

Salford City Council's Allocations Scheme

This allocations policy was approved by Salford's City Mayor in consultation with Cabinet in June 2025.

Implementation of the policy will take place between September – December 2025, following completion of system updates and testing.

Once the final implementation date is confirmed, applicants will be notified via email and notice on the Salford Home Search website.

1.0 CONTENTS

1.0	Contents.....	2
1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	Policy aims and objectives	4
1.2	Legal framework	7
1.3	Related strategies:	9
1.4	Wider Statutory Duties	9
1.5	Equality of opportunity:.....	10
2	ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION.....	11
2.1	Eligibility criteria:	11
2.2	Qualifying criteria:	12
2.3.1	Local Connection:	13
2.3.2	Unacceptable Behaviour:	14
2.3.3	Deliberate worsening of circumstances:	16
2.3.4	Owner occupiers:.....	17
2.3.5	Income limit:.....	18
2.3.6	Savings limit:.....	18
3	HOW APPLICANTS ARE ASSESSED	19
3.1	Joint Applicants.....	19
3.2	Initial Assessment	19
3.3	Verification of information:.....	20
3.4	Stage Two – Categorising applications:	21
3.5	The Points System	23
3.6	Mutual Exchange Register for Social Homes.....	24
3.7	Transfers for existing social tenants.....	24
3.8	Data Protection	25
3.9	False Statements	25
4	HOW THE HOUSING REGISTER WILL WORK.....	25
4.1	Definition of an allocation:	25
4.2	How Properties will be advertised	25
4.4	Shortlisting	28
4.5	Offers	29
4.6	Nominations from Registered Providers not Partners in Salford Home Search	30
4.7	How the Size of Property Required will be Decided	30

4.8 Property Types.....	32
4.9 Direct Allocations (Discretionary Allocations).....	33
4.10 Local Lettings Policies.....	34
5.ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY	35
5.1 Applicants who are ineligible or do not qualify	35
5.2 Decision Making.....	35
5.3 Requests for Information.....	36
5.4 Changes in Circumstances:	37
5.5 Cancellation of Applications:	37
5.6 Reviews	38
5.7 Exceptional Circumstances:.....	39
5.8 Complaints:	40
6.MONITORING AND REVIEW	40
6.1 The effectiveness of the Allocations Policy will be monitored by:.....	40
7.Appendix A – Salford’s Allocation Policy Points System	42
8.Appendix B: Salford Home Search Partners	46
Nominating Partners:.....	46

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy aims and objectives

Section 166a of the Housing Act 1996 requires a local housing authority to publish an Allocations Policy which sets out how social rented housing is allocated within the area, how applicants on the housing register are prioritised and to publish a summary of that scheme.

This Allocation Policy applies to existing social housing tenants needing to move as well as to new applicants wanting to join the housing register.

Salford City Council (“the Council”) is the local housing authority which manages and administers the housing register, allocations are made by the Council’s housing partners (registered housing providers).

The previous policy, approved in 2020, has been fully reviewed in 2024, including:

- Analysis of data (Salford Home Search: housing register data),
- Consideration of other local authorities’ allocations policies,
- Two public consultation exercises (Feb 2024 and Nov 2024),
- Face to face engagement with a range of vulnerable people with lived experience of housing difficulties,
- Dedicated engagement/workshop sessions with key partners and stakeholders,
- Engagement with Children’s, and People and Neighbourhoods leadership teams.

This Allocation Policy has been agreed by the Council and its housing partners (see Appendix B for a list of partners).

The Council is responsible for:

- Receiving and processing housing applications, assessing eligibility and housing need,
- Managing and maintaining the housing register,
- Developing and publishing the Allocation Policy and supporting it’s administration,
- Monitoring partner performance (registered housing providers) against the Allocation Policy.

Salford’s housing partners, listed in Appendix B, are responsible for:

- Owning, managing and maintaining social housing,
- Advertising and letting homes in accordance with the Allocation Policy
- Local Lettings Policies

This Allocations Policy (“the Policy”) has been approved by the Council’s City Mayor in consultation with Cabinet on 22.04.25.

A review of the Policy and amendments as appropriate will be completed in 3 years’ time. This is because the allocations process is currently subject to a number of pilot approaches that are testing a different way of working. We would like to review these in 2 years’ time, with a view to publishing a revised Allocations Policy in 2028.

However, in the meantime, revisions to the Policy will be expedited in response to changes in legislation and statutory guidance.

The Policy applies only to residential lettings. Commercial lettings and sales of low-cost homeownership products are beyond the scope of the Policy.

The Council retains full responsibility for the scheme delivered through Salford Home Search (the housing register) and will be responsible for amendments and consultation processes.

The Policy is based on the following principles:

- To have a fair system for the allocation of housing accommodation, which is transparent and easy to understand
- To give priority to applicants with the greatest housing need
- To manage customer expectations by supporting people to make realistic and informed choices about where they live

The Policy underpins a number of wider council strategic priorities, these include:

- To prevent homelessness, where possible
- To make best use of increasingly scarce housing assets
- To support the Council in meeting its corporate parenting responsibilities
- To reduce the impact of domestic abuse, including the cycle of abuse
- An anti-poverty approach
- Supporting the creation of sustainable communities

The Policy seeks to achieve these aims by:

- Ensuring housing accommodation is allocated to the most appropriate household by utilising a housing needs-based system,
- Prioritising homelessness prevention,
- Supporting under-occupiers to ‘right-size’ into accommodation more suitable for their needs, and thus make available very scarce larger family accommodation,
- Ensuring adapted and accessible properties are allocated households in greatest need of that accommodation,
- Ensuring people move from supported accommodation to independent living in a timely way,
- Enabling access to next step independent housing for care leavers,

- Supporting victim/survivors of domestic abuse to either move to more suitable/safe housing or to live safely in their own homes,
- Encouraging housing partners to undertake affordability assessments for prospective tenants to ensure they can meet their housing costs prior to being successful for a tenancy,
- Ensuring that financial thresholds are appropriate and promoting case by case consideration of individual circumstances so that decisions are person centred and realistic,
- Reducing the risks of anti-social behaviour.

The Council will deliver the Policy as part of a housing need approach that will identify those people in greatest need and provide advice on a range of options to access suitable accommodation. A household's personal circumstances will only be taken into account if they are impacted on or worsened by their housing need. The housing options available to a household will be dependent upon level/type of housing need. Each application will be assessed on its own merits and exceptional circumstances will also be taken into consideration (see sections 2 and 3 for more details). Housing options and advice will aim to achieve one of the following: (whichever is suitable to the household):

- Help and support to remain in current accommodation
- Advice on securing alternative private rented accommodation
- Advice on mobility schemes that may help a household move out of the area
- Advice to current social housing tenants on mutual exchange
- Advice on low-cost home ownership options
- Access to the housing register to obtain social housing

The allocation of Extra Care housing sits outside the scope of this Policy. Extra Care Housing provides a combination of supported housing and Care Quality Commission regulated Adult Social Care services on site. This provision includes self-contained accommodation located within an Extra Care Housing scheme which has access to a range of shared facilities.

The Care Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to carry out an assessment where there is the appearance of need for care and support. If eligible care needs are identified then the Authority is required to meet those needs. Extra Care Housing is a means of meeting care needs.

