

# thirteen

## Lettings Policy

Version Number 4

<b>Company</b>	Thirteen Group
<b>Lead Manager</b>	Head of Housing Services
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<b>Review Date</b>	March 2025
<b>Officer Responsible for Review</b>	Head of Housing Services

### Policy Review History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Action &amp; Changes</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	New policy	JMc	Sept 2018
2	Interim Policy Review	JMc	June 2020
3	Full Policy Review – in line with Review date September 2021	KG	Aug 21
4	Minor amends made prior to final launch because of feedback during launch phase from colleagues.	KG	Feb 22

## 1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Thirteen exists to provide good quality homes and support for those in housing need as well as providing homes for customers who want to buy, whether that be outright sale or shared ownership. This policy sets out how we will deliver this aim in a fair and transparent way so that customers can have access to good quality homes, providing choice to our customers whilst also meeting the housing needs for individuals and ensuring that we create sustainable communities.
- 1.2 Our policy sets out how Thirteen allocates their homes in line with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) England, ensuring that we meet our Local Authority strategic housing duties and that we achieve our own business aims and aspirations.

## 2. Legal and regulatory background

- 2.1 As part of the regulatory framework, Thirteen is required to let homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way, taking into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants, with a clear application, decision-making and appeals process.
- 2.2 To demonstrate how Thirteen achieves this, it must publish a summary of the rules for determining the priority between applicants in the allocation of homes that show how it:
  - Makes the best use of available housing
  - Is in keeping with its housing purpose
  - Contributes to the local authority's strategic housing function and sustainable communities, including the Local Authorities homelessness duties, by meeting obligations in nomination agreements.
- 2.3 Properties can be relet through several routes:
  - Direct management lets
  - Offers direct from Thirteen's digital portal MyThirteen
  - Alternative marketing platforms
  - Transfer applications
  - Nominations from Local Authority agreements
  - Mutual exchanges between social tenants
- 2.4 The policy aims to:
  - Provide the details for how properties will be let
  - Explains who can apply for housing with Thirteen
  - Describes all the Housing options that are available for customers

## 3 Reference Material

- 3.1 Included as [Appendix A](#).

## 4. Definitions

- 4.1 Included as [Appendix B](#).

## **5. Policy Contents**

### **5.1 Eligibility to apply for a home with Thirteen**

5.2 Thirteen offers a range of quality homes to rent through a variety of products, namely:

- Social rented homes
- Affordable rented homes
- Market rent

5.2 We want to maximise choice and provide access to a range of homes for rent. Any person over the age of 16 can be considered, regardless of whether there is a local connection to the area. We will provide advice around the different products that we have, promoting alternatives, such as homes for sale and shared ownership, to maximise rehousing choice linked to affordability. Where customers are struggling to afford a home, we will offer advice so that homes that customers choose to apply for are affordable and sustainable in the long term.

5.3 Customers aged 16-17 can be rehoused in extreme circumstances but will need to have a rent guarantor so that we know that customers have the support needed to be successful in their new home. If a young person does not have a rent guarantor, then access to alternative accommodation is possible where we provide some additional support, for example we have accommodation specifically for young people. We want to make sure that all tenancies are successful, so we have a range of checks that are completed as part of the lettings process. This includes checking customers are eligible to access housing and seeking references, including credit checks for our market rented products. Some homes to let may have specific letting criteria i.e. bungalows and sheltered homes for over 55-year-olds and customers will need to meet the criteria to access these homes. These will be clear on our adverts where they apply.

5.4 Thirteen expect all customers accessing rehousing to have no outstanding debt (i.e., a clear rent account if currently renting, no former debt from previous tenancies, housing related debt for example rechargeable repair debt and sundry legal costs), no unspent criminal convictions and a good track record of managing and maintaining a tenancy where appropriate. Where this isn't the case, then we would ask that you are open and transparent with Thirteen and declare what debt that you have, any unspent convictions and where breaches in tenancy behaviour have occurred along with reasons. If a debt of less than £500.00 is owed, then we would not overlook your application, but would expect that this is cleared prior to any firm offer being awarded. If you are found to have not been clear in your application this may impact your chances of rehousing with Thirteen and/or the continuation of your tenancy should this information, come to light once a tenancy has commenced.

