

Appendix TKP1.3

Council's FOI response 7 August 2025

5.3 Housing need assessment

All applicants will be assessed to determine whether or not they fall within one of the following five categories -

- Additional Preference (Band A)
- High Preference (Band B)
- Moderate Preference (Band C)
- Low Preference (Band D)
- No Preference (Band E)

5.4 Additional Preference Category (Band A)

Cases that fall into this category will be people who need to move because of either:

- a) an emergency, usually on health or welfare grounds; or
- b) because the Council needs them to move urgently in order to create vacancies within the housing stock for other people in housing need (management moves).

Emergency Cases

Very few cases are likely to be eligible for this category, which will apply where:

- An applicant cannot occupy their property because of a medical problem or disability and the property cannot be adapted e.g. a wheelchair user who lives in a first floor flat with no lift.
- The applicant is a serving or former member of the Armed or Reserve Forces who needs to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which he or she, or a member of their household, has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces.
- An existing secure tenant of the Council or an assured tenant of a Registered Provider of Social Housing (RP) in the District* who needs to immediately move because of serious violence or harassment, where this has been substantiated and management action against the perpetrator(s) cannot resolve the situation, or
- Other cases recognised as emergencies but not fitting into the above categories at the discretion of the Head of Housing (see 7.2 later).
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, in such cases, any alternative property will be offered on a like-for-like basis with the applicant's existing property and will not, necessarily, be based on the property size eligibility rules in this Scheme (see section 10.6 later).

Management Moves

The following applicants will fall into this category:

- Tenants of the Council or an RSL in the District* who:
 - Are under-occupying family properties and are prepared to move to one-bedroom properties.
 - Are in certain supported housing that is needed by other high priority applicants and who, themselves, no longer require the support.

* Such tenants are only eligible to be included in this category where they were nominated by the Council and the Council would have a nomination right to the resultant vacancy, such that a further applicant can be assisted.

- Applicants who are part of a reciprocal arrangement agreed with another local authority or RSL (see 7.3 later).

- Applicants who are key workers (see 7.6 later) with at least 5 years of service who are retiring or being made redundant from accommodation provided for the better performance of their work duties (tied accommodation).
- Other cases recognised as urgent management moves but not fitting into the above categories at the discretion of the **Head of Housing**.

Cases that fall into the above categories will be placed in **Band A**, unless:

- a) they do not have a local connection with Tandridge (see 6.1 later), or
- b) they have a high/moderate income (see 6.2 later),

In the case of a) or b) applicants will be placed in **Band D**.

5.5 High Preference Category (Band B)

The following applicants will fall into this category:

- Households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness by the Council and who are in priority need within the meaning of the Housing Act 1996
- Households whose accommodation lacks basic facilities (i.e. a kitchen, bathroom or toilet) and this cannot be provided by the owner at reasonable cost.
- Households whose accommodation is assessed as being in severe disrepair by an Environmental Health Officer and which cannot be repaired at reasonable cost.
- Households with dependent children where the facilities are shared with others who are not members of the applicant's household & the applicant has no rights to occupy the property or to apply for an occupation order.
- Households without enough bedrooms for their need (see 7.4 later).
- Households with an urgent need for alternative accommodation on medical or welfare grounds (see 7.1 and 7.2 later).
- Tenants of the Council or an RSL in the District* who are under-occupying properties with three or more bedrooms and are eligible to move to two-bedroom properties.

* Such tenants are only eligible to be included in this category where they were nominated by the Council and the Council would have a nomination right to the resultant vacancy, such that a further applicant can be assisted.

Cases that fall into the above categories will be placed in **Band B**, unless they are assessed as being subject to reduced preference (see section 6).

If they are assessed as being subject to reduced preference they will be placed in **Band D**.

5.6 Moderate Preference (Band C)

The following applicants will fall into this category:

- Households that are renting accommodation with limited security of tenure (see 7.5 later).
- Other households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness including those who are not in priority need within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
- Households with no fixed abode who have made a statutory declaration witnessed by a solicitor that they have no accommodation in which they can reside, even temporarily.
- Households containing at least one child under 5 and/or a pregnant woman that are living in accommodation above the ground floor.



