will only be considered for properties that meet their housing needs and improve their condition and quality of life (see 2.3).

Severe Overcrowding (Autobid)	The applicant's household has been assessed as being overcrowded, which is defined as requiring at least two additional bedrooms based on the Council's minimum bedroom standard. The minimum bedroom standard (see 6.1) states that a separate bedroom is required for the following: • A single person (sole applicant) • A married or cohabitating couple • Two children both aged under 10 years, regardless of gender • Two children of the same gender, regardless of age, unless there is a 10 year age gap and one child is at least 16 years old For the purposes of assessing overcrowding single parents are regarded as requiring 1 bedspace and can use a single bedroom. This criterion does not apply to applicants with no dependent children. In addition, this criterion does not apply where the need arises because of a relationship breakdown, and the applicant has security of tenure. Such applicants would be expected to pursue alternative housing options.
Armed Forces (Autobid)	The applicant or a member of their household has an urgent housing need (reasonably preference as defined in 1.3) and has access to no other suitable accommodation and meet any of the following criteria: • They are currently serving in the regular forces and are due to leave soon, suffering from a serious injury, illness, mental ill health, or disability attributable to their service. • They have recently ceased or will soon cease to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or civil partner, who served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable wholly or partly to that service. • They are serving or have served in the reserve forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability attributable wholly or partly to their service. For the purpose of this criterion, the terms regular forces and reserve forces have the meaning given by section 374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006.
Risk of Harm (Autobid)	The applicant or a member of their household is at serious risk of imminent harm resulting from violence, threats of violence, other abuse, or serious trauma and needs to relocate to ensure their safety. Applicants must be owed a homeless duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 by the Council. This will be verified by the Police and/or other relevant agencies as necessary and may include a move to protect a witness of criminal acts under the NCA Relocations Team. Any offer of accommodation under this criterion will have restrictions attached regarding eligible areas to minimise any risk as far as it is reasonably practical.
Category 1 Hazard (Autobid)	The applicant is a private sector tenant, housing association tenant, or owner occupier and the Council has determined that their current accommodation poses a Category 1 Hazard (excluding overcrowding) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS). This will only apply where the problem cannot be rectified within a reasonable period of time (e.g. six months) and continuing to live there poses a significant risk to health.

Major Repairs (Autobid)	The applicant is a tenant of the Council who needs to move because their accommodation needs major renovation or extensive repairs. This will be verified by the tenancy team and property services. This does not include temporary decants (e.g. six months).
Demolition (Autobid)	The applicant needs to move because their home is about to be demolished or redeveloped. This only applies when the demolition or development is as a result of factors beyond the applicant's control.
Natural Disaster (Autobid)	The applicant's home is uninhabitable due to flood, fire or natural disaster through no fault of the applicant and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a reasonable period of time (e.g. six months).
Under Occupying Tenants with Medical Need (Autobid)	The applicant is under occupying social or affordable rented accommodation in North Northamptonshire and has an urgent medical need as defined within the Band B criteria (see 5.2). Applicants awarded this criterion will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation and that meet their housing needs and improve their condition or quality of life.
Priority Sheltered Move (Autobid)	The applicant is a social rented tenant living in a sheltered, supported or assisted living scheme allocated under the scheme with an urgent medical need as defined within the Band B criteria (see 5.2) and their needs would be resolved by moving within their current scheme.
Supported Move On (Autobid)	For this criterion to apply to any of the following categories, the applicant must be ready to move to independent accommodation on the recommendation of the support provider, social care service, or equivalent. The applicant must have needed medium to long-term, rather than short-term tenancy support at the point of referral into the supported accommodation and these needs must have been fully addressed. Any required support package must have been assessed and be in place and the Council must agree with the recommendation. This criterion will not apply to applicants who do not have sufficient awareness and/or mental capacity to accept and manage a tenancy and live independently. Local Authority Nomination Rights The applicant is currently occupying and is ready to move on from accommodation provided by an approved supported provider in North Northamptonshire, where there is a formal arrangement in place that enables the Council nomination rights to vacancies. The provider must have signed up to the Council's supported move on protocol for this criterion to apply. Care Leavers The applicant is a former relevant child and is ready to move on from accommodation provided by Northamptonshire Children's Trust. This criterion will only apply where the Council is the corporate parent, and the application has been made in accordance with agreed protocols. Adult Social Care The applicant is occupying and is ready to move on from accommodation provided wholly or partly by the Council's Adult Social Care service following an assessment under the Care Act 2014. Confirmation from the service will be required.

	• Domestic Abuse Refuge The applicant is occupying and is ready to move on from an approved refuge provider within North Northamptonshire. This will also apply to applicants residing in refuge accommodation outside North Northamptonshire where a secondary local connection is established. Any offer of accommodation under this criterion will have restrictions attached regarding eligible areas to minimise any risk as far as is reasonably practical.
Releasing Adapted Property (Manual Bid)	The applicant is a current tenant occupying social or affordable rented accommodation in North Northamptonshire that is either fully wheelchair accessible or offers a level access shower or wet room and is willing to transfer to suitable non-adapted accommodation. This criterion will not apply where the adaptation does not offer a realistic solution to others (e.g. a level access shower in a first floor flat). This criterion also does not apply to sheltered accommodation.
Releasing Large Family Property (Manual Bid)	The applicant is a current tenant occupying social or affordable rented accommodation in North Northamptonshire that offers four or more bedrooms (including three-bedroom parlour houses if the parlour room can be used as a bedroom) and is willing to transfer to suitable smaller accommodation. Applicants awarded this criterion will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation.