5.5 Where customers are open and transparent, we may choose at times to consider customers for rehousing where debt, convictions or former tenancy breaches exist, based on individual personal circumstances.

- 5.6 Where a debt exists, and there has been a significant change in behaviour with reasonable attempts to reduce over a period which is proportionate to the debt owed, an application may still be considered. Where there have been previous tenancy breaches, or unspent convictions, evidence of changes in behaviour over a period, will also be considered on an individual basis. Please see [Appendix C](#) for further examples of unacceptable behaviour. Thirteen maintain the right to not rehouse any customer especially where no attempts to change behaviour has been shown. It is the customers responsibility to provide this detail to support their application.
- 5.7 Thirteen will not rehouse any applicant who has previously been evicted by Thirteen (including respective landlords) for any tenancy breach. Thirteen will also not prioritise any customer for rehousing where they have disclosed information that suggests their tenancy may impact on the immediate community or property including but not exclusively relevant convictions spent or otherwise for arson, sexual offences, violent assault etc, whether as a Thirteen tenant or not.
- 5.8 Customers that have deliberately worsened their own circumstance by leaving a Thirteen property to gain additional priority on the scheme will not be considered for up to a 12-month period from the date of the application unless there is an exceptional change in circumstance.
- 5.9 Customers that have provided false, or deliberately withheld, information as part of their application will not qualify for a minimum of 3 years from the date of the assessment outcome.
- 5.10 Where a decision is made to make a customer ineligible they will be notified in writing of the reason and period of ineligibility along with the actions they need to take to rectify the decision. Customers can request a review within 21 days of the decision if they do not agree with the outcome. Please see ([Appendix D](#)).
- 5.11 It will be the responsibility of the Customer to re-register after the ineligible period and to provide the supporting evidence to show they have complied with the actions required in the original decision.
- 5.12 EU Nationals, plus persons from Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, or Liechtenstein who arrived in the UK up to the 31 December 2020 will be able to access housing via My Thirteen if they have successfully applied to the EU Settlement Scheme. Those who have obtained Settled Status through this scheme will be able to access housing. Those have who obtained pre-settled status will also need to demonstrate they have a right to reside other than simply being a job seeker to access housing. EU Nationals who arrived up to the 31 December 2020 and do not have either settled or pre-settled status cannot access housing with Thirteen unless they have some other form of immigration status allowing them to legally reside in the UK. Those arriving from the 1 of January 2021 will be treated as Third Country Nationals (see 5.16), unless they are joining EEA Nationals who arrived by the 31 December 2020 who have pre or settled status and they have a family permit issued under the EUSS.

- 5.13 Irish Citizens will continue to be able access Housing with my Thirteen under the Common Travel Area Agreement rules and are not subject to the rules set out above in 5.14
- 5.14 Third Country Nationals who have legal immigration status will be able to access housing via My Thirteen even where a person has no recourse to public funds, However, they may also need to show how they can afford to pay the rent when they are unable to claim benefits to cover this, as part of the affordability assessment completed for all lettings A person with no legal immigration status will not be able to access housing via My Thirteen unless an exception applies.
- 5.15 Where customers may struggle to manage a tenancy, for example where customers may not have the capacity to hold a tenancy for medical reasons, access to alternative accommodation should be considered through Thirteen's, care and support services.

## **6. Digitised Lettings Portal, MyThirteen**

- 6.1 Thirteen will advertise available homes on Thirteen's digital lettings portal called "MyThirteen" which can be accessed online or via our Touchpoint store and telephone line. This approach is designed to assist customers in finding a home that is most suitable for their individual needs. The portal will include a range of tenures including market rented, affordable rented and social rented options.
- 6.2 Customers will create a customer account and be able to receive updates through My Thirteen once they have registered their requirements for a home. We will give all customers the opportunity to contact Thirteen and be considered for properties (subject to eligibility). Customers will be offered in order of the criteria set out below based on what is affordable for them, through an affordability assessment, to support a long-term solution to their housing need.
- 6.3 Properties will be advertised on MyThirteen with a description of its features, the rental and any service charges that apply, any additional features and the local area/ amenities.
- 6.4 Customers that need assistance in finding a home due to disability, medical or support needs will be assisted through one of our Touchpoint advisors – either face to face or over the telephone.
- 6.5 Thirteen reserve the right to advertise / re-advertise on other lettings platforms for example, Rightmove or Zoopla, where it is considered that there isn't sufficient demand generated from a MyThirteen advert from customers in housing need.

