

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

LOCATION PRIORITY POLICY

1. 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 will also be used to identify appropriate locations where the council will consider discharging the main housing duty under s.193 Housing Act 1986 through the use of a Private Rented Sector Offer.
- 1.3. This policy outlines which households will have priority for accommodation within or close to the London Borough of Lewisham. Within each priority band, officers will endeavour to place all households within or as close as possible to the London Borough of Lewisham.
- 1.4. 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.
- 1.5. In reaching individual location decisions 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. However, compliance with this policy will indicate that, insofar as there are adverse effects on such needs, the limited supply of accommodation within or close to the London Borough of Lewisham justifies those effects.
- 1.6. The award of any location priority does not guarantee the provision of temporary accommodation within those areas, rather priority for such accommodation should it be available and suitable.
- 1.7. 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.
- 1.8. It is intended that this policy be reviewed yearly in order to assess the impact of the changes from the previously version of the policy (2015), with an option to revise the policy should this be required.

2. 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. This assessment will determine whether the applicant has:

- Priority A - Priority to be located within the London Borough of Lewisham
- Priority B – Priority to be located close to the London Borough of Lewisham
- Priority C - No priority as to the location of the property.

3. Priority A: In-Borough Priority

3.1. Priority for available in-borough accommodation will be given to certain households who have a particularly compelling need to be housed within the London Borough of Lewisham. 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 (ECHP) 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 person or people in the London Borough of Lewisham who is not part of their household. The cared for person must be in receipt of the daily living component of the personal independence payment, the middle or highest rate of disability living allowance or attendance allowance and the carer in the applicants household must be eligible, or have an underlying entitlement for Carer's Allowance or be eligible for Carer's Credit for the care that they provide to the cared for person.
- e. They are in receipt of care through a longstanding arrangement with another person or persons who is not part of the household and where placement in another local authority would disrupt this arrangement. Those being cared for must be in receipt of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment or the middle or highest care rate of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance.
- f. Other exceptional circumstances which demonstrate a compelling need which cannot be met outside of 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.

4. Priority B: Close to Borough Priority

- 4.1. 'Close to borough priority' is defined as priority for accommodation that is located within Greater London.
- 4.2. 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 are employed at a workplace 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 continuously employed in this role for six months prior to the date of application and must remain so employed.
 - 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.
 - c. Children who are enrolled in GCSE or A level courses in the London Borough of Lewisham, with public exams to be taken in the current or next academic year.
 - d. Other exceptional circumstances where applicants demonstrate a compelling need to be housed close to the London Borough of Lewisham.
- 4.3. Such priority does not guarantee a placement within Greater London, but should suitable and affordable accommodation be available within that area, it does give the household priority over others without that assessed priority.

5. Priority C: No Locational Priority

- 5.1. Applicants who meet none of the 'in-borough' or 'close to borough' criteria will be offered properties further afield.