5.2 Band B

The Council will place an applicant into Band B if they meet one or more of the criteria outlined below.

Band Reason	Criteria
Homeless Relief Duty (Autobid)	The applicant is owed a section 189B Relief Duty by the Council because they are eligible and homeless. In addition, the applicant is believed to be in priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establish a local connection under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). There are additional conditions associated with this criterion (see 7.5).
Homeless Prevention Duty (Autobid)	The applicant is owed a section 195 Prevention Duty by the Council because they are eligible and threatened with homelessness. In addition, the applicant is believed to be in priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establish a local connection under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). There are additional conditions associated with this criterion (see 7.5).
Supported Move On (Autobid)	For this criterion to apply to any of the following categories, the applicant must be ready to move to independent accommodation on the recommendation of the support provider, social care service, or equivalent. The applicant must have needed medium to long-term, rather than short-term tenancy support at the point of referral into the supported accommodation and these needs must have been fully addressed. Any required support package must have been assessed and be in place and the Council must agree with the recommendation. This criterion will not apply to applicants who do not have sufficient awareness and/or mental capacity to accept and manage a tenancy and live independently. Where the supported accommodation is outside North Northamptonshire, this criterion will not apply, unless the placement in that accommodation was due to it being the only suitable specialist placement available to meet the needs of the applicant at the time, and the applicant has a local connection to North Northamptonshire. Local Authority Nomination Rights The applicant is currently occupying and is ready to move on from accommodation provided by an approved supported provider in North Northamptonshire, where there is no formal arrangement in place that enables the Council nomination rights to vacancies. Vulnerable Applicants The applicant lives in a supportive home environment which is not sustainable in the medium to long term, for example, a vulnerable applicant who lives with elderly parents who are their carers.

Urgent Overcrowding (Manual Bid)	The applicant's household has been assessed as being overcrowded, which is defined as requiring at least one additional bedroom based on the Council's minimum bedroom standard. The minimum bedroom standard (see 6.1) states that a separate bedroom is required for the following: • A single person (sole applicant) • A married or cohabitating couple • Two children both aged under 10 years, regardless of gender • Two children of the same gender, regardless of age, unless there is a 10 year age gap and one child is at least 16 years old For the purposes of assessing overcrowding single parents are regarded as requiring 1 bedspace and can use a single bedroom. This criterion does not apply to applicants with no dependent children. In addition, this does not apply where the need arises because of a relationship breakdown, and the applicant has security of tenure. Such applicants would be expected to pursue alternative housing options.
Urgent Medical Need (Manual Bid)	The applicant or a member of the household has a permanent medical condition or disability which is seriously adversely affected by their current accommodation. This criterion will apply in the following circumstances: • A household member requires ground floor accommodation (or a stairlift) and requires alternative bathing facilities to that in their current accommodation • A household member is a permanent wheelchair user and their current property is ground floor with suitable bathing facilities, however, it does not have suitable floor space, widened door frames or ramped access and the property cannot be made suitable or adapted • A household member requires medical equipment supplied by a health authority or hospital and the current property or living conditions cannot be alternated to make sufficient space (this does not include mobility scooter storage) Applicants will only be considered for properties that meet their housing needs and improve their condition and quality of life (see 2.3).
Essential Care and Support (Manual Bid)	The applicant or a member of their household needs to give or receive essential care and support that is substantial and ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in their current accommodation. Applicants must either be in receipt of carers allowance, have a carer who is in receipt of carers allowance or have had an assessment by social services or another similar support agency, so it can be established that care and/or support is substantial and essential.
Under Occupying (Manual Bid)	The applicant is a current tenant under occupying social or affordable rented accommodation in North Northamptonshire and is willing to transfer to suitable smaller accommodation. This applies to two or three bedroom properties. Applicants awarded this criterion will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation.

Successor (Manual Bid)	The applicant has been granted use and occupation of social rented accommodation within North Northamptonshire and has been accepted as a successor or non-statutory successor by the respective landlord of the property. This applies specifically to applicants who have succeeded to the tenancy but not the property itself and must move to more suitable accommodation. If after a period of six months from the date of qualification as a successor or non-statutory successor, the applicant has not secured alternative accommodation, the Council reserves the right to place the application on autobid and/or make a direct offer of accommodation in accordance with 7.4 and 7.8. This criterion does not apply to applicants who do not have the right of succession to the tenancy or the property.
Employment Hardship / Right to Move (Manual Bid)	The applicant or a member of the household needs to move in order to take up or continue permanent employment in North Northamptonshire for 16 hours a week or more, and to avoid hardship. Hardship as a result of employment includes commuting distance, the availability and affordability of transport and other factors such as medical conditions or childcare. A commute between home and work of 60 minutes each way is considered reasonable. The applicant's circumstances must be able to be improved to qualify under this criterion.

5.3 Band C

The Council will place an applicant into Band C if they meet one or more of the criteria outlined below.