## **7. How to search for a home on My Thirteen**

- 7.1 Searching via MyThirteen provides a quick and easily accessible way for customers to access a rented home. Customers can easily choose the most suitable rehousing option based on their circumstances and longer-term aspirations.
- 7.2 Customers can access help via our Touchpoints, whether that be over the telephone, on-line or at one of our Touchpoint stores. Customers will be able to apply for one of our homes as soon as they are registered, but additional supporting information will be required prior to a customer receiving an offer. Customers may

warrant an additional priority due to their current housing need which will be established through a range of questions when applying via MyThirteen.

- 7.3 All homes will be advertised on MyThirteen for a minimum of 2 days and the number of homes advertised will change daily. Customers will be responsible for viewing what properties are available to let and to apply for the homes that they want to be considered for.
- 7.4 Thirteen will allocate properties based on the customer meeting the eligibility criteria for the property and customers housing need. Properties will be allocated in MyThirteen, on band rating first, followed by date band verified and then date and time of first registration.
- 7.5 Where properties with are advertised with certain adaptations, preference will always be given to customers with an assessed need for the adaptation, as Thirteen aim to make best use of the homes we have available to let. Where there is no demand for the adapted property the property may be offered to a customer who does not need the adaptation but is happy to accept the property with the adaptation in situ. Similarly, properties will only in exceptional circumstances be adapted (due to the high proportion of properties that already have adaptations) e.g. where the adaptation requirements are complex and have to be tailored to an individual's requirements or where there is only a small number of properties with a specific type of adaptation. Small minor alterations will be carried out i.e., ramps, handrails etc. as recommended by an Occupational Therapist.
- 7.6 Where Thirteen advertises homes for market rent, these maybe subject to a specific criteria i.e. on an affordability first come first served basis.
- 7.7 Sometimes customers need to move urgently and are protected through public protection arrangements such as MAPPA level 2 or 3. Where this is the case, we will work with the Local Authority to ensure that access to rehousing is completed in a planned way, subject to risk assessments and plans being in place. This process will always take place as a direct let.
- 7.8 Additionally, Thirteen may find it necessary to make a direct let to a current Thirteen tenant for an alternative property. This may be due to an emergency fire, flood, domestic abuse or if the tenant would be at risk of serious harm to remain in their current home. Where a customer has the right to succeed a tenancy but not the property due to it being too large for the successors needs or adaptations that are not required, then a direct let may also be undertaken. (This list is not exhaustive). This will be in mutual agreement and approved by Senior Managers to ensure that there is a full audit trail and that the decision meets with the Lettings Policy.

## **8. Priority Bands**

- 8.1 Thirteen will prioritise customers who apply for rehousing via MyThirteen based on their priority band, followed by the date in which the band was awarded. Please refer to section 10 for details of nomination agreements in place, with lettings prioritised on local housing needs based on their local authorities' lettings policy.

In all circumstances, the responsibility resides with the customer to have provided the evidence to support the criteria below. Failure to provide this and/or provide

appropriate evidence when requested will result in an automatic allocation of Band 4 need ([Appendix E](#)).

**Band 1:**

- Decant -Thirteen's tenants that are losing their home due to a recognised demolition and/or regeneration scheme.

**Band 2:**

- Non-Thirteen customers in employment or who need to move to the area due to an offer of employment and have a local connection to the Local Authority area where the property is located.
- Customers with an **Urgent** medical need where the property is unsuitable due to medical or mobility reasons, which will be resolved by applying for a property that is suitable for the customers' requirements.
- Thirteen transferring tenants who are seeking rehousing due to being a victim of abuse or through a police recommendation for immediate rehousing.
- A customer (Thirteen and non-Thirteen) who has left the armed forces within the last 5 years (supported through our armed forces covenant).
- A Thirteen customer requiring "move on" accommodation within our commissioned care and support services who no longer needs ongoing support.
- A Thirteen tenant who is pregnant (28 weeks+) or a parent with full custody of child(ren) under the age of 14 who are living in a high-rise block or a property above ground floor. Non thirteen customers who are working in the NHS, Police, Fire Brigade and Care workers.