As Extra Care Housing is an approach to meeting an individual's care and housing needs, applications for/referrals to Extra Care Housing are restricted to Adult Social Care Services for a person with eligible needs, and therefore advertisements and lettings to Extra Care are not included in the Council's choice-based lettings scheme delivered by Salford Home Search. As such there is also an exception to the Policy's residency criteria in that the applicant must be resident in Salford at the time of the referral for Extra Care Housing and must have eligible assessed care and support needs.

The Council reserves the right to place people with assessed social care needs into those Extra Care Housing schemes that are located within the local authority boundary of the Council

1.2 Legal framework

The Housing Act 1996, Part 6 (“the Act”) requires the Council to make all allocations of housing accommodation in accordance with a published scheme. This Policy is the full scheme, a copy of this Policy is available free of charge to anyone who asks for a copy, and can be found on the [council's web site](#).

The Act provides the framework for allocating housing accommodation and defines categories of people who must be given reasonable preference on the housing register for the allocation of accommodation. These categories are called the ‘Reasonable Preference categories’ (see section 3.3 below).

The Act also requires the Council to outline its position with regard to giving applicants choice on the housing offer or to allow households to make a statement of preference on the area in which they wish to live.

The provisions of Part 6 Housing Act 1996 and the Localism Act 2011 allow the Council some freedom to determine who qualifies for housing accommodation in its area, and to develop solutions, which make best use of its social housing stock.

Although the Localism Act 2011 maintained the reasonable preference categories, which ensures priority for social housing is given to those in greatest need, it also created opportunities for the Council to better manage its housing register to meet local need and to prevent people without a housing need from joining the Council’s housing register.

‘Guidance for Local Authorities in England on the Allocation of Accommodation’ was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in June 2012 and updated in December 2024. Local Authorities are required to have regard to this guidance when exercising their functions under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

‘Providing social housing for local people: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England’ was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in December 2013 and updated December 2024. Local Authorities are required to have regard to this guidance when exercising their functions under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

‘Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations’ 2015 and the ‘Right to Move: statutory guidance on social housing allocations for Local Housing Authorities in England’ 2015 provides for an exclusion from local connection qualification requirements where there is a work-related ‘right to move’.

The 'Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces)(England) Regulations 2012', the 'Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 and the statutory guidance 'Improving access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces' published June 2020 (and updated in December 2024) requires that Local Housing Authorities do not apply a local connection rule, but do apply a Reasonable Preference to:

- persons who have served in the armed forces (or have done so in the 5 years preceding their application),
- bereaved spouses or civil partners where the death of their partner was (in part or whole) attributable to their service and they are no longer entitled to reside in ministry of defence accommodation and
- certain (former) reservists who are seriously injured, ill or disabled as a result of (or in part due to) their service.

The guidance also sets out how Local Authorities can ensure that estranged spouses and civil partners of serving personnel are not disadvantaged when applying for social housing, and that members of the Armed Forces and veterans suffering from mental ill health are given the priority for social housing that they deserve. This is also specified in the Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance which details the Duty of Due Regard, for Local Authorities to give special consideration to those who have given the most, been injured in service or are bereaved spouses.

Following the government consultation (Jan 2024) on changes to social housing allocation tests, it has been made clear (Oct 2024 Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP) that the government is committed to ensuring that, where appropriate, barriers preventing vulnerable groups in need from accessing social housing are removed, such groups specified to include victims of domestic abuse, care leavers and armed forces personnel and their partners.

The 'Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997', prescribes that an Elected Member shall not, at the time the allocation decision is made, be included in the decision-making body where the housing accommodation in question is in the Elected Member's electoral division or ward, or the person to whom the housing may be allocated resides in that division or ward.

Furthermore, this policy has been informed by (not an exhaustive list):

- 'Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local authorities 2012,
- Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020 Sch.1(1) para.2(2), subject to some savings provisions in SI 2020/1210 reg.2 and Sch.1 and SI 2020/1309 regs 82-83, Sch.3 paras 2-6 and Sch.4 paras 2-4
- 2019: Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/861) – in line with new regulations EEA eligibility has been updated accordingly

- 2021: The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/667)
- Providing social housing for local people 2013 statutory guidance
- Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse guidance 2018, updated January 2022
- Armed Forces Covenant: guidance and support updated 2024

1.3 Related strategies:

In developing this policy, all of Salford City Council's local strategies have been considered, to include (not an exhaustive list):

- Homelessness Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Tenancy Strategy
- Corporate parenting responsibilities
- Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy

1.4 Wider Statutory Duties

All organisations in England that work with or provide services for children and families have a duty to protect their welfare. The statutory guidance, "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2023) sets out the legal requirements that health and social services, police, schools and all other organisations that work with children must follow. There is a responsibility to protect children when concerns are raised through alerting the appropriate agencies so they can then make inquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child.

Similarly, Officers within the Council also have a responsibility to safeguard adults. All adults who are or may be in need of community and health care services, are or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves should be able to retain independence, well-being and choice and must be able to access their human right to live a life that is free from abuse and neglect.

Officers of the Council who administer the Policy must have regard to these requirements during the course of their work and are required to follow the Council's processes for raising concerns about a child or vulnerable adult. More information can be found on:

- [The Children and families Safeguarding webpage](#) and on;
- [The Adult safeguarding webpage](#)

In addition, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 also requires public services to refer those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness (with the applicant's consent). More information can be found on:

- [Public Duty To Refer webpage](#)

Officers of the Council who administer the Policy may have to act on any information which raises concerns about a child, vulnerable adult or someone who is homeless/threatened with homelessness, in line with relevant statutory requirements and Council policy.

1.5 Equality of opportunity:

The Council is committed to providing quality housing and services to our customers. The Council will comply with all relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 to prevent unlawful discrimination due to age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

The Policy also seeks to ensure that all disabled people are allocated housing in a fair and equitable way. To this end, the categories system (explained in more detail in Section 3.3) and the advertisements of all accessible homes within the Accessible Accommodation Category ensures that those with physical disabilities who require specific mobility accessible homes are properly assessed and this scarce resource is properly allocated to those who need it.

It is the aim of the Council to ensure that our services are fair and equitable for all our customers who may utilise them and we want our services to be accessible to everyone. The Council will not tolerate any unlawful discrimination that provides a lower standard of service to any group or individual.

The Policy enables the delivery of a consistent and equitable approach to the allocation of social housing in the district of the Council, ensuring that cases are dealt with in a consistent and fair approach, in line with national guidance.

In addition, officers administering the policy on behalf of the Council will monitor “offer bypasses” (when landlords do not offer accommodation to the winning bidder because of concerns about, for example, references, behaviour, criminal convictions, rent arrears or the suitability of the property) to ensure that applicants’ cases are being dealt with in an equitable way and that landlords are not unlawfully discriminating against individuals. Any concerns will be addressed either directly with the landlord or through the monthly Choice Based Lettings Partnership Meeting, which usually convenes every two months.

In line with the ‘Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997’, Elected Members are restricted from becoming involved with individual housing allocations. Furthermore, to ensure a consistent and equitable approach, officers of the Council (outside of those administering the policy) are also restricted from becoming involved with housing allocations.

Housing advice and information can be obtained free of charge from the Housing Options Service, of the Council.

