



## **LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

### **LOCATION PRIORITY POLICY**

#### **General**

- 1.1. This Location Priority Policy will provide a framework for the fair allocation of affordable temporary accommodation within and close to the London Borough of Lewisham. This policy applies to the allocation of temporary accommodation secured under Part VII, Housing Act 1996 and under Part III, Children Act 1989.
- 1.2. This policy does not prevent a household from considering other housing options, including asking the Council for advice, support and assistance in relocating to more settled accommodation.

#### **Categories of Location Priority**

- 2.1. If the local authority has a duty to secure accommodation, an assessment will be carried out to determine the location priority of the applicant. The assessment will determine whether the applicant has:
  - Priority to be located in the London Borough of Lewisham
  - Priority to be located close to the London Borough of Lewisham
  - No priority as to the location of a property.
- 2.2. The award of an 'In-borough' or 'Close to Borough' location priority does not guarantee the provision of temporary accommodation within those areas, rather priority for such accommodation should it be available and suitable.
- 2.3. Where the household is in receipt of welfare benefits, this may place additional constraints on the availability of affordable accommodation, including constraints on its type and location.
- 2.4. The Council will have due regard to the principal needs of any children in the household, and the need to safeguard and promote the children's welfare. In particular, regard will be had to any disruption to schools, medical care, social work, other key services and other support.

### **In-borough Priority**

- 3.1. Priority for available in-borough accommodation will be given to certain households who have a compelling need to be housed within the London Borough of Lewisham.
- 3.2. An 'In-borough' priority does not guarantee an in-borough placement, but should suitable and affordable accommodation be available within that area, it does give that household priority over others without this assessed priority.
- 3.3. Applicants and their household members to be housed with them who satisfy one or more of the following criteria will qualify for 'In-borough' priority:
  - a. They are receiving treatment for a physical or mental health condition from a specialist hospital unit which cannot be transferred to another NHS service or they are at a critical point in their treatment.
  - b. Children subject to a Child Protection Plan in the London Borough of Lewisham which cannot be transferred to another local authority without causing serious detriment to a child's welfare.
  - c. Children subject to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a Statement of Special Educational Needs in the London Borough of Lewisham which cannot be transferred to another local authority without causing serious detriment to the child's welfare.
  - d. They have a longstanding arrangement to provide essential care to another family member in the London Borough of Lewisham who is not part of the household. Carers must be in receipt of Carer's Allowance.
  - e. Other circumstances which demonstrate an exceptional and compelling need which cannot be met outside of the London Borough of Lewisham.

### **Close to Borough Priority**

- 4.1. 'Close to Borough' priority is defined as priority for accommodation located within 90 minutes travelling distance of the London Borough of Lewisham by public transport.
- 4.2. Such priority does not guarantee a placement within 90 minutes travelling distance of the London Borough of Lewisham by public transport, but should

suitable and affordable accommodation be available within that area, it does give the household priority over others without that assessed priority.

- 4.3. Applicants or their household members to be housed with them who satisfy one or more of the following criteria will qualify for 'Close to Borough' priority:
- a. They have been continuously employed close to the London Borough of Lewisham for 16 hours or more per week in a role which cannot be transferred to another area. Applicants must have been employed in this role for six months prior to the date of application and remain so employed. Wherever practicable, the Local Authority will seek to place such households within 90 minutes travelling distance, by public transport, from the place of employment at the time of application.
  - b. Women who are on maternity leave from employment and meet the above criteria will also be prioritised for placements close to the London Borough of Lewisham. Wherever practicable the Local Authority will seek to place such households within 90 minutes travelling distance by public transport from their place of employment.
  - c. Children who are enrolled in GCSE, AS, or A level courses in the London Borough of Lewisham, with public exams to be taken within the current or next academic year. Wherever practicable the Local Authority will seek to place such households within 90 minutes travelling distance by public transport of their school or college.
  - d. Other exceptional circumstances, where applicants demonstrate an exceptional and compelling need to be housed close to the London Borough of Lewisham.

### **No Locational Priority**

- 5.1. Applicants who meet none of the 'In-borough' or 'Close to Borough' criteria will be offered properties further afield than 90 minutes travelling distance of the London Borough of Lewisham by public transport, when no suitable property is available within these areas.
- 5.2. The Council will have regard to the principal needs of any children in the household, and the need to safeguard and promote the children's welfare. In particular, regard will be had to any disruption to schools, medical care, social work, other key services and other support.