

Housing Allocations Policy – Amendment Summary

These amendments apply to all applicants who have applied to Birmingham City Council for housing. It does not apply to Supported Housing, Temporary Accommodation, and Extra Care accommodation.

If you are currently eligible for housing with Birmingham City Council, the way we make you offers of properties has changed.

The Birmingham Choice Based Lettings scheme, called Birmingham Home Choice is the new way for you to find and rent a home from Birmingham City Council and some housing associations.

Policy Amendment Summary

This summary replaces Section 5.1 and 5.3 of Birmingham City Council's Housing Allocations Scheme.

Birmingham City Council has a team of allocation officers and assistant allocations officers responsible for allocating properties in accordance with the allocation scheme.

Allocations are only made to applicants on the Housing Register who are eligible for an allocation.

Applicants who register for housing with Birmingham City Council will be provided with a User ID and Personal Identification number or PIN. (Each applicant will need their User ID and PIN to bid for properties.)

Applicants on the Housing Register can look each week for properties they are interested in.

Properties that are to be let through Birmingham Home Choice are advertised weekly through the website – www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk – Digital Television (Looking Local) and the Birmingham Home Choice property pages.

Each applicant can place up to three bids each week during the advertising cycle. Occasionally properties are advertised outside of the standard weekly advertising cycle.

Bids can only be placed on properties that applicants are eligible for.

Bids can be placed by internet, SMS text message, Interactive Voice Recognition Service and Digital Television.

Applicants may change or withdraw a bid at any time during the weekly advertising cycle.

Up to six applicants will be considered for the shortlist for each property. Applicants may be required to view the property with other applicants. Any applicant who has placed a bid on a property they are not eligible for will not be considered for shortlisting.

Birmingham City Council carries out shortlisting for BCC properties and for RSL properties which are offered to Birmingham City Council for nomination. Shortlisting means that up to six applicants with the highest points of all those who have placed a bid on that property will be invited to view.

Where an applicant has placed more than one bid in the same weekly advertising cycle, and would be in the top six most highly pointed cases for more than one property, the applicant will be invited to view one property only.

Applicants will usually be contacted on the day of shortlisting and invited to view the property. Applicants invited to view properties will be asked to bring with them proof of identify and current housing circumstances.

Where an applicant's circumstances cannot be verified, or where it is evident that there has been a material change in circumstances, an offer will not be made and the points level may be affected.

Applicants will be made aware of their position on the shortlist prior to viewing. Once applicants have been shortlisted, they will be unable to place further bids until the outcome of the shortlist has been determined.

If an applicant arrives late or fails to attend a viewing that they have been invited to, they may lose the opportunity to be considered for the property.

Where properties have been adapted, priority will be given to applicants who require an adapted property. These applicants can bid on properties that have not been adapted, but before such applicants are shortlisted a Housing Officer will assess whether it is reasonable and practicable for the property to be adapted.

Some applicants are not able to participate in the scheme. This usually happens where an applicant is subject to a multi-agency agreement.

Applicants who are homeless and owed a duty by the Local Authority or involved in a clearance programme may have bids placed on their behalf by an Officer of the Council at any time.

Lettings history will be published on the Birmingham Home Choice website, www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk . The website will give details of:

- The properties let from the most recent advertising cycle for which the information is available
- The number of bids that were made,
- The number of points the successful applicant had and the date of registration of that applicant on to the Housing Register

This information can be used by applicants to help them understand the relative demand for properties in particular areas and the level of points (and Band category) that may be needed to secure an allocation to that property type and location.

Birmingham City Council may also continue to allocate properties in the traditional way; by matching customers to properties, for a period of time as may be necessary. Birmingham City Council reserves the right to do this without giving notice to customers'