Band Reason	Criteria
Homeless Relief Duty (Autobid)	The applicant is owed a section 189B Relief Duty by the Council because they are eligible and homeless. In addition, the applicant is believed to have no priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establish a local connection under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). There are additional conditions associated with this criterion (see 7.5).
Homeless Prevention Duty (Autobid)	The applicant is owed a section 195 Prevention Duty by the Council because they are eligible and threatened with homelessness. In addition, the applicant is believed to have no priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establish a local connection under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). There are additional conditions associated with this criterion (see 7.5).
Non-Statutorily Homeless (Manual Bid)	The applicant has received a section 184 decision by the Council at the end of the section 189B Relief Duty finding them to be homeless but have no priority need as outlined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). This criterion will also apply to applicants who are verified as sofa surfing at two or more addresses and have no fixed abode.
Overcrowding (Manual Bid)	The applicant's household has been assessed as being overcrowded, which is defined as follows: • Requiring an additional bedspace within a bedroom • Having two children of the same gender sharing a bedroom and there is at least a 10 year age gap between the children or one child is at least 16 years old • Applicants with no dependent children who share accommodation with another household and are overcrowded For the purposes of assessing overcrowding single parents are regarded as requiring 1 bedspace and can use a single bedroom. This does not apply where the need arises because of a relationship breakdown, and the applicant has security of tenure. Such applicants would be expected to pursue alternative housing options.
Sharing with Others with Dependents (Manual Bid)	The applicant's household has at least one dependent child or a pregnant woman with a confirmed due date, sharing accommodation with their family or another household and is otherwise adequately housed. This does not apply where the need arises because of a relationship breakdown, and the applicant has security of tenure. Such applicants would be expected to pursue alternative housing options.

Medical Need (Manual Bid)	The applicant or a member of the household has a permanent medical condition or disability which is adversely affected by their current accommodation. This criterion will apply in the following circumstances: • A household member requires either ground floor accommodation (or a stairlift) or requires alternative bathing facilities to that available in their current accommodation • A household member is currently receiving ongoing treatment from primary and secondary mental health services for a diagnosed mental health condition which is made worse by their current accommodation and would be resolved by moving to alternative accommodation Applicants will only be considered for properties that meet their housing needs and improve their condition and quality of life (see 2.3).
Ongoing Care and Support (Manual Bid)	The applicant or a member of their household needs to give or receive care and support that is ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in their current accommodation. Ongoing care and/or support does not have to be substantial in that applicants may not be in receipt of qualifying care benefits or have social services involvement. It may include practical and/or emotional support that is essential to the physical or mental well-being of the person receiving the care and support.

5.4 Band D

The Council will place an applicant into Band D if they meet one or more of the criteria outlined below.

Band Reason	Criteria
Homeless Relief Duty (Autobid)	The applicant is owed a section 189B Relief Duty by the Council because they are eligible and homeless. In addition, the applicant is believed to have worsened their housing circumstances and/or do not establish a local connection under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). There are additional conditions associated with this criterion (see 7.5).
Homeless Prevention Duty (Autobid)	The applicant is owed a section 195 Prevention Duty by the Council because they are eligible and threatened with homelessness. In addition, the applicant is believed to have worsened their housing circumstances and/or do not establish a local connection under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). There are additional conditions associated with this criterion (see 7.5).
Intentionally Homeless (Manual Bid)	The applicant has received a section 184 decision by the Council finding them to be homeless but intentionally so as outlined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
Supported Move On (Autobid)	For this criterion to apply to any of the following categories, the applicant must be ready to move to independent accommodation on the recommendation of the support provider, social care service, or equivalent. The applicant must have needed medium to long-term, rather than short-term tenancy support at the point of referral into the supported accommodation and these needs must have been fully addressed. Any required support package must have been assessed and be in place and the Council must agree with the recommendation. This criterion will not apply to applicants who do not have sufficient awareness and/or mental capacity to accept and manage a tenancy and live independently. Where the supported accommodation is outside North Northamptonshire, this criterion will not apply, unless the placement in that accommodation was due to it being the only suitable specialist placement available to meet the needs of the applicant at the time, and the applicant has a local connection to North Northamptonshire. Care Leavers The applicant is a former relevant child and is ready to move on from accommodation provided by a leaving care service of any local authority. This criterion will apply where the Council is satisfied that the application has been made in accordance with the principles laid out in agreed protocols with Northamptonshire Children's Trust. Domestic Abuse Refuge The applicant is occupying and is ready to move on from an approved refuge provider outside North Northamptonshire. Any offer of accommodation under this criterion will have restrictions attached regarding eligible areas to minimise any risk as far as is reasonably practical.

5.5 Band Demotion

Once an applicant's priority for rehousing has been assessed, the Council may reduce that priority if the applicant or a member of their household has deliberately worsened their housing circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:

- Abandoning or terminating previous accommodation without securing suitable alternative accommodation first.
- Selling a property or giving notice on a tenancy without securing suitable alternative accommodation first.
- Accepting a property owned by a Keyways landlord, which the applicant now claims is unsuitable despite there being no change in their circumstances.
- Moving into accommodation that is unaffordable despite being aware of the associated financial implications.
- Having their application closed previously for failing to bid.
- Deliberately disposing of assets or capital that would have enabled them to secure suitable accommodation.
- Ending a homeless duty due to deliberate and unreasonable refusal to cooperate.

There may be other circumstances where an applicant has moved to new accommodation that is worse than their previous accommodation without good reason. The Council will consider the facts of such cases on an individual basis to determine whether the applicant's decision to move was made solely or largely to create a housing need for the purpose of securing accommodation under the scheme. Decisions to move from suitable accommodation into accommodation that is overcrowded, insecure or lacks basic amenities, for example, will be scrutinised.

When a decision is made to demote an application by one priority band, the Council will reduce the applicant's priority for a period of twelve months from the date their circumstances worsened.