Applicants wanting to apply to the housing register can do so on the following webpage:

[Apply to the housing register](#)

Any applicants who need housing advice, are homeless or feel they are at risk of losing their home can request an appointment via the link below:

[Housing Options appointment](#)

Telephone interpreter services are available for those who need this and the service will take into account any special needs making appropriate arrangements for the delivery of advice / information as appropriate i.e. use of sign interpreters, large font and tailored advice for specific client groups.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure that this Policy does not unlawfully discriminate against any protected characteristics but does enhance equality of opportunity. The Equality Impact Assessment can be found below:



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2 ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION

2.1 Eligibility criteria:

The Housing Act 1996 and associated legislation states that some applicants are not eligible for an allocation of social housing (except for certain existing social housing tenants including those seeking a transfer who are to be given reasonable preference).

The Council is required to check that an applicant is eligible for an allocation of social housing.

A person may not be allocated accommodation under Part 6 of the Act if he or she is a person from abroad who is ineligible for an allocation under the Act. There are 2 categories for the purposes of section 160ZA:

- (i) a person subject to immigration control – such a person is not eligible for an allocation of accommodation unless he or she comes within a class prescribed in regulations made by the secretary of state (section 160ZA(2)), and
- (ii) a person from abroad other than a person subject to immigration control – regulations may provide for other descriptions of persons from abroad who, although not subject to immigration control, are to be treated as ineligible for an allocation of accommodation (section 160ZA(4)).

The regulations setting out which classes of persons from abroad are eligible or ineligible for an allocation are the Allocation of housing and homelessness (eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) ('the eligibility regulations'). Updates and amendments to this legislation, including secondary legislation is described on page 7 under the legal framework.

All persons from abroad and those from the UK returning to live in the district of the Council, will need to provide evidence of their eligibility to join the housing register.

Eligibility for an allocation may change over time therefore acceptance on to the register does not guarantee that the person will be able to remain registered or be allocated accommodation. Eligibility will be confirmed again at the point of consideration of making an offer of accommodation. Where a person's circumstances have changed and they are no longer eligible, their application will be removed from the housing register and an allocation to that person will not take place.

2.2 Qualifying criteria:

Applicants aged under 16 years of age do not qualify.

Applicants aged 16 or 17 years will be able to register an application with Salford Home Search, but it will be suspended until they reach their 18th birthday. Exceptions may be made for example, young people leaving care. However, this will only apply where appropriate support is in place to assist the young person with sustaining a tenancy and the young person agrees to accept the support.

People (regardless of their existing tenure)¹ are qualifying people if they are not excluded by statute or another part of the Policy and fall into one of the following categories:

- People who have been assessed as being in housing need and who belong to one of the statutory Reasonable Preference groups,
- People who are under-occupying a home,
- Where local connections criteria are met including people who are living in temporary or supported accommodation in the city. This will usually be accommodation provided where the person is homeless and has no other accommodation available to them and the intention of the accommodation provider and of the person is that they will be resettled to alternative accommodation when any support needs have been met. It includes move-on supported accommodation funded by Mental Health Services,
- People who are able to manage a tenancy independently or with support.

2.3 Who is not a qualifying person?

¹ This policy applies to existing tenants of social housing, privately renting tenants and owner occupiers, where they meet eligibility and qualifying criteria.

In addition to being in housing need (those who are otherwise suitably housed will not qualify to register on Salford's Housing Register) the Council has decided that criteria relating to local connection, unacceptable behaviour, home ownership, income and savings will also be taken into account before a person can register with Salford Home Search.

2.3.1 Local Connection:

In order to ensure that the needs of the local community are met, a person who does not have a local connection to the district of the Council is not a qualifying person under this scheme.

For the purposes of the Policy a local connection is defined as:

- **Residence:** the applicant must have continuously lived in the district of the Council in settled accommodation for at least the previous 5-year period on the date the application is decided upon, or
- **Employment:** the applicant must have a contract of permanent employment to work within the district of the Council. It is not sufficient that the employers' head office is located within the district of the Council or that the applicant is seeking work in Salford. The applicant must have been in continuous employment for at least 6 months prior to the application date. The employment can be full-time, part-time, zero-hour contract or self-employed. It should be noted that the intention of this criteria is to support employment opportunities (promoting their sustainability) by enabling improved access to employment through rehousing. This would not therefore, include working from home, but may include those (who meet the above criteria) who hybrid work and who must attend a place of work within the boundary of Salford on regular occasions throughout the working week, or
- **Previous asylum seekers:** the applicant will have a local connection to Salford if their application for asylum was determined whilst living in accommodation in Salford provided under section 95 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 and they have been granted the right to remain.
- **Households accommodated in Salford under a humanitarian protection scheme** (i.e. Ukrainians, Afghans and Chagossians) in line with legal requirements
- **Residents of Salford City Council commissioned homelessness supported housing schemes** (i.e. Abbott Lodge, SASH, RSI and RSAP schemes including rough sleepers).

Other special circumstances: there may be circumstances (raised by an applicant) that do not meet any of the above criteria but on consideration the applicant is deemed to have a local connection. These cases will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the decision will be made by the Service Manager of the Council's Housing Options Service. Such circumstances might include, but are not limited to:

- Applicants fleeing violence (this could be domestic abuse or violence from outside of the home) and to whom the Council owe a duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act because they are homeless, or
- Applicants who are not currently resident in Salford but who need to reside in the district of the Council in order to give or receive care and support, as a result of a serious disability/health condition, to/from a family member or named carer, or
- Care leavers where the Council is the Corporate Parent, but where their care placement may have been outside Salford
- An applicant who is or was living in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence and whose former spouse or civil partner was a service person whose death was attributable in whole or in part to their service.
- Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of service personnel who need to move out of accommodation provided by the ministry of defence

All former members of the Armed Forces (the army, marines, naval, and air forces) will be exempt from any local connection tests in relation to access to social housing. It should be noted that this is regardless of when the applicant last served in the armed forces.

This local connection criteria in the Policy definition should not be confused with the definition that is used for the purposes of a homelessness application as defined in section 199 of Part 7 of the Housing Act, for the purposes of a homeless application. The local connection used in the Policy complies with Allocations Policy guidance and the powers made available to the Council under Part 6 of the Housing Act.

2.3.2 Unacceptable Behaviour:

A person does not qualify under the Policy if they or a member of their household has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant; and in the circumstances at the time the application is considered, they are unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of that behaviour.

The following list, although not exhaustive, provides examples of unacceptable behaviour.

- Owing significant rent arrears, either current or former, to any council, registered provider or private landlord. Applicants with arrears will only be able to register on Salford Home Search if:
 - They have rent arrears of less than 6 weeks arrears owing and are able to demonstrate they are engaging in a repayment plan with the landlord and can demonstrate regular and consistent payments to cover a 13-week period, or
 - They have rent arrears of between 6 and 8-weeks arrears owing and are able to demonstrate at least 19 weeks of engagement with an

arrears repayment plan (or engagement from the commencement of the arrears if this is less than 19 weeks).

Applicants will otherwise be asked to provide evidence of clear rent accounts from current and previous tenancies. Where evidence comes to light, following acceptance onto the housing register, that significant rent arrears are owed, the application may be removed from the housing register. However, any arrears that are statute barred, or otherwise legally unrecoverable (such as a Debt Relief Order or Bankruptcy) will be disregarded for this purpose.