- Households whose accommodation is assessed as being in disrepair by an Environmental Health Officer and which cannot be repaired by the owner at reasonable cost.
- Households sharing facilities with others who are not members of the applicant's household but where either:
 - the applicant has rights to occupy the property or to apply for an occupation order to grant this, or
 - their household does not include any dependent children.
- Households with no living room or those sharing a living room with another household.
- Households accepted as Tandridge key workers (see 7.6 later).
- Households with a need for alternative accommodation on medical or welfare grounds (see 7.1 and 7.2 later).

Cases that fall into the above categories will be placed in **Band C**, unless they are assessed as being subject to reduced preference (see section 6).

If they are assessed as being subject to reduced preference they will be placed in **Band D**.

5.7 Low Preference (Band D)

Applicants who have any of the housing needs detailed in Bands A-C but are assessed as being subject to reduced preference (see section 6) will be placed in **Band D**.

5.8 No Preference (Band E)

Applicants who do not have any of the housing needs detailed in Bands A-C will be placed in **Band E**.

6. Reduced Preference

The supply of rented social housing available to the Council is limited and the Council cannot provide rented accommodation to everyone who requests it. Reduced priority for housing will therefore be given to eligible applicants where:

- a) They do not have a local connection with the District of Tandridge.
- b) They have financial resources available to meet their housing costs or where they have had such resources but have unreasonably disposed of them.
- c) Their behaviour or that of a member of their household affects their suitability to be a tenant.
- d) They are the tenant of a housing association (registered provider) property in Tandridge for which the Council does not have nomination rights or are living in temporary accommodation provided by another local housing authority.

A decision to reduce priority on this basis will be made by the Housing Allocations Officer following an individual assessment of each application.

6.1 Local Connection

Applicants will be considered to have a local connection with the District of Tandridge where they:

- Currently live in the District of Tandridge and have done so for at least one year, or
- Have previously resided in the District for 3 out of the last 5 years, or

- Are Tandridge key workers (see section 7.6 later) and they have been employed in this role for more than 16 hours per week for the last two years, or
- Have immediate family (i.e. mother, father, son, daughter) who have lived in the District for 5 or more years and the applicant needs to move to the District in order to receive essential support from, or give essential support to them.
- Have been accepted as having another special reason why they need to live in Tandridge.

Applicants who do not have a local connection will be placed in Band D if they have any of the housing needs detailed in Bands A-C or Band E if they do not.

Applicants with a local connection will have their income/assets assessed before being placed in the appropriate band

6.2 Financial Resources

Less priority for rented units will be given to applicants who have sufficient income, funds or assets to resolve their housing situation in the private sector by purchasing or renting alternative accommodation suitable to their needs, or by using the Council's Shared Ownership Schemes,

Less priority will also be given to applicants accepted as eligible for sheltered housing who are in the following classes of applicant:

- a) Those who have within 5 years of the date of their application, disposed of an asset which they could reasonably have been expected to use to resolve their own housing difficulties, or
- b) Those who are property owners- that have an asset that could be used to obtain accommodation suitable to their needs.
- c) Those who have previously benefitted from the Right to Buy of a social housing property, whether in Tandridge or another local authority area. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis, such as relationship breakdown, where one partner is unable to live in the property and has no legal rights to force sale or release any equity.

It is generally considered reasonable for a household to use up to 30% of their gross income towards housing costs (i.e. rent/mortgage). This threshold is used when determining whether an applicant has sufficient income to pursue outright purchase or shared ownership options. The table on the following page shows the income levels above which households will be considered to have sufficient income, funds or assets to purchase alternative accommodation suitable to their needs. In this regard, the income of all working adults within the applicant's household will be taken into account.

Applicants that have a higher income or assets (those that fall in a-c above) will be accepted on to the Housing Register but will be placed in either band D or E. Those assessed as being in high/moderate housing need will be placed in band D and those in low housing need in band E. Applicants who have a low income will go on to be considered for bands A-C.