5.6 Band Effective Date

The effective date is used to prioritise applicants within the same band. The effective date of an application is generally the date that a complete application is submitted online via the Keyways website. If there is a change in circumstances after the initial registration, the application will be reassessed and applicants may:

Change in Circumstances	Effective Date
Gain greater priority and be placed in a higher priority band.	The date on which the higher band applies will be used.
Be assessed as remaining in the same band.	The original effective date will be used.
Lose priority due to changes in their circumstances and be placed in a lower priority band.	The original effective date will be used.
Become ineligible or no longer qualify for an allocation.	The application will be closed and applicants may reapply at a later date if their circumstances change. A new effective date will then apply if the application is accepted.

6 Property Eligibility Criteria

6.1 Household Composition

The size and type of property for which applicants are eligible will depend on household composition and their needs, as outlined below. If an applicant's household composition or circumstances fall outside the rules detailed, a Senior Housing Allocations Officer will determine the appropriate size and type of property the applicant is eligible to be considered for. Circumstances in which this might be the case include an evidenced need based on a formal diagnosis and a full assessment by a relevant professional for an additional bedroom on urgent medical grounds or to discharge homeless duties and make best use of stock.

As a minimum, the applicant's household is entitled to one bedroom each for:

- A single person (sole applicant)
- A married or cohabitating couple
- Two children both aged under 10 years, regardless of gender
- Two children of the same gender, regardless of age, unless there is a 10 year age gap and one child is at least 16 years old

This is referred to as the Council's minimum bedroom standard.

Some applicants will also be eligible to bid for properties that offer an additional bedroom to the minimum entitlement listed above, although they will receive a lower preference for this accommodation. Maximum bedroom entitlement is dependent on the household composition. Bungalows are allocated in line with 6.5.

For the purposes of property eligibility, the term 'child' or 'children' refers to both dependents and non-dependent children. Extended family members considered as part of the applicant's household (e.g. step siblings or cousins) are expected to share a bedroom.

Household Composition	Minimum Bedroom Entitlement	Maximum Bedroom Entitlement
Single Person or Couple Without Children / Expecting First Child (1 to 26 Weeks of Pregnancy)	Bedsit • 1 Bedroom Bungalow • 1 Bedroom Flat • 1 Bedroom House	Not Applicable.
Household Expecting First Child (27 Weeks of Pregnancy) or Household with 1 Child	• 2 Bedroom Bungalow • 2 Bedroom Flat • 2 Bedroom Maisonette • 2 Bedroom House • 2 Bedroom Parlour House	Not Applicable.
Household with 2 Children	• 2 Bedroom Bungalow • 2 Bedroom Flat • 2 Bedroom Maisonette • 2 Bedroom House • 2 Bedroom Parlour House	• 3 Bedroom Bungalow • 3 Bedroom Flat • 3 Bedroom Maisonette • 3 Bedroom House • 3 Bedroom Parlour House

Household with 3 Children	• 3 Bedroom Bungalow • 3 Bedroom Flat • 3 Bedroom Maisonette • 3 Bedroom House • 3 Bedroom Parlour House	• 4 Bedroom House • 4 Bedroom Flat • 4 Bedroom Maisonette
Household with 4 Children	• 3 Bedroom Bungalow • 3 Bedroom Flat • 3 Bedroom Maisonette • 3 Bedroom House • 3 Bedroom Parlour House	• 4 Bedroom House • 4 Bedroom Flat • 4 Bedroom Maisonette • 5 Bedroom House
Household with 5 Children or More	• 3 Bedroom Parlour House • 4 Bedroom House • 4 Bedroom Flat • 4 Bedroom Maisonette	• 5 Bedroom House

6.2 Pregnancy

Applicants assessed as having a housing need who are expecting their first child will only be considered for family accommodation once the pregnancy has reached its third trimester (27 weeks). Similarly, applicants assessed as having a housing need who are expecting a child will have their property eligibility reassessed once the pregnancy has reached its third trimester (27 weeks).

Applicants who are otherwise suitably housed will not incur a housing need as result of pregnancy. A housing need assessment will be carried out once the baby is born.

6.3 Family

Family accommodation is defined as a house or flat offering two or more bedrooms with its own garden.

Applicants whose household consists only of non-dependents are generally not eligible for family accommodation, except in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances include:

- A requirement for disabled adapted accommodation that can only be met with an offer of adapted family accommodation.
- Non-dependents who are not capable of living independently due to a severe learning disability and would benefit from a property with a garden.

A three bedroom property with two reception rooms is referred to as a parlour type property. Applicants with a minimum need for three or four bedrooms are eligible to bid for parlour type properties. Applicants with a minimum four bedroom need can use the second reception room as a fourth bedroom.

Applicants who are under occupying social or affordable rented properties and wish to downsize from high demand and/or short supply properties, such as three bedroom parlours or four or five bedroom properties, may be eligible to bid for properties larger than defined in 6.1. Such decisions will be made by a Senior Housing Allocations Officer.

6.4 Accessible

Properties advertised under the scheme may have the following adaptations:

- Full mobility adaptations
- Wet room
- Level access shower
- Stairlift
- External ramp
- Shower over bath
- Minor adaptations
- Lift

When a property has been adapted, the Council reserves the right to let the property directly rather than advertising it under the scheme. This is to make best use of specialist housing stock.

When an adapted property is advertised under the scheme, applicants with a need for all the adaptations and who will use all other property attributes will be given preference. If no applicant meets this criterion, the Council will filter the shortlist according to which applicant will make best use of the adaptations and other attributes, such as using all the bedrooms, taking into consideration band and effective date.