- Owing rechargeable repairs on a current or former tenancy with any council, registered provider or private landlord.
- Owing significant mortgage repayments amounting to more than one month's repayment.
- Serious nuisance/annoyance to neighbours where there is evidence that a member of the household and/or visitors to the property have committed serious anti-social behaviour and are the subject of an ASBO, injunction or other legal proceedings (including an order made in a civil court linked to a property or the locality of a property) due to a breach of tenancy conditions or anti-social behaviour order.
- Having unspent criminal convictions which the Council considers makes the applicant or a member of their household unsuitable to be a tenant due to the threat they would pose to neighbours and/or the community, including perpetrators of domestic abuse or hate crime who are subject to a non-molestation order, an injunction order, an occupation order or a restraining order. Being convicted of using current or former accommodation (or allowing it to be used) for illegal and/or immoral purposes such as drug dealing.
- Serious neglect, damage or abandonment of a previous property.
- Allowing furniture, fittings and other installations provided by the landlord to deteriorate due to ill treatment.
- Abusive or threatening behaviour towards members of staff at the Council or any housing partner providing accommodation under the Policy,
- Having committed an act of fraud, withheld, falsified or misrepresented any information pertaining to access to public funds and/or services including obtaining a tenancy by deception.
- Having lost previous accommodation provided in connection with employment due to misconduct that meant the applicant could no longer live there.
- Having been evicted for any other breach of tenancy conditions, regardless of tenure. Some examples include sub-letting some or the whole of the property without permission, failure to report repairs, failing to allow contractors to enter the property to carry out maintenance and running a business from the property. This includes both settled accommodation evictions and evictions from suitable temporary accommodation provided to a household by the council as part of homeless duties.
- Perpetrators of domestic abuse who are in housing need as a result of that domestic abuse, will be excluded from the housing register unless they can

demonstrate a commitment to change (i.e. accessing a perpetrator programme).

Any applicant who does not qualify due to unacceptable behaviour will be notified of the decision and the grounds for it in writing and will be informed of their right to request a review of the decision. Exceptional/extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration and the review process (detailed in section 5.6.) should be followed when seeking a review of the decision to cancel or suspend an application.

Application reviews will be considered on a case-by-case basis and if they are able to demonstrate their ability to be a suitable tenant/extenuating circumstances, then they will be considered for the register, this might include for example:

- Having very significant rent arrears in excess of 8 weeks owing but having signed up to an arrears repayment plan and able to evidence compliance with that plan for a reasonable period of time (i.e., 6 months)
- Able to demonstrate a period (i.e., 6 months) of settled accommodation (post eviction), with compliant rent payments and good landlord references.
- Able to demonstrate consistent engagement (over a period of time) with relevant services capable of supporting the applicant to maintain their own tenancy.
- An inability to afford a previous tenancy due to no fault of the applicant (i.e. as a result of welfare changes or redundancy) and where the applicant can evidence engagement with their landlord.
- Evictions which have resulted due to serious and significant mental health issues (i.e. which have resulted in hospital admission under a section of the mental health act) and where their behaviour cannot be deemed deliberate or intentional as a result
- An applicant subject to/fleeing Domestic Abuse, where the home was lost due to rent arrears accrued or damage to property which was caused by the actions of a partner or financial / controlling behaviours.

Any new application will normally only be considered at the request of the applicant. The Council will consider whether there has been a reasonable cause for complaint or concern against the applicant (or members of their household) during the period of 12 months prior to the application.

2.3.3 Deliberate worsening of circumstances:

Any applicant who has deliberately made their situation worse to increase their housing need and consequently improve their chances of rehousing is guilty of unacceptable behaviour and is therefore ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation.

Examples of deliberately worsening circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Vacating a property in the private rented sector without good reason, when the property was still available for an applicant's occupation, then moving in with family resulting in overcrowding
- Selling or transferring a property that is affordable and suitable for the applicant's needs without good reason
- Moving additional household members into a property to cause an overcrowding need

Any applicants assessed under homelessness legislation, the Housing Act 1996 part VII, who are found to be intentionally homeless will be considered to have worsened their own housing circumstances.

The onus will be on the Council to prove the applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances. However, applicants are expected not to withhold information and to provide signed consent to enable the Authority to make reasonable enquiries into their application and housing circumstances. In cases where consent is unreasonably withheld, preventing the Council from making reasonable enquiries, the application will remain suspended until consent is provided.

The Council has the right to seek prosecution of applicants for fraud (Housing Act 1996, section 171) if they deliberately withhold information, provide misleading information or fail to provide notification of any change in circumstances (e.g. change in household information or eligibility status).

2.3.4 Owner occupiers:

The 'Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England' 2012, encourages local authorities to avoid allocating social homes to those who already own their own home, except in exceptional circumstances. The housing register will operate on a housing needs basis and will take into account an applicant's ability to resolve their own housing situation.

Furthermore, the Council has had regard to the significantly disproportionate number of households in need of housing compared to the extremely small number of homes that become available for let each year.

All owner occupiers who apply to register on Salford Home Search, therefore, will be interviewed by the Council's Housing Options Service. The aim of that process will be to enable them to explore and rule out all other possible solutions to meet the applicants relevant housing need.

Only in exceptional cases would the applicant be accepted onto the register when all other possible alternative solutions have been ruled out.

If the applicant refuses/fails to engage in those identified activities/solutions and this renders them in housing need, the applicant and their household would not then qualify for the housing register.

2.3.5 Income limit:

Having had regard to the disproportionate need and demand for social housing compared to the availability of these homes, the Council recognises the need to prioritise this scarce resource for those who are most in need of it.

Therefore, the Council has imposed an income threshold to the qualifying criteria for its housing register. An income limit is applied to all applicants and their partners who are members of their household (either independently or jointly) set at £80,000 per year (gross income). This threshold disqualifies households from accessing the housing register if their income is over £80,000 per year.

A household with an income above the £80,000 threshold will have an assessment with the Council's Housing Options Service which will identify the financial demands on the family (based on their circumstances) and establish whether it is a viable option for the household to resolve their own housing issue (through private rented accommodation or house purchase for example) or if there is a genuine and real need for social housing, based on affordability.

All applicants and their partners will be required to provide financial information to establish their income and failure to do so or to engage with the assessment process will result in the application remaining suspended until the applicant does so.

2.3.6 Savings limit:

Another means of ensuring that social housing in the district of the Council is prioritised for those who are most in need of it, is the setting of a savings limit threshold.

Applicants and their partners who are members of their household (either independently or jointly) who have savings of £30,000 or more, will not qualify to join the Council's Housing Register.

Applicants and their partners will be required to provide financial information to establish savings. In exceptional circumstances, following an assessment by the Council's Housing Options Service, if the assessment shows that there is a genuine need for social housing, despite the savings, an applicant may be allowed to register.

Failure to provide the required financial information or to engage with the assessment process will result in the application remaining suspended until such time as the applicant does so.

3 HOW APPLICANTS ARE ASSESSED

3.1 Joint Applicants

Applications on Salford Home Search can only be made in one name. All other members of the household will form part of that application but there will be one lead applicant.

With respect to joint tenancies this is outside the scope of the policy.

Where household members have a long-term commitment to the home for example, when adults share accommodation as partners (including same sex partners, friends or live-in carers), landlords are able to grant a joint tenancy, but this is dependent upon individual Registered Housing Providers and their own lettings policies.

3.2 Initial Assessment

Individuals are able to make and be included in only one application on Salford Home Search. Repeat applications will be cancelled.

Anyone who normally resides with the applicant as a member of the family or who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant, can be included on the application as a household member.