Applicants who have sufficient income to pursue low cost home ownership will be given details of suitable initiatives and vacancies.

Applicants with an annual household income over £60,000 or savings over £75,000 are ineligible to join the Housing Register.



Table 1 Minimum Income Levels for Low Cost home Ownership

Bedroom Need			
	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom
Single income	£30,000	£35,000	£40,000
Joint income	£35,000	£40,000	£45,000

6.3 Behaviour

In accordance with section 166A (5) of the Housing Act 1996, reduced priority will be given where the applicant or a member of their household:

- a) Is a current tenant of a Council or RSL and has rent arrears or has caused nuisance which is subject to ongoing action;
- b) Has arrears from a previous Council or RSL tenancy and is not keeping to satisfactory arrangements to clear the debt. Generally, this arrangement would be expected to have been maintained for at least 6 months;
- c) Is a Council or RSL tenant who has been served with a Notice of Seeking Possession for rent arrears and whose account has not been clear for at least 6 months;
- d) Is a Council or RSL tenant who has been served with a Notice Seeking Possession because of nuisance and a minimum period of 12 months has not yet passed without any further instances of nuisance;
- e) Is a Council or RSL tenant who is required to make good damage to their current property;
- f) Is or was a tenant other than in a) above and the Council is satisfied that they have rent arrears or other housing related debts which they are not making satisfactory arrangements to repay;

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, applicants in the above categories will not be offered accommodation if there are other applicants in bands A to D.

Where there is evidence that an applicant has deliberately arranged their circumstances in order to qualify for higher priority under the scheme, no additional priority will be awarded for 6 months. This would apply where an applicant moves from accommodation that was available for their occupation and was no less suitable for them than the accommodation they have moved to, and which it was reasonable for them to have continued to occupy.

An applicant is entitled to request a review of any decision to reduce their preference in accordance with this section (see Section 12 later).

6.4 Housing Association Tenants

Less priority will be given to an applicant who is the tenant of a housing association (registered provider) property in Tandridge for which the Council does not have nomination rights. In such circumstances, the applicant would be expected to make arrangements with their landlord to transfer to more suitable accommodation.

Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis, particularly, for those needing to move on from supported housing. However, move on would normally be expected to be provided by the borough/district where the client lived prior to referral to the supported housing and not by Tandridge District Council.

Applicants who fall into this category will be placed in Band D if they have any of the housing needs detailed in Bands A-C or Band E if they do not.

6.5 Temporary Accommodation provided by Another Local Authority

Less priority will be given to an applicant who is occupying accommodation provided by another housing authority in discharge of its duties under section 188, section 190(2) or section 193(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (temporary accommodation). Such applicants are owed a duty by the placing local housing authority to be provided with suitable accommodation until that duty is lawfully ended.

Applicants who fall into this category will be placed in Band D if they have any of the housing needs detailed in Bands A-C or Band E if they do not.

6.6 Refusal of a reasonable offer

Any person that refuses two offers of accommodation that fully meet their expressed choices will be entitled to remain on the Housing Register but will have their priority reduced. Their degree of preference (banding) will continue to be determined by their housing need assessment but their date of registration will be amended to be the date of refusal of the second offer, thus reducing their priority within the band.

Applicants who have been awarded urgent priority but have not made any applications for accommodation within any 12-month period since receiving this priority will be written to and requested to provide confirmation of their current circumstances and their reasons for not making any applications for housing. Applicants will not be considered for an allocation of accommodation until the necessary information has been received and assessed. Where it is considered appropriate to do so, the Council may consider reducing an applicant's priority.

7. Definitions

7.1 Medical Assessment

An applicant can apply to have medical priority awarded to their case. They will need to complete a self-assessment medical form. Where appropriate, the Council will seek specialist opinion from its Medical Advisor. The Council will then decide whether or not the application should be given one of the following:

Emergency Medical Priority

In very exceptional circumstances an applicant may be assessed as requiring an emergency move on medical grounds. This level of priority may only be awarded by the Housing Needs Manager following a recommendation from the Medical Adviser. An example of such a situation is where:

- An applicant cannot occupy their property because of a medical problem or disability and the property cannot be adapted e.g. a wheelchair user who lives in a first floor flat with no lift.