Due to the high demand and acute shortage of adapted social and affordable housing within North Northamptonshire, applicants seeking alternative adapted accommodation must first demonstrate that they have thoroughly explored all options to adapt their current home to meet their needs. This evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- Evidence from relevant therapy services or similar outlining necessary adaptations to the home.
- Copies of any applications submitted and responses received to secure funding to carry out adaptations, such as via the Disabled Facilities Grant.
- Confirmation from the current landlord regarding the possibility of property adaptations being carried out, including requests, approvals and refusals.

6.5 Bungalows

In the first instance, a minimum age preference of 60 years will be applied to general need bungalows that do not offer adaptations (excluding sheltered accommodation). Such properties will be allocated in the following priority order:

1. Applicants aged 60 years and above with a ground floor need and a requirement for all bedrooms.
2. Applicants of any age with a ground floor need and a requirement for all bedrooms.
3. Applicants aged 60 years and above with a requirement for all bedrooms.
4. Applicants of any age with a requirement for all bedrooms.
5. Applicants aged 60 years and above with a ground floor need.
6. Applicants of any age with a ground floor need.
7. Applicants aged 60 years and above.
8. Applicants of any age.

General need bungalows offering disabled adaptations (excluding sheltered accommodation) will be allocated in the following priority order:

1. Applicants of any age with a ground floor need requiring adaptations and a need for all bedrooms.
2. Applicants aged 60 years and above with a ground floor need and a need for all bedrooms.
3. Applicants of any age with a ground floor need and a need for all bedrooms.

4. Applicants of any age with a ground floor need requiring adaptations.
5. Applicants aged 60 years and above with a ground floor need.
6. Applicants of any age with a ground floor need.

For general need bungalows without adaptations, applicants listed in priority points 1 to 4 will be shortlisted. For bungalows offering adaptations, applicants listed in priority points 1 to 3 will be shortlisted. If no suitable applicants meet the criteria after the shortlisting process, the property will be readvertised for a second cycle.

Should there be no suitable applicants found after two cycles, the property will be nominated to applicants from the remaining points using the shortlist created from the second advert.

In cases of joint applicants, the minimum age preference of 60 years mentioned in this section need only apply to one applicant. Properties will be allocated primarily to those who can use all the bedrooms.

6.6 Sheltered

Sheltered accommodation is a form of independent living generally available to older individuals with support needs. Depending on the specific sheltered scheme, adverts may stipulate an age criterion. While sheltered housing provides some level of support, it is not suitable for individuals with high care and support needs.

Applicants who bid on sheltered accommodation may be subject to further assessments conducted by the landlord if they are nominated. These assessments will evaluate factors such as support needs, suitability and risk issues, in accordance with the individual landlord's policies. Landlords of sheltered accommodation reserve the right to refuse nominations if their criteria are not met (see 7.7).

7 Property Shortlisting and Allocations

7.1 Advertisements

To assist applicants in choosing the properties that best suit their needs, the Council will advertise all properties with information on size, location and features. Where possible, the advertisements will also include the following details:

- At least one image of the front of the property.
- The landlord who owns the property.
- Weekly rent and any other applicable charges.
- An estimated date for when the property will be available to move into, if known.
- The closing date for applicants to express their interest.
- Additional information, such as the type of heating supply, adaptations, number of steps leading to the property, priority floor level and any restrictions on pets.
- Whether a local lettings plan is applicable.

At times, similar properties may be grouped together and advertised under one property identification number. In these cases, applicants need only express their interest once to cover all the properties included in the advertisement. This approach may be used when advertising a new build development that includes multiple properties of the same size and type.

The scheme also has the functionality to create any time advertisements, which will operate outside of the weekly advertisement cycle and bidding process outlined in the scheme. These advertisements can be added on any date to avoid multiple and repeated duplicate advertisements week after week. In North Northamptonshire, this primarily applies to some sheltered properties.

Bidding opportunities for any time advertisements will be in addition to the core bidding opportunities described in the scheme. Besides difficult to let properties, the Council may use the any time advertisement facility in other circumstances, including but not limited to advertisements and lettings that need to be fast-tracked. Decisions to use the any time advertisement facility for any reason other than for a difficult to let property will be made by a Senior Housing Allocations Officer.

7.2 Local Lettings Plan

From time to time, the Council may agree upon a local lettings plan for specific areas or developments to address local circumstances. Local lettings plans enable the Council to support particular communities in becoming or remaining safe, creating cohesive communities where people want to live.

The Council may also use a local lettings plan to support individuals who contribute to their communities, such as those in employment, or to encourage working individuals to move to particular areas. Additionally, local lettings plans may be used to encourage individuals who contribute to their local communities through volunteering. This is in line with the Council's community contribution criteria defined in 7.3.

In some cases, local letting plans may give preference to residents with a local connection to a specific town or village. This is usually due to a legal requirement as a result of the original planning consent for the property. Advertisements for these properties will highlight that preference will be given to applicants who fulfil the criteria set out in the legal agreement.

For existing communities, any local lettings plan will be drawn up in consultation with current tenants and residents, taking into account housing management considerations such as the social mix of tenants,

density, age range, vulnerability of tenants (e.g. due to insufficient facilities for vulnerable people) and community stability.

Once implemented, local lettings plans will remain in force for a fixed period specified within the plan. Upon expiry, the allocation of properties in the area will be made in accordance with the overarching scheme unless there is an evidenced need for a further local lettings plan. Any local lettings plan in place will be included in the property advertisement. Details of local lettings plans can be found on the Keyways website.

7.3 Community Contribution Criteria

In accordance with 7.2 of the scheme, some allocations may be made to applicants who satisfy the Council's community contribution criteria. This includes individuals who contribute to making their neighbourhood a desirable place to live, work and play. The Council believes that such individuals should be allocated social housing so they can continue to contribute to the sustainment of their local communities.