**Band 3:**

- Customers with a **High** medical need will be allocated to customers who have been assessed as needing to move to an alternative property to receive support from relatives or a carer, or one which is situated within a supported housing scheme.
- Thirteen's tenants who are under-occupying and financially impacted.
- Thirteen's tenants who are over-crowded by 1 or more bedrooms.
- Newly granted refugees leaving asylum accommodation in the next 28 days

**Band 4**

- Anyone applying for a property will be treated as band 4 as a default where customer is unable to provide evidence to substantiate the above banding criteria.

## 9. Transfers

9.1 Where a tenant wishes to apply for another property with Thirteen, they can choose to apply for a transfer via MyThirteen. All tenants wishing to transfer are subject to a home inspection and must have: -

- A clear rent account
- Not committed any tenancy breaches; and
- Leave their existing property with no damage, be decorated to a good standard and both the property and the garden should be clean, tidy and free of any rubbish or personal belongings. (link to video)



- 9.2 Where customers are new, a transfer cannot be arranged in the first 24 months, unless there are exceptional circumstances which warrant a transfer sooner.
- 9.3 Where transfer applicants want to be rehoused and there is damage to their home or outstanding debt on the account, then these must be rectified first before a transfer application will be considered. All recharges should be paid in advance of a move, or the damage rectified to an agreed standard. Customers will be offered support through our tenancy support service, or via external partner agencies where needed.
- 9.4 In exceptional circumstances where a property does not meet the Thirteen standard, and a customer MUST move, for example due to a domestic abuse incident, or high priority medical need, discussions will take place with the customer and other agencies around an agreed approach. This could include setting up a repayment plan following a recharge, an agreed repayment plan against an existing debt, acting against a perpetrator where a customer is subject to abuse and damage has occurred, or working with partner agencies to improve the property prior to a move.
- 9.5 All customers transferring to their new home, must leave their home clean and tidy prior to returning the keys to Thirteen. Any transferring customer who leaves any belongings in the property will be recharged the full costs for clearance and cleaning which will be paid by the customer on the day of the transfer. .

## **10. Local Authorities Nomination agreements**

- 10.1 Thirteen will work with individual Local Authorities to agree the proportion of their homes that will be allocated via a local authority nomination agreement. Where nomination agreements are in place, this means that a certain proportion of Thirteen homes will be offered to the Local Authority for nominations of customers from their own waiting list, based on their assessment of housing need. This ensures that Thirteen is able to assist the Local Authority in its strategic functions, meeting local housing needs and will give preference to reasonable preference groups as set out in The Housing Act 1996 (Part 6). All nominations still need to meet the eligibility criteria for a property, be subject to reference checks and comply with Thirteen's lettings policy. Local agreements in place are as follows: -

- Hartlepool Borough Council – 75% nominations
- Hull City Council – 50% nominations- for relets
- Middlesbrough Borough Council – 50% nominations for relets
- Stockton Borough Council – 50% nominations for relets
- Redcar and Cleveland Council – 50% nominations for relets
- Darlington Borough Council – 50% nominations for relets

See ([Appendix F](#)) for further details.

- 10.2 Nomination agreements are also in place with Local Authorities in Tees Valley for our extra care accommodation and other specialist housing schemes (as detailed in relevant Local Authority Nomination Agreement) with 100% nominations to ensure that these homes are allocated to customers with the required care and support needs through either a panel or nomination process. Consideration is given to affordability and the balance of care needs within the scheme.

10.3 Nomination agreements with the relevant Local Authority also refers to the % of initial and subsequent relets on new builds. This is normally 100% nomination on initial lets where the property is built based on access to public funds and each nomination agreement provides more detail on the exact % nominations that are in place per Local Authority.

## 11. Local Lettings Policies

11.1 Where there is a new build scheme, a local lettings policy is usually in place, which sets out the eligibility criteria for accessing these homes. For example, where homes are located near a hospital, then the Local Lettings policy may award additional priority to customers who are currently working within the NHS. Some local lettings policies award a percentage of lets to customers who are working or set clear criteria around local connection arrangements. All local lettings policies are implemented in consultation with the Local Authority. The majority of local lettings policies are implemented by the Local authority as part of the nomination agreement process, but on occasions the local lettings policy may indicate that the lettings will all be made via MyThirteen. Where this approach is taken it will be clear on all adverts for these schemes. There will be a clear rationale for a local lettings policy being needed and will be reviewed annually.