It is a question of fact as to who is living with the applicant, and local housing authorities are not required to satisfy themselves that it is reasonable for this member of the family to normally reside with them. The phrase 'as a member of the family', although not defined for these purposes in legislation, will include those with close blood or marital relationships and cohabiting partners, and, where such a person is an established member of the household.

The second group relates to any other person and includes those who may not have been living as part of the household at the time of the application but it would be reasonable to expect that person to live with the applicant as part of their household. People in this group might include a companion for an elderly or disabled person, or children who are being fostered by the applicant or a member of the family that normally resides with the applicant.

The Council will assess whether any other person might reasonably be expected to live with the applicant and there will be a range of situations that the Council will need to consider. Persons who would normally live with the applicant but who are unable to do so because there is no accommodation in which they can all live together should be included in the application. When dealing with a family which has split up, the Council will take a decision as to which members of the family normally reside, or might be expected to reside, with the applicant. A court may have made a residence order indicating with whom the children are to live, but in many cases, it will be a matter of agreement between the parents, and a court will not have been involved.

Every application received will be considered according to its facts. Because every applicant's situation is different, applications will be considered on an individual basis and individual circumstances will be taken into account.

The initial application should be completed on-line (where frequently asked questions can be found) by the applicant or by a Housing Options Advisor as part of an overall Housing Options assessment. Alternatively, those who require support to complete the application may access that support via the Housing Options Service at Salford Civic Centre (ground floor), Chorley Road, Swinton, Salford, M27 5AW.

The purpose of the initial assessment is to determine firstly is the applicant eligible as defined within this policy. If the applicant is eligible the second stage of the initial assessment will determine if the applicant is a qualifying person as defined within the Policy.

Where an applicant is found to ineligible or does not qualify they will be notified in writing of the decision and the reasons why. The applicant will have the right to request a review of that decision, (see Reviews, section 5.6).

Those who have received a decision from the Council that they are not eligible to join or are disqualified from the Council's housing register, can make a further application when there has been a material change in their circumstances. The applicant will be asked to provide evidence of this change as part of the new assessment.

Applications may trigger other statutory (legal) duties e.g. an application for homelessness assistance, and in this instance the Council's Housing Options Service will contact you directly to discuss this further.

All new applications will not be made 'live' until information provided by the applicant has been verified.

3.3 Verification of information:

Information provided by the applicant on their application will be verified. Applicants will be required to provide the following:

- Two forms of identification one of which should include a photograph (such as a driving licence or passport)
- Proof of residence at current address
- Identification and proof of address for all household members included on the application
- A reference from current or previous landlord or mortgage company
- Proof of eligibility
- Confirmation of employment where applicable (such as employment contract, payslips, etc)
- Child benefit award letter for person who is registering an application

A home visit may be carried out by the Council's Housing Options Service to verify information given about current accommodation and household members.

Enquiries may be made of third parties, for example, previous landlords or health professionals.

Applications will remain at initial assessment stage until all the required documentation has been provided and any further verification has been completed.

3.4 Stage Two – Categorising applications:

If an applicant is both eligible and qualifying a full assessment will be completed to determine what category the application will be placed in.

Applicants who are not eligible and/or do not qualify for the housing register, will still be entitled to receive free advice and assistance with regard to their housing options.

Eligible/qualifying applications will be placed into one of three categories on the housing register as follows:

❖ General Housing Needs Category

This category will be for the ‘majority’ of applicants who, according to the Housing Act 1996, part 6, section 166A(3) fall within a Reasonable Preference group, Including:

- People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness (within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and who have, in relation to their homeless application to the Council:
 - An accepted s.195(2) (Prevention) duty
 - An accepted s.189B(2) (Relief) duty
 - Had their s.189 Relief duty discharged but they do not have a priority need as defined by law for accommodation
 - Previously made a homeless application and were found not to have a priority need
- People who are owed a duty by any local authority under the Housing Act (1996) or who are occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- People who need to move on health, medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the Council, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

In addition, the following groups will be placed in the General Housing Needs Category (providing they have a local connection to the district of the Council unless specifically exempt):

- Social housing tenants under-occupying their current accommodation

- Those needing to move to smaller accommodation on grounds of affordability, (any move must not create overcrowding)
- Members or former members of the armed forces with a housing need
 - Serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained 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 partner.
 - Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of service personnel who need to move out of accommodation provided by the ministry of defence
 - Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
- Foster carers approved by the local authority who need to move to enable their foster caring role
- Those needing to move to provide or receive care and/or support, due to a serious disability/health condition, from a family member or named carer
- Households where a child/children are assessed as being a child/children in need or on a Child Protection Plan and alternative accommodation is required in order to safeguard the child/children
- Residents of supported accommodation who are deemed ready to move on to independent living and who have completed a tailored support package
- Care leavers where Salford is the corporate parent

❖ **Full Duty Statutory Homeless Category** (section 193, Housing Act 1996):

This category will be for all applicants who have been assessed by the Council's Housing Options Service and who are owed the main housing statutory homelessness duty under the Housing Act 1996, Section 193(2), Part 7 (as amended).

Priority for housing within this category will be based on the Section 193 full statutory homelessness duty decision date in all cases.

Those applicants who were initially registered under the General Housing Needs category and then become a full statutory homeless duty (section.193) case (due to a change in circumstances) will move to the Full Duty Statutory Homeless category and their date within this band will change to the date of their homelessness decision for allocation purposes.

❖ **Accessible Accommodation Category:**

This category is for those applicants (or household members) who, due to a physical disability, require an accessible property, this includes wheelchair

adapted, level access and ground floor accommodation with no more than a few steps to access the property.

All accessible properties will be advertised in this category enabling the Authority to ensure that this very scarce resource is reserved for those families with physical disabilities who require it.

The exception to this is the allocation of 3+ bedroom wheelchair (M4{3}) adapted accommodation which will be allocated by a panel which consists of a manager from the Housing Options Service, Housing Strategy Team and the registered provider allocation manager, conducted in consultation with relevant allocated Occupational Therapists.

Applicants must complete the medical section of the Salford Home Search application. The applicant (or household member) must require either level access, ground floor or wheelchair accessible accommodation. Information will be sought to support this reported requirement.

The Housing Options Service will assess and allocate all cases into one of three mobility categories:

- SN1 – Properties designed to M4(3) design standards. Property suitable for a permanent wheelchair user, required by customers with a severe physical disability who are unable to stand or walk unassisted i.e. permanent wheelchair users who need to use a wheelchair for all activities of daily living.
- SN2 - Ground floor property with level access, required by customers who do not use a wheelchair indoors but walk with difficulty and have difficulty climbing stairs. People who use a wheelchair outdoors.
- SN3 - Ground floor property, required by customers that do not use a wheelchair indoors, walk with difficulty but can manage one or two steps.

Applicants registered in the Accessible Housing Category might also fall into a Reasonable Preference category. Where this is the case, the applicant will be awarded points in line with those applicants in a Reasonable Preference category in the General Housing Needs Category.

3.5 The Points System

Applicants in the General Housing Needs and Accessible Accommodation categories can receive points, which will prioritise them on a bid list. Points relate to housing need and how that housing need impacts on the household members.

[The points system can be found in Appendix A](#)

Applicants who have a 'Reasonable Preference' will have points added to their application according to the criteria met above. However, this will not necessarily exceed the level of need awarded to those applicants with an Additional Preference. This is purely dependent upon the level of housing needs experienced.