For the purpose of this section, 'applicants' refers to the main and/or joint applicant on an application and not any other household members. To qualify for the community contribution criterion, applicants must:

1. Have a current positive residence history, defined as:
 - No ongoing culpable involvement in antisocial behaviour or criminal activities.
 - No breaches of tenancy within the last five years.
 - No recoverable housing related debt.
 - No outstanding unspent convictions.
2. Contribute to economic growth or make another valuable contribution to their community, which includes:
 - Working households.
 - Volunteers.
 - Individuals in training or education.
 - Armed forces personnel.
 - Registered foster carers.
 - People with disabilities and older residents.

Additional information on each of the above categories and the associated minimum requirements is available upon request.

7.4 Autobid and Manual Bidding

Most applicants are entitled to select the properties they wish to bid on, however, applicants are expected to place bids regularly. If an applicant fails to place bids on suitable properties over a period of six months, their banding may be reviewed or their application cancelled. The Council reserves the right to adjust property size eligibility based on the urgency of housing needs and to address homelessness.

Some applicants may have their choice removed and be placed on autobid to ensure a timely resolution of their housing needs. Autobid means that the software will place bids on an applicant's behalf, targeting properties that provide the best possible chance of a nomination (e.g. the best queue position at the end of the bidding cycle). Autobids are placed at one minute past midnight at the end of the bidding cycle, once all other bids have been placed.

To inform the autobid process, applicants may be required to provide additional evidence to ensure that the autobid functionality can provide a suitable accommodation offer in terms of property attributes and geographical area. Other applicants will be able to place bids themselves through their online account.

All applicants are entitled to up to five bids per bidding cycle. Any successful bid will be considered a formal offer of accommodation and the refusal sanctions set out in 7.9 will apply.

Whether an application is subject to autobid or manual bidding is specified within the priority banding criteria in section 5.

7.5 Homelessness Duties

In accordance with Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the Council is permitted to end any homeless duty by providing one offer of suitable accommodation of any tenure. This includes a private rented sector offer that complies with the Suitability Order 2012. The Council will ensure that any offer made is in accordance with its Discharge of Homelessness Duties (Accommodation Offers) Policy.

All applicants accepted as being owed a homeless duty will have their choice removed and be placed on autobid. This measure is taken to ensure the Council can prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity and minimise the use of temporary accommodation.

A failure to engage in the nomination, viewing or verification process, resulting in the withdrawal of a property offer, will be regarded as an implied refusal of a final offer.

If applicants are shortlisted for more than one property, the Council will determine which property will constitute the applicant's final offer. This decision will be based on the individual circumstances of the applicant, which property is close to being ready to let and the need to maximise the number of allocations to homeless households in that cycle.

7.6 Highest Bidder

The Council retains the discretion not to offer a tenancy to the highest bidder for advertised properties after considering all circumstances. This decision may be exercised when the Council determines it could not be in the best interests of the applicant, another party or the effective use of housing stock. Situations where this discretion may be applied include, but are not limited to:

- Where there is a history of domestic abuse and the Council determines that the property is too close to the perpetrator, thus not resolving the applicants housing needs.
- Where the Council identifies implications for community safety as defined in 7.9.
- Where, upon completion of a financial assessment, the landlord and Council determine that the property would be unaffordable for the applicant.
- Where an offer of accommodation would be contrary to an applicant's stated housing need (e.g. an applicant awarded priority due to a need to move to a particular area to provide or receive care and support, will not be moved to an area that does not resolve this need).
- Where an applicant's individual support needs are such that they are likely to severely impact other residents in a housing scheme and affect the landlord's ability to manage the applicant's needs or risks within the scheme.

7.7 Offers

If applicants are successful with a bid, they will be contacted directly. If the Council is unable to contact an applicant within 24 hours, the applicant will no longer be considered for the property and will be bypassed

on the shortlist. If an applicant verbally accepts the offer, the landlord that owns the property will then contact the successful applicant and provide further details.

Each landlord may have different processes that they follow and all reserve the right to:

- Request suitable identification for all household members.
- Carry out checks on the information provided by the applicant, which typically include rent arrears and criminal convictions.
- Withhold an offer if the applicant's circumstances have changed and this has not been communicated to the Council until the changes have been fully assessed.
- Withdraw an offer if checks reveal issues not included in the application.
- Withdraw an offer of sheltered accommodation if an applicant does not meet their own eligibility criteria.
- Withdraw an offer if a notice to vacate a property is withdrawn or the property becomes unavailable for letting.
- Withdraw an offer if verification checks confirm that the applicant would not be an eligible or qualifying person.
- Withdraw an offer if a financial assessment establishes that the applicant cannot afford the required rental payments.
- Conduct a property inspection of the applicant's current home.
- Withdraw an offer if the applicant fails a property inspection.
- Withdraw a property from advertisement if advertised incorrectly.
- Request up to four weeks rent in advance.
- Require rent payments to be made by direct debit only.
- Request the applicant complete a tenancy workshop, pre-tenancy training or equivalent.

Applicants must inform the landlord whether they wish to accept the offer. The time limit for responding to offers may differ between landlords. If the applicant does not contact the landlord or the Council within the given timescale, the Council will assume that the applicant does not wish to accept the offer and will withdraw it.

Applicants will not be matched to multiple properties at the same time. Applicants who are matched to a property will not be able to bid and will be bypassed on any other open shortlists until the outcome of the matched property has been concluded.