Urgent Medical Priority

This will be awarded where an applicant's health, or that of a member of his/her household, is likely to decline very rapidly and lead to a life-threatening situation if they are not moved from their current accommodation within the next 6 months. Examples might include:

- An elderly applicant who lives above ground floor without a lift and who has had a series of heart problems, or
- Where an applicant's continued occupation of their current home is likely to cause a marked deterioration in their health e.g. severe depression or mental illness



Medical Priority

This level of priority will be awarded where the applicant's health is being affected by their current accommodation but their health is unlikely to deteriorate significantly within a short period of time.

Any award of medical priority will only be applicable to properties that the Council considers to be suitable for the applicant's needs, whether on medical grounds or otherwise.

No Medical Priority

Where:

- rehousing is unlikely to improve the applicant's health; or
- the accommodation in itself is not affecting the illness; or
- full recovery is likely within one year,

Then no medical need will exist and no priority will be given on this basis.

7.2 Welfare Assessment

Additional priority on this basis may be awarded to an application where there are particular welfare or social factors, or exceptional circumstances not covered elsewhere. These will usually need to be substantiated by other agencies e.g. the Police, Social Services, Leaving Care Team, etc. The award of priority on this basis is rare and is made by the Head of Housing, following a detailed review by the Housing Needs Manager.

Priority may also be awarded in the following circumstances:

- a) Where an applicant is a relative or partner of a Tandridge District Council tenant who has died, they were residing with them for at least 12 months immediately prior to their death, and they would have had the right to succeed to the tenancy in accordance with the Council's Succession Policy had there not been a previous succession. In these cases, additional priority for the allocation of suitable accommodation will usually be awarded if the applicant does not have sufficient income, funds or assets to purchase alternative accommodation suitable to their needs privately or by using the Council's Shared Ownership Schemes.
- b) Where an applicant has had to give up an existing Council or RSL tenancy to receive long-term treatment or rehabilitation. Priority may be awarded following confirmation that the applicant has completed the treatment and is in housing need.
- c) Where an application is received to make an existing Tandridge District Council (TDC) secure tenancy a joint tenancy with another eligible person and it is considered appropriate in the circumstances to do so. Furthermore, that there are no adverse implications from the joint tenancy for the good use of the housing stock and the Council's ability to continue to provide for housing need.
- d) Where one party to a joint TDC secure or introductory tenancy formally terminates the tenancy and it is considered appropriate to allocate the tenancy of this property or another property to the remaining tenant. Furthermore, that in doing so, there are no adverse implications for the good use of the housing stock and the Council's ability to continue to provide for housing need.
- e) Where a person needs to move to a different locality in order to give or receive care, to access specialist medical treatment, or to take up or maintain particular employment or training. Furthermore, that hardship would be caused to themselves or others if they were unable to do so. This would include applicants who are existing social housing tenants, considered eligible under the Right to Move regulations, who may also be considered to have a local connection with the District under the category of other special reason (see section 10.8 later);