It should be noted that homeless prevention and relief points will only be awarded to those applicants who have been assessed by the Housing Options Service and have been formally accepted by the Council as being owed a homelessness Prevention Duty (section 195(2)) or Relief duty (section 189B(2)) under the Housing Act 1996. These cases will be dealt with under the General Housing Needs category and the points will be awarded for a time limited period only while the duty is owed.

It should be noted that points are not awarded to applications in the Accessible Accommodation Category to reflect their need for accessible accommodation. This need is reflected in the qualification to register on Salford Home Search and entry into that category. All applications that require accessible accommodation are treated in the same way/equally from this point of view. Points can be awarded for other housing needs.

In exceptional circumstances additional preference (management points) may be awarded to applications in order to meet housing need within a reasonable timescale. Such cases will be determined by the Housing Options Services and a record kept. This might include, but is not limited to, those who need to move urgently because of a life-threatening illness or sudden life changing disability, families in very severe overcrowding where that overcrowding poses a serious and evidenced health hazard, those who are homeless and require urgent rehousing as a result of immediate and high-risk violence or threats of violence, including intimidated witnesses, and those escaping very serious anti-social behaviour. Care leavers over the age of 25 who still have an ongoing housing need and have complex support needs – please refer to the [exceptional circumstances section at 5.7](#).

3.6 Mutual Exchange Register for Social Homes

The Council is committed to making best use of social housing stock in the city and therefore actively promotes mutual exchange as a means of achieving this. Where social housing tenants would otherwise be unable to register with Salford Home Search.

Mutual exchanges do not fall within the definition of an allocation within the Act but have been included here for advice. Applicants must register with the House Exchange website – [Salford House Exchange](#). Applicants will require the consent of their landlord before being permitted to enter into a mutual exchange.

3.7 Transfers for existing social tenants

Transfers for existing social tenants who do not fall within a Reasonable Preference group are not defined as an allocation within the Act.

Individual social landlords have existing transfer policies which may administer lettings for those residents who do not qualify for a housing allocation under this policy.

Residents are advised to contact their landlord directly if they do not qualify for an allocation of housing under this policy but they would still like to move home.

3.8 Data Protection

Please refer to Salford City Councils website for a copy of the Allocation Policy Privacy Notice.



Privacy Notice - SHS
2022.docx

3.9 False Statements

It is an offence for anyone to knowingly or recklessly make a statement that is materially false, or to deliberately withhold information which is reasonably required, or to fail to notify the Housing Options Service of any changes in their housing circumstances. If the applicant has been allocated a property under these circumstances the relevant partner of Salford Home Search may take court action to evict the applicant.

Note should also be made of the action taken when it is deemed that a household has deliberately worsened their circumstances – see section 2.3.3.

4. HOW THE HOUSING REGISTER WILL WORK

4.1 Definition of an allocation:

Under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 part 6 the allocation of accommodation by local housing authorities is defined in section 159 as:

- Selecting a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation held by a local authority (it should be noted that all social housing owned by the local authority is managed directly by Pendleton Together),
- Nominating a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation held by another person (i.e. one of the authorities or bodies fulfilling the landlord condition mentioned in section 80 of the Housing Act 1985) or
- Nominating a person to be an assured tenant (including of an assured shorthold) of housing accommodation held by a registered provider.

4.2 How Properties will be advertised

A number of Registered Housing Providers (landlords of social rented homes) advertise properties on Salford Home Search. A list can be found in document

[Appendix B](#). Landlords advertise properties upon notification that the property will become available - there is no set bidding cycle.

The numbers of homes which are advertised in the General Needs and Full Duty Statutory Homeless Categories will be determined by the Salford Home Search Partners Group. This group meets on a bi-monthly basis and this meeting is used to address any issues which arise in relation to the advertisement or allocation of housing via Salford Home Search including for example repeat bypassing of individuals or by a particular Registered Housing Providers to prevent any possible 'cherry picking' and to ensure an equitable and fair service delivery to all applicants.

This process ensures equitable distribution of available properties between categories and does not therefore promote one category as being more favourable than another. This allows the council to meet its statutory duties whilst also addressing wider housing need across the city.

The category in which a property is advertised is determined by the landlord.

It is the responsibility of the relevant landlord to complete pre-allocation checks to determine if the applicant is still eligible and qualifying (at the point of bidding) and if so to make a provisional offer of the accommodation.

Applicants will be given a reasonable period of time to accept an offer of accommodation. They will have the opportunity to view the property prior to accepting or rejecting it. Additional time may be granted to those applicants who are vulnerable or who have difficulty in responding due to their circumstances.

Applicants are advised that individual Registered Housing Providers may have their own policies in relation to seeking references prior to a formal offer of accommodation is made and this information should be available on the advertisement.

If the highest bidder declines an allocation of a property, then the property will be allocated to the next available bidder.

4.3 Bids and choice

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, requires the allocation scheme to describe the council's policy about offering applicants choice over where to live. This should not be confused with applicants having a 'right' to choose or express preferences on where to live, for which there is no legal requirement.

It is important that applicants are aware that registration on Salford's Housing Register does not mean that they are guaranteed to be made an offer of social housing. There is a significant shortfall in the availability of social housing, and the need and demand for social housing significantly out-weights the availability of those homes.

The Policy allows the majority of applicants to express a preference for both area and property type. Expressing a preference over where an applicant would prefer to live does not mean that preference can be met or that an applicant will not be offered suitable accommodation outside of their preferred area.

This Policy recognises that social housing is a very scarce resource. Furthermore, we recognise that the more applicants restrict their areas of choice the more they restrict their potential to be rehoused. All applicants are advised to consider living in as many areas of the district of the Council as possible in order to support their chances of being rehoused.

However, importantly, in order to support the Council in discharging its homelessness duties - any area will be considered suitable for households that have been awarded by the Council a: homelessness Prevention duty (s.195(2)), Relief Duty (s.189b(2)) or main housing duty (s.193(2)), unless there is a real and genuine reason why they need to or cannot live in any given area. This process will be supported by a robust assessment conducted by the Council's Housing Options Service who will discuss these issues with all applicants once their homelessness duty has been awarded (informed and guided by the Homelessness Code of Guidance).

Similarly, applicants who restrict the type of home that they will consider (for example, single people opting only for self contained homes rather than shared houses and families opting only for houses rather than apartments) the more they restrict their potential to be rehoused. Applicants are advised to consider living in different types of homes in order to support their chances of being rehoused.

The majority of applicants registered with the scheme (or persons acting on their behalf) are able to **express an interest** in (or in other words **bid for**) up to three properties at any one time. However, this does not mean that applicants can refuse up to three properties. Applicants are expected to accept any reasonable offer of accommodation suitable for their household's needs.

Once a bid cycle has closed and the applicant has not been successful, then further bids can be placed.

However, it should be noted that all applicants within the Statutory Homeless category, as well as those with a Prevention or Relief Duty (under Part VII, Housing Act 1996, as amended) in the General Needs Category, will have **automatic bids** placed on their behalf, based on the above assessment conducted by the Housing Options Service with the applicant.

At the assessment, the Housing Options Service will discuss with the applicant which areas within the city are safe for them to live in, and which locations would be suitable and reasonable for the applicant to live in; taking into account employment, education, support / care giving needs. In addition, the assessment will include consideration of any other issues such as health conditions and disabilities, as well as wider issues such as risks associated with being the victim of domestic abuse,

(threats of) violence and exploitation for example, which might impact on the type of accommodation, as well as the location that might be considered suitable and reasonable. This again supports the Council in discharging its homelessness duties.