7.8 Direct Offers

In certain circumstances, the Council may not advertise available properties under the scheme. Instead, a direct offer may be made to an applicant. Any direct offer will constitute a formal offer and, if refused, will be subject to the same sanctions for refusal as outlined in 7.9. Decisions regarding direct offers will be made by two Senior Housing Allocations Officers.

The circumstances under which direct offers may be made include, but are not limited to:

- Where the Council deems it inappropriate for the applicant to participate in the scheme. In such cases, applicants are assessed individually and a full range of housing options is considered. This may be where an applicant is placed in North Northamptonshire under the NCA Relocations Team or where an applicant is subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) at Level 3, or at Level 2 where a risk management plan is in place which has reduced the level.
- Where the Council makes a direct offer to discharge its statutory homeless duty, enabling the Council to make efficient use of housing stock.
- Where a landlord advertising properties under the scheme must permanently relocate a tenant to undertake major modernisation or rehabilitation works on their current property.

- Where it is necessary to provide an alternative property to a successor or non-statutory successor within the 12 month statutory time limit.
- Where a joint social tenant has issued a notice to quit and the property is deemed suitable for the remaining tenant to continue occupancy. Such allocations must be supported by the landlord.
- Where the property provides a specialist housing solution or is in particularly short supply, such as large properties or homes with disabled adaptations.
- Where the Council determines it necessary to temporarily suspend the scheme due to significant events, such as a public health emergency. Decisions of this nature will be made by the Assistant Director or an officer of equivalent or higher seniority within the Corporate Leadership Network.
- Any other scenario where the Council considers it necessary to make best use of housing stock or to address emerging local housing needs.

7.9 Refusals

Applicants for whom the Council has accepted a homeless duty are subject to specific provisions (see 7.5). Other applicants may submit up to five bids per bidding cycle and decline one suitable accommodation offer without penalty. Refusal of two suitable offers within a 12-month rolling period results in disqualification for 12 months from the second refusal date. Reapplication within this period may be considered only in exceptional circumstances, such as significant, uncontrollable changes affecting the household or increasing their housing priority band.

An accommodation offer may include a formal written offer from a landlord or a verbal nomination by the Council. For joint applications, a refusal by either the main or joint applicant constitutes a refusal, as agreement by both is unnecessary. Failure to attend nomination, viewing or verification processes that lead to an offer withdrawal is considered an implied refusal.

Landlords may reject nominated applicants in accordance with their own tenancy policies. If this occurs, the landlord must provide a written explanation to the applicant, who may request a review within 21 days of receiving the decision by contacting the landlord directly.

The Council collaborates with the police, probation service, community safety partnerships and housing providers to manage risk within the community. If any details pertaining to an applicant or application lead the Council to believe there may be implications for community safety, the Council reserves the right to refuse housing to applicants in certain areas.

Additionally, the Council may implement a local lettings plan for specific areas or developments to address community safety concerns (see 7.2).

8 Right of Review, Appeals and Complaints

In accordance with the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, applicants have the right to request a review if the Council decides to deny their admission to the scheme or makes a decision impacting their housing application.

Applicants who believe that the decision that has been made is incorrect must first submit a written enquiry (initial review), clearly outlining the reasons. This enquiry will be assessed by a Housing Allocations Officer.

If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial review, they have the right to request a formal review of the decision.

8.1 Requesting a Review

The applicant, or the applicant's representative, must make a request to a Senior Housing Allocations Officer at the Council in writing within 21 days of receiving a written decision. The applicant, or the applicant's representative, may give the reasons for requesting a review in person, if it is difficult to tell the Council these reasons in writing.

8.2 Formal Review Decision

A Senior Housing Allocations Officer will review the decision and consider the reasons for the review being requested. A decision on the review will be based on the known facts at the time of the review. In some cases, a Senior Housing Allocations Officer may need to request more information from the applicant to inform a decision which will be made in line with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

A Senior Housing Allocations Officer will provide the applicant with written confirmation of the review outcome and reasons for the decision within eight weeks of the request for the review. A longer period may be agreed with the applicant.

The Council's decision on formal review is final and can only be challenged by way of a judicial review.

8.3 Landlord Reviews

In some circumstances Keyways landlords may refuse applicants the offer of a tenancy. Reasons for this may include if an applicant fails the verification checks or it is demonstrated that the applicant cannot afford the rental payments following a financial assessment conducted by the landlord. If an applicant wishes for this decision to be reviewed, the applicant or the applicant's representative must make the request in writing direct to the Keyways landlord within 21 days of receiving their written decision.

8.4 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Applicants who wish to give a compliment, comment or complain about the Council or the scheme can do so in accordance with the Customer Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy. Applicants who wish to do the same for any Keyways landlord should contact them directly.

Applicants who remain dissatisfied can make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or the Independent Housing Ombudsman. They are independent services run by central government to make sure that local authorities and housing providers provide a certain standard of service to their customers.