- f) Where the cumulative needs of an applicant and their household warrant additional priority. During the assessment of an application, applicants who have a range of needs, that would, when considered independently of each other, qualify them for the same band, will be identified. These cases will be further assessed to identify those applicants whose needs, when considered cumulatively, are considered to be sufficient to warrant them being placed in a higher band.
- g) Where an applicant has a particular special need that causes them to be considered vulnerable, other than on medical grounds. Examples of such applicants include those with a learning disability, a care-leaver aged 18-21, etc. Priority will normally be awarded following assessment of an applicant's case at a Multi-Agency Special Needs Panel or similar meeting.
- h) Where the Council has accepted a duty to use its best endeavours to provide suitable accommodation under Section 28 of the Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976.
- i) Where a former TDC introductory or secure tenant has become a tolerated trespasser and the breach of tenancy has been fully remedied so that eviction would not normally be considered. Furthermore, that it is considered appropriate in the circumstances to grant them a further introductory tenancy of the same, or an alternative, property.
- j) Where a member of the armed forces is leaving service accommodation and:
 - Immediately prior to enlistment, one partner had lived at a fixed address within the District for three out of the five years immediately before moving to Forces accommodation; and
 - The applicant has been on the Housing Register for at least six months prior to discharge: and
 - The serving partner has fulfilled the terms of his/her engagement in the forces and has served at least three years; and
 - The household would be in priority need and have a local connection should homelessness arise (as defined in the Housing Act 1996 Part VII section 189).
- k) Where the applicant is a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces who is leaving Services' Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner. Furthermore, that they are entitled to reasonable preference in accordance with Section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996 and are considered to have urgent housing needs.
- l) Where the applicant is a former member of the armed forces, who is entitled to reasonable preference in accordance with Section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996 and is considered to have urgent housing needs.
- m) Where a review of the Council's stock results in the re-designation of certain properties and, as a result, a TDC secure tenant of such a property requests a move to alternative accommodation. The applicant's current property must previously have been designated as sheltered (or age-restricted) accommodation at the time that the applicant was granted the tenancy but has since been subject to a re-designation to general needs accommodation or to a significantly lower age restriction. Priority may be awarded where the applicant wishes to move to a new property that has the same (or a very similar) age-restriction as that which applied when they were granted their tenancy.
- n) Where an applicant would be approved for foster caring but cannot be approved for a placement because they lack sufficient bedrooms to accommodate a foster child. Priority on this basis will be restricted to a maximum quota of 2 applications per year.



If additional priority is regarded as appropriate the Head of Housing will decide which of the following awards should be given:

Emergency Welfare Priority

In very exceptional circumstances an applicant may be assessed as requiring an emergency move on welfare grounds. Examples of such situations are where:

- An applicant's life would be in immediate danger if they continued to live in their current accommodation and the Council has third party evidence that supports this, or
- An existing Council tenant or assured tenant of a Registered Social Landlord in the District who needs to immediately move because of violence or harassment.

Urgent Welfare Priority

This will be awarded where an applicant has an urgent need to move on welfare grounds or needs to move urgently to a particular locality to avoid hardship to themselves or others and written support for this has been received from an appropriate agency.

Welfare Priority

This will be awarded where an applicant has a less urgent need to move on welfare grounds or needs to move to a particular locality to avoid hardship to themselves or others.

7.3 Reciprocals

A reciprocal is where one Council re-houses an applicant from another Council on the understanding that the Council who has given up a property will, at some stage, be offered a property for someone from their housing lists.

Tandridge District Council will consider a reciprocal in the following circumstances:

- Where the applicant is fleeing violence, including domestic violence.
- Where special needs accommodation is vacant and there is no one on the Tandridge Housing Register in need of the type of accommodation in question.
- Where there are exceptional management reasons requiring a move e.g. when a tenant from another authority is to be a witness in criminal proceedings and needs to be moved for their own protection.
- Where a request for assistance is made through the mobility scheme for the re-housing of victims of violence in accordance with the current procedure agreed by the Surrey District Housing Authorities.
- Where a request for assistance is made through the mobility scheme for the re-housing of offenders in accordance with the current protocol agreed by the Surrey District Housing Authorities and other partner agencies.

Before any agreement is given to a reciprocal, a full written report of the circumstances is required from the other Authority. The decision whether or not to accept a reciprocal will be made by the Housing Needs Manager, who may also need to be satisfied that an applicant in housing need from Tandridge can be housed by the other Authority within a reasonable time. A written commitment to the granting of a property in return for re-housing is also required from the other Council.

Providing the applicant is eligible for the Housing Register and the form has been completed and verification documents uploaded the application will become active on the Housing Register. A letter will be sent to the applicant confirming their application reference number and their banding within 10 working days.

If an applicant is considered to have the income to pursue low cost home ownership they will also be sent details of the affordable home ownership schemes currently available through the Help to Buy Zone Agent.