The automatic bids will be placed immediately before the bid cycle closes for each advertised property. Those bids cannot be removed by the applicant.

Once an applicant has been made an offer of accommodation and the applicant has accepted the offer, the applicant will be unable to express an interest in any further properties advertised.

Registered applicants who do not express an interest in/bid on any suitable properties that have been advertised within Salford Home Search, in a twelve-month period (i.e., for an appropriately sized/type of property) will be removed from the housing register for a period of 12 months, after which the applicant can reapply. Applicants will have the right to request a review of the decision to remove their application. ([See Reviews, section 5.6](#)).

4.4 Shortlisting

At the end of the bid cycle for each property, a shortlist of bidders is generated. Those bids will be prioritised in the following order:

General Needs Category:

- Those bidders allocated to the category within which the property has been advertised
- number of bedrooms required
- number of points
- date registered with Salford Home Search

In order to incentivise right-sizing of accommodation and to free up larger family social homes within the city for those in need of them, it has been agreed that single applicants or couples who are under-occupying 3+ bedroom social homes are able to bid for 2 bedroom social housing properties, if they wish to do so. This is subject to an affordability assessment which will be conducted with the applicant by the Housing Options Service.

Accessible Accommodation Category:

The majority of accessible and adapted properties are advertised in the Accessible Accommodation category. For example, properties with adaptations for wheelchair users, properties that have level access to, and throughout the property and properties located on the ground floor.

This is with the exception that all wheelchair adapted properties with 3 or more bedrooms are allocated via a Panel approach. This helps to prioritise accessible properties for those who most need them.

Bids are prioritised in the following way:

- only applicants who have been assessed as requiring adapted/accessible accommodation will be placed into this category, and can only bid on the type of property they need (i.e. adapted, ground floor or level access)
- number of bedrooms required
- applicants requiring the type of adapted/accessible accommodation advertised and who are full duty statutory homeless cases will be prioritised – these cases will be prioritised based on their full duty homelessness decision date
- all other cases will then be prioritised based on:
 - number of points – for all other applicants
 - date registered with Salford Home Search

Full Duty Statutory Homelessness Category

- Those bidders allocated to the category within which the property has been advertised
- number of bedrooms required
- full duty homelessness decision date

4.5 Offers.

The majority of applicants will be allowed one refusal of suitable accommodation, followed by the ability to bid on one other suitable home.

Two refusal's of suitable offer's without good reason will result in removal from the housing register for a period of 12 months. The applicant will be able to reapply to join the register after 12 months.

Applicants will have the right to request a review of the decision to remove their application from the register, including the suitability of the offered property. (See Reviews section 5.6).

However, this is with the exception of any households owed a duty under homelessness legislation (including a Prevention, Relief and Full Duty statutory homeless Duty), who will only be allowed one offer of suitable accommodation after which their application will be removed from the register for 12 months, as above.

Any applicants removed from the housing register will be given free advice and information on how to access accommodation within the private rented sector.

A review of the suitability of any offer under this policy can be requested – [please see section 5.6.](#)

4.6 Nominations from Registered Providers not Partners in Salford Home Search

Registered Housing Providers who are not a partner in Salford Home Search but have entered into a nomination agreement with Salford City Council will provide the Housing Options Service with the details of properties to be allocated.

Details of Registered Housing Providers who have entered into a nomination agreement with Salford City Council can be found in separate document Allocation Policy Appendix B which is a live document updated as required.

The Housing Options Service will generate a shortlist for the property on the landlords behalf based on the bedroom size of the property, those with the highest number of points and date on register, unless this is an allocation to a full duty statutory homeless applicant in which case the main homelessness duty decision date will be used to prioritise cases. The rest of the process remains the same as for partners in Salford Home Search.

4.7 How the Size of Property Required will be Decided

In the interests of making best possible use of the available social housing stock, applicants will be offered accommodation that meets the needs of their household and is affordable.

The following rules will be applied when determining the size of property required:

- One bedroom will be allowed for a single person household
- One bedroom will be allowed for a couple
- One bedroom will be allowed for any two children of the same sex up to the age of 21 years
- One bedroom will be allowed for any two children regardless of sex up to the age of 10 years
- One bedroom will be allowed for any other child

Children of an appropriate age and sex within the same households are expected to share a bedroom regardless of relationship, for example stepchildren and foster children.

Unborn children will not count as requiring a bedroom. Applicants can register with Salford Home Search twelve weeks before the expected due date of the baby. However, the application will be suspended until after the birth of the child.

Where applicants have shared care arrangements for children, they will only be allocated an additional bedroom if they are the recipient of the child benefit for that child unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as a legal document awarding joint care arrangements where the parent has the child residing with them 50% of the time. Furthermore, the applicant will only be awarded a bedroom for the

child in these circumstances if they are able to demonstrate that that size of property would be affordable to them.

Provided it will not constitute statutory overcrowding and should the applicant agree, in certain circumstances a household will be allowed to occupy a property smaller than they would be entitled to under this policy. This would normally apply to households needing five bedrooms or more.

Applicants (who are single or couple's) who are under-occupying 3+ bedroom social housing are able to bid on 2 bedroom accommodation (if they wish to do so), even if their housing need is for a one bedroom property, to facilitate freeing up larger family accommodation for those who need it – subject to an affordability assessment.

We recognise that occasionally there can be exceptional circumstances ([see section the exceptional circumstances section at 5.7](#)) that may sometimes lead to the need for an additional bedroom. These exceptional circumstances usually result from an extremely serious, long term and exceptional issue. In these situations, applicants can request a review of the bedroom size award.

However, before submitting such a request, an applicant should consider that fewer larger properties become available for let in the district of the Council, than smaller properties. This would mean that there would be a substantial impact on the amount of time applicants could be waiting for a larger property to bid on, in some cases this could be many years and there is no guarantee that a household will be rehoused through Salford Home Search. Applicants must also be aware that usually the larger the property is, the higher the rent is.

In addition, from April 2013, Housing Benefit rates were based on the number of people in the household and the size of the accommodation. This applies to all working-age tenants renting from a local authority, housing association or other registered social landlord. This means those tenants whose accommodation is larger than they need may lose part of their Housing Benefit, unless they meet certain criteria – the Council's Housing Benefit Team can be contacted for more information.

It is a tenant's responsibility to ensure that they can afford their home.

Examples of exceptional circumstances that the Council can consider might be (but not exclusively):

- a) If one of your children who is sharing a bedroom is Transgender and you believe that sharing a bedroom would be detrimental to them.
- b) If a separate bedroom is required for a child, who would normally be expected to share a bedroom with another child, as a result of a long term/severe health condition or disability.
- c) If an overnight carer is required or an additional/separate bedroom is required for the storage/provision of medical equipment, resulting from a long term/severe health condition or disability.

It should be noted that in all cases where an additional bedroom is being requested supporting evidence will be sought by the Housing Options Service, if this is as a result of a long term and severe health condition or disability (which includes for example, those with a physical, mental health, sensory, learning or neurodivergent/development disabilities/disorders) – as in points b and c above, then required evidence will include:

- Award of carer's allowance, and
- Award of middle/high rate Disability Living Allowance or award of enhanced rate Personal Independence Payments, and
- Letter of support from a suitably qualified (medical, social care or nursing) Professional

This list of possible exceptional circumstances which may result in the award of an additional bedroom is not meant to be exhaustive. However, if applicants wish to request a review of the number of bedrooms they are entitled to, then they must submit relevant evidence from suitably recognised professionals and services – the need for these may be defined during the review process, dependent upon individual' circumstances.