## 12. Mutual Exchange

12.1 Tenants will be encouraged to register on a mutual exchange scheme to maximise their opportunities for a suitable move. This will be through House exchange. Further details of how the scheme operates is available on our website [www.thirteengroup.co.uk](http://www.thirteengroup.co.uk)

## 13. Governance Information

<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	The policy has undergone an Equality Needs Impact Assessment, and actions from this will be monitored.
<b>Environmental Sustainability</b>	No issues/implications affecting environmental sustainability.
<b>Customer Involvement and Consultation</b>	Consultation has been completed with internal team consultations with Health and Safety, Governance, Risk Assurance, Service Delivery, Finance and Communications as well as customer consultation.
<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, but sooner in the event of any relevant legislation regulation or operational changes.  The Head of Housing Services will be responsible for the review and tenant representative groups will be involved and consulted in any review of this policy.
<b>Responsibility</b>	It is the responsibility of the Director of Operations to ensure that the policy is in place. The Head of Housing Services will be responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy and working within the policy requirements. The Head of Housing will also be responsible for ensuring that customers are fully informed of the policy and any changes made during review.

## 14. APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### REFERENCE MATERIAL

The following reference material has been used:

This policy has been developed with regard to the codes of guidance issued to local housing authorities in England, in exercising the functions under 167(1A) and 167(2E) of the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Thirteen will ensure that the policy is compatible with obligations imposed by other existing legislation, in addition to Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 as detailed below; this list is not exhaustive.

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended 2006)
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Children Act 1989
- General Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- Crime & Disorder Act 1998
- Homelessness Act 2017
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Welfare Reform Act 2012
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Tenancy policy
- Rent policy
- Right to Rent
- Mutual Exchange
- European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020

This policy also takes into consideration the following guidance:

- Commission for Racial Equality (Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing – September 2006)
- The Housing Green Paper - Quality and Choice (A Decent Home For All - July 2000)
- Code of Guidance (Choice Based Lettings - January 2007)
- Shelter's Good Practice Report (A Question of Choice - June 2005)
- Communities and Local Government (Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England – June 2012)
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (October 2017).

## APPENDIX B

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Eligibility**

Applicants must satisfy certain criteria to be eligible for an allocation of accommodation and support services, and to be allocated certain property types.

### **Local Lettings Policies (LLP)**

Are used to enhance the sustainability of defined communities by giving preference for offers of accommodation to customer groups. This may include customers outside of the housing needs categories and include key worker groups for example. Local lettings policies will be evidence-based and be approved for defined geographic areas.

### **Local Connection**

Connections to a particular area within a local authority boundary because of residency, employment, close family or a main source of support.

### **Advert Criteria**

Advertisements of properties may have an age criteria for example for older person homes, or have a preference to certain size of households / groups. This will be described within the advert details.

### **Mutual exchange**

Applicants wishing to exchange their home with another Registered Provider/ Social landlord or tenant of a Local Authority can apply to do this, but this is subject to the policy guidelines for mutual exchange. The written agreement and inspection from the appropriate landlords are required prior to the exchange taking place.

### **Nominations**

A type of allocation defined in the Housing Act 1996, where a Local Authority puts forward (nominates) an applicant from the Local Authority Housing Register to Registered Providers for re-housing.

### **Registered Provider (RP)**

A housing association or housing company registered with the Regulator of Social Housing England (RSH).

## APPENDIX C

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are (this list is not exhaustive):

- £500 rent arrears outstanding or previous tenancy debt
- Evidence of serious rent arrears, which would constitute an outright possession order i.e. current and former tenancy arrears
- Evidence of conduct which is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household living within the local authority boundary e.g. severe noise nuisance, neighbour harassment
- Evidence of perpetrating domestic abuse
- Evidence of hate related crime or anti-social behaviour
- Relevant unspent convictions or convictions for prolific offences in the locality of their present or previous home/s, which affects the stability of the neighbourhood e.g. domestic burglary or unauthorised taking of motor vehicles
- Violence or threats of violence towards employees, board members or elected members
- Previous Thirteen tenants that have outstanding debt re-chargeable repairs due to leaving their property in an unacceptable condition.
- Where a debt relief order is still in place or bankruptcy order that prevents Thirteen from being able to recover any debt owed.