If the applicant is considered to be ineligible for the Housing Register, they will be sent a letter confirming this and the reason for this decision.

8.2 Re-registration of applications

Applicants will be asked to renew their application annually on the anniversary of their application on their Home Choice Account and they must confirm the current details held on their application and resubmit their application for renewal online.

Any applicant who does not renew their application within 28 days of receiving the invitation to do so will be assumed to no longer require housing and their application will be cancelled accordingly.

8.3 Changes of Circumstance

Applicants who move to a new address or whose circumstances change after they have been accepted onto the Housing Register (e.g. - someone joining or leaving their household, or a change in income or employment, etc.) should update their details on their online Home Choice application so their application can be reassessed.

Where the Council becomes aware that an applicant's circumstances have changed, they will, where possible, contact the client to request they update their application online. Applicants will not be considered for an allocation of accommodation until the necessary information has been received and assessed.

8.4 Verification

The Council will verify all information provided by the applicant that is relevant to their eligibility and / or priority for an allocation of accommodation. Further verification, which may include inviting the applicant for an interview or completing a home visit, will be required at the time an applicant is allocated a property and the Council may check information with other sources as allowed by the law, including credit referencing agencies.

Where practicable, applicants will be visited at home to verify their circumstances prior to any offer of accommodation being made. Applicants will be expected to provide documentary evidence that all persons included on the application are resident at the address applied from. Applicants will also be required to provide any additional proof considered appropriate to confirm the applicant's circumstances

8.5 Removal / Cancellation of applications

If information is obtained that gives reason to believe that an applicant who has already been accepted onto the Housing Register is, in fact, ineligible to be on the Register, the applicant will be informed in writing. The applicant will be given 28 days to provide information to show that they are eligible. If they do not reply within this period, or if they reply but the Council still believes them to be ineligible, they will be removed from the Housing Register.

Unless the Council decides that there are exceptional circumstances, an applicant that accepts an allocation of accommodation made by the Council will have their application cancelled.

9. Applicant Choice

9.1 Free Choice

The Council wishes to ensure that choice is extended as widely as possible to all applicants. Most applicants are therefore able to choose specific accommodation that they wish to be considered for. Exceptions to this are described in section 9.2 later.

Tandridge District Council operates a Choice Based Lettings scheme known as Tandridge Home Choice. The Council will advertise its own vacancies (and housing association vacancies to which it has negotiated nomination rights) in its offices, on the internet, on a dedicated telephone line and, for vulnerable clients, by newsletter. Applicants on the Housing Register are invited to express an interest in, or bid for, the properties advertised.

All applicants can also express their preference for the type and location of property required when completing a Housing Needs Register application form. They can also contact the Council at any time to change their preferences. However, there are certain preferences that will not be recognised, such as where an applicant asks for a property which is larger than they need. The type and size of a property an applicant will be considered eligible to bid for will depend on the applicant's household composition, age and eligibility. Applicants will be registered for and thus able to bid for only for the size and type of property they are entitled to, as described in 10.5 and 10.6 below.

Applicants may make a total of 3 bids in any one advertising cycle for properties advertised through Tandridge Home Choice and properties that are advertised for cross-boundary mobility moves (see section 10.3.1).

Bids must be made before the deadline shown in the advertisement otherwise the bid will not count.

9.2 Restricted Choice

Because some households need to move very urgently, it will not always be possible to meet all of their preferences for particular types of property or areas of the District. Restricted choice will therefore apply to the following groups of applicants:

1. Emergency Cases
2. Statutorily homeless households

Arrangements for implementing restricted choice for each of these groups are detailed below.

Emergency cases

These applicants will be placed in Band A and made one suitable offer of accommodation within the District. When determining suitability, in addition to the size standards specified in 10.6 later, consideration will be given to the following:

- Location of employment.
- Schooling.
- Support networks that the household has.
- Mobility and transport issues.
- Any medical needs that the household has.
- Any substantiated issues of violence or harassment.
- Any other specific factors, considered by the Council to be relevant.