Council Complaints**Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Landlord Complaints**(Housing Associations / Registered Providers)**

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 1484

Unit D

Preston

PR2 0ET

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Appendix A Glossary

Word	Description
Adaptations	Adjustments to a property to assist a disabled member of the household access the property or facilities such as a stair lift, wet room, level access shower or ramp.
Affordable Rent	Affordable rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent.
Applicant	A person who applies to Keyways, including joint applicants.
Autobid	Autobid means that the software will place bids on an applicant's behalf, targeting properties that provide the best possible chance of a nomination (e.g. the best queue position at the end of the bidding cycle). Autobids are placed at one minute past midnight at the end of the bidding cycle, once all other bids have been placed.
Band	The Council assigns each application a level of priority for housing using priority bands A, B, C and D. Applicants in Band A are given the highest priority for rehousing.
Bid	The term used when an applicant expresses an interest in a property advertised on Keyways.
Choice Based Lettings (CBL)	A scheme that allows applicants to express a choice about where they want to live from within their property eligibility.
Decant	The term used to describe the process whereby a tenant of one of the Keyways landlords has to temporarily move out of their home into another property to enable the landlord to complete essential repairs or maintenance to the property.
Effective Date	The effective date is used to prioritise applicants within the same band. The effective date of an application is generally the date that a complete application is submitted online via the Keyways website.
Eligibility	The term used to describe those who are subject or not subject to immigration control and are eligible or ineligible for an allocation of social housing under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 and related legislation.
Fixed Term Tenancy	A type of tenancy granted by social landlords that are for a fixed length of time, usually five years.
Habitual Residence Test	The test looks at whether the applicant's residence in the United Kingdom is of a settled nature. For example, it looks at the length and continuity of residence, work or work prospects and family ties.
Housing Allocations Scheme	This explains the rules that determine how North Northamptonshire Council and the Keyways landlords allocate social housing properties in North Northamptonshire.

Keyways Landlord	The term for a social landlord with housing stock in North Northamptonshire that advertises vacancies via Keyways. This term includes North Northamptonshire Council and Housing Associations (also known as Registered Providers).
Letting / Bidding Cycle	New properties will be advertised each week from 00:01am on a Thursday to 23.59pm on a Tuesday. There are no social/affordable properties advertised on a Wednesday with the exception of 'any time' adverts (see 7.1).
Main Duty	A duty owed to households under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 who are eligible, homeless, in priority need, unintentionally homeless and establish a local connection.
Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)	The framework which joins up agencies, including probation, the prison service and local housing authorities, tasked with the management of offenders who pose a serious risk of harm to the public.
Mutual Exchange	A swap of accommodation between two social housing tenants. The two households swap homes and each move permanently into the others property.
Non-Statutorily Homeless	A term that refers to homeless people or households to whom local housing authorities do not have a legal duty to make an offer of settled housing.
Nomination	The term used when a local housing authority provides from its housing register, the name and details of an applicant to a landlord for an offer of housing.
Prevention Duty	A duty owed to households under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 who are eligible and threatened with homelessness within 56 days.
Rechargeable Arrears	This is damage caused by a tenant or their family or visitors) or arising as a result of negligence to a property during a tenancy.
Registered Provider (RP)	A housing association or a not-for-profit company registered through Homes England and the Regulator of Social Housing to provide social or affordable housing.
Relief Duty	A duty owed to households under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 who are eligible and where they are within the first 56 days of having become homeless.
Right to Move	Government statutory guidance from March 2015 enabling social tenants that are employed, or have an offer of employment, and need to move to avoid hardship to (a) establish a local connection and (b) receive a level of priority for rehousing.
Qualifying Person	A local housing authority can decide what classes of persons are, or are not, qualifying persons for Keyways. Only qualifying persons are accepted on Keyways.
Queue Position	When placing a bid, Keyways will calculate an applicant's position in the shortlist as at the time of the bid. This can fluctuate (go up or down) throughout the letting cycle (Thursday - Tuesday). The higher up the shortlist for the property an applicant is, the more likelihood there is of that applicant being allocated it. On occasion, an advert will specify if there is a preference criterion therefore the queue position may be affected. i.e. adapted properties will be offered to those requiring the adaptations in the first instance.

Senior Housing Allocations Officer	A senior officer within the Housing Allocations Team, Head of Service or an officer of more seniority responsible for the Housing Solutions Service such as an Assistant or Executive Director.
Service Level Agreement	An agreement that North Northamptonshire Council has with some Housing Associations (Registered Providers) that stipulates the proportion of lettings to be made through Keyways.
Sheltered Housing	The term used to describe housing allocated to older people with a support need.
Shortlist	A list of those applicants that have expressed an interest in a particular property advertised on Keyways.
Skipped	The term used when an applicant has bid on a property and has been bypassed. Reasons for being bypassed may include, but are not limited to: The property is unsuitable for the applicants needs Enquiries reveal a change in circumstances including housing related debt Local lettings plan or priority criteria apply e.g. preference offered to specific groups of applicants Adaptations suitable for disabled applicants
Social Housing	Housing owned by a local authority (Council) or Housing Association (Registered Provider) and rented to tenants at rents restricted by national rent controls.
Succession	When a secure tenant dies, the tenancy will automatically pass to their spouse, civil partner, or other partner living as though they were a spouse or civil partner. Some tenancy agreements include the provision for other family members to succeed to a tenancy on the death of the tenant. These rights vary between different landlords, depending on what the tenancy agreement says. Anyone who takes over the tenancy in this way is called a successor. Any permission to succeed should be formally confirmed by the landlord.

Appendix B Accountability

Document Version Control	
Author (Post holder title):	Housing Allocations Manager
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Document held by (name/section):	Housing Allocations Team
For internal publication only or external also:	Both
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Change History		
Issue	Date	Comments

Consultees	
Internal e.g. Individual(s) / Group / Section	External e.g. Stakeholders / Partners /Organisation(s)

Accountability		
Granted approval level (CLT / committee)	Approval Date DD / MM/ YYYY	Who is responsible for delivery of the policy
Scrutiny	TBC	Assistant Director of Strategic Housing, Development and Property Services
Executive	TBC	Assistant Director of Strategic Housing, Development and Property Services