## APPENDIX D

### **Appeals – right to request a review of decision**

Applicants have the following rights concerning decisions about their housing application:

- The right to be notified in writing of any decision not to be registered on the scheme because of unacceptable behavior serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant.
- The right to be notified in writing of any decision not to be registered on the scheme because of immigration control, within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.
- The right, on request, to be informed of a decision about any information which is being taken into account in considering whether to make an offer of accommodation.
- The right, on request, to request a review of a decision in respect of any of the above. The applicant will also be informed of the decision in respect of the review and the grounds for that decision. This review will be final and there are no further grounds for appeal.

Applicants will be notified of these rights whenever a decision is made that affects their registration or status to receive offers of accommodation, and they will be informed of their right to submit further information, which may assist the review of their case.

The review will be carried out by a senior manager to the person that made the original decision and will have had no previous involvement in the original decision.

Tenants still not satisfied on a point of procedure may be able to seek a further review through the complaints process. In such circumstances the complaint will escalate straight to stage 2 of the Thirteen complaints process.

## Appendix E

### **Evidence examples**

Decant – this will be awarded and evidenced directly via Thirteen.

#### Employment

- Payslip or P60 (within the last 3 months)
- Written evidence on letterhead from your employer (within last 6 months)
- Contract
- Offer letter of employment in the area

Medical need - this will be assessed via the Local Authority Occupational Therapist as part of a medical assessment if the customer requires an adapted property. For other medical needs we may require proof of address for registered carers, or a letter from a medically qualified professional.

#### Pregnancy or custody of a child if living above ground floor

- A copy of the MATB1 certificate showing expected due date or a letter from the NHS or GP Surgery confirming your due date.
- Proof of child benefit such as a letter from DWP or bank statements showing child benefit being received by the applicant.

#### Armed forces

- Verification of service can be evidenced by discharge papers. If currently serving, a military identification card should be used. If the customer doesn't have either of these documents, they can apply for proof online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-copy-military-service-records/apply-for-your-own-records>.

#### Refugee status

Evidence can be your biometric residence permit, or you can complete an online verification at [gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status](https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status), and provide a share code to us so we can verify your status online.

#### EU Settlers and Third Country Nationals

UK residence card, permanent residence card, derivative residence card biometric residence permit, or you can complete an online verification at [gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status](https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status), and provide a share code to us so we can verify your status online.

#### Transfers

- Customers living in care and support accommodation based services requiring rehousing will be evidenced via Thirteen
- Under/overcrowding
  - Proof of address for household members and a property inspection within the last 12 weeks.
  - An income and expenditure assessment and evidence of income (under occupying)
  - Statement from an advice agency i.e. Police, Social Care etc. where a customer is needing immediate rehousing

## Appendix F

### **Reasonable preference groups:**

Local Authorities must frame their allocation schemes to give additional preference to certain groups (reasonable preference groups).

Below is the definition used in the Housing Act 1996 to describe the types of housing need that should be given priority in a local authority's allocations policy:

- People who have been assessed as homeless by the Local Authority homeless service within the meaning of Housing Act 1996, Part 7 (Homelessness).
- People who are owed a duty by any Local Housing Authority in England under the Housing Act 1996 from a section 190 (2), 193 (2) or 195 (2) or the equivalent duties under the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation provided to them by the Local Housing Authority under Housing Act 1996 s 192 (3).
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds including grounds relating to a disability and;
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the Local Housing Authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or to others.

Examples of these are defined as below:

- Those who need to move urgently because of a life-threatening illness or sudden disability
- Families in severe overcrowding which poses a serious health hazard
- Those who are homeless and require urgent re-housing because of violence or threats of violence, including intimidated witnesses, and those escaping serious anti-social behaviour or domestic violence
- Members of the Armed and Reserve Forces (or Former) that need to move because of serious injury, medical condition, or disability as a result of their service.
- Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving services family accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.