Details about how to request a review is found in [section 5.6](#) of this allocations policy.

4.8 Property Types

Applicants who have an assessed need for an accessible property will only be considered for properties advertised in the Accessible Accommodation category.

In Salford, the majority of sheltered housing schemes (or in other words often known as independent living schemes) owned/managed by Registered Housing Providers, are designated for those who are or who's partners are 55 years of age or older. Exceptions may apply for those applicants assessed as requiring the support services provided in this type of accommodation, but this will be dependent upon the local lettings policies held by each Registered Housing Provider for those individual properties and this is not a matter for this Allocations Policy.

Single applicants or couples with no children will not be considered for homes with more than one bedroom, unless they are currently under-occupying a social housing 3+ bedroom property. Where applicants request an additional bedroom to accommodate medical equipment, or because a resident carer is part of the household, applicants should complete a medical support application for this need to be considered.

Applicants with one child under the age of 10 years will be considered for properties in multi-storey blocks where these properties have been advertised as being suitable for these households. Individual circumstances of households, for example families with children with serious learning disabilities, neuro-divergent needs or those with

severe mental health problems, will be taken into account when considering the suitability of the property.

4.9 Direct Allocations (Discretionary Allocations)

As far as possible the categories will be used to advertise and allocate properties. However, this scheme recognises that there may be circumstances where the Housing Register, Salford Home Search, is unable to meet the very specialised needs of certain applicants. In these circumstances, an offer of accommodation may be made direct to the applicant without the property being advertised within Salford Home Search and therefore without the need for the applicant to have expressed an interest in that property.

Circumstances that might be appropriate for a direct allocation include, but are not limited to:

- Statutory homeless applicants who are failing to exercise choice through Salford Home Search or who are failing to express an interest in appropriate accommodation through Salford Home Search
- Care leavers supported by the city council's Next Step team.
- Applicants with complex needs requiring specially adapted properties
- Sheltered accommodation
- Where child or public protection issues require urgent rehousing or where the Multi Agency Public Protection Panel or National Witness Mobility Scheme has recommended that applicants be excluded from certain areas due to them being inappropriate
- Where in the interests of community cohesion there is a need to exercise extra sensitivity when letting certain properties in order to minimise the potential for anti-social behaviour

Direct allocations will be agreed on a case-by-case basis taking into account individual circumstances and will be recorded as such by the Housing Options Management team.

Where an offer of suitable and reasonable accommodation is refused, the applicant will be made one further offer of suitable accommodation which if refused will result in cancellation of the application and suspension from being able to reapply to the housing register for a period of 12 months. The applicant will have the right to request a review of the suitability of the offer, (see Reviews, section 5.6).

In line with the Policy, if one suitable offer of accommodation (made by direct allocation) is refused by any applicant owed a homeless duty (Prevention, Relief, Full duty) this will then result in the cancellation of the housing register application as above and no further offer will be made. A review can be requested by the applicant. (see section 5.6 below).

Those who are required to move from their home or where their property is subject to compulsory purchase as a result of regeneration activity will be offered accommodation under the Policy 'Direct lets for household's whose homes are affected by regeneration/re-development proposals'. This policy sits outside the Allocations Policy in order to ensure that those households whose homes are subject to regeneration/re-development proposals and who are required to move as a result of that activity can be accommodated in a timelier fashion, in appropriate accommodation that meets the household's needs.

4.10 Local Lettings Policies

Salford City Council owns only a very small proportion of Council homes within its district which are managed by Pendleton Together Housing. The majority of social housing in the Council's district is owned and managed by other Registered Housing Providers listed in document Appendix B.

Registered Housing Providers may develop a local lettings policy to help manage allocations to a particular block or neighbourhood. Local lettings policies are designed to respond to specific local issues. These may include particular concerns on estates and areas, or other social issues in the community.

Only a small proportion of the housing stock should be affected by local lettings policies.

Good practice guidelines encourage local lettings policies to:

- Protect balanced and mixed communities
- Reduce property void rates and tenancy turnovers
- Improve community cohesion and stability
- tackle low demand areas
- reduce anti-social behaviour

Salford City Council works in collaboration with the Registered Housing Providers locally to try to agree local lettings policies. Local lettings policies must be published by the relevant landlord and each policy must include the following:

- the scope of the policy, for example geographical coverage, property void levels, tenant profiles where appropriate
- clear reasons and evidence of why a local lettings policy is required
- an assessment of any possible negative impacts of the local lettings policy
- how the policy will be monitored
- how the policy will be reported on and reviewed

Local lettings policies should last no longer than 12 months without being reviewed.

In order to best meet the Council's statutory duties and strategic objectives the Council seeks agreement from Registered Provider partners that the following groups will be excluded from local lettings policies, where possible:

- statutory homeless households
- care leavers
- residents of supported accommodation

5.ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY

5.1 Applicants who are ineligible or do not qualify

If the Council decide that an applicant is ineligible or not qualifying for the housing register, the applicant will be notified of the decision and the grounds for it in writing. Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision, (see section below).

Applicants are entitled to reapply at any time. However, they may remain ineligible or continue not to qualify unless their circumstances have significantly changed.

Applicants cannot make more than one application to join the housing register at any one time. However, applicants may make multiple applications to join housing registers elsewhere dependent upon the allocations policies within those other Authorities.

5.2 Decision Making

All decisions taken in relation to the scheme are to be taken by Housing Officers within the Council's Housing Options Service unless otherwise indicated. All applicants will be notified of decisions made in writing.

The Housing Options Service administers the implementation of the Allocations Policy through the Salford Home Search system:

- Administration Staff are responsible for: general information and advice, bidding, registration, processing medical assessments, list cleansing, lifting suspensions, random audit checks and verifying information.
- Housing Officers are responsible for: lifting suspensions, verifying information, registering applicants, assisted bidding, suspensions and cancellations.
- Managers are responsible for: appeals around access to the housing register, Councillor/MP enquiries, complaints and assessments relating to inclusion on the Accessible Accommodation category in liaison with Integrated Care Commission Officers.
- The Senior Manager is responsible for: Appeals, MP/Councillor enquiries and complaints

5.3 Requests for Information

Information relating to the successful award for properties advertised previously can be found on the website for Salford Home Search. The information provided shows the category the property was advertised in, the category of the successful applicant and the number of needs that the successful applicant had.

Applicants can also see the information relating to the expressions of interest they have placed by logging in to their own application on Salford Home Search. For every property that the applicant has expressed an interest in the total number of applicants expressing an interest, together with the applicant's position in relation to those other applicants is given.

General information about the profile of social housing stock in the district of the Council will be published on the Salford Home Search website on a 12 monthly basis.

Applicants wanting further information in relation to any decision about their application can request the information using the contact details as shown on the Council's website.

The Council is subject to General Data Protection Regulation and the administration of this policy must comply with this regulation. [View the authority's Choice Based Lettings Scheme privacy notice.](#)



Privacy Notice - SHS
2022.docx

You can also find out about [exercising your rights with respect to accessing your personal information and your rights to be informed](#) on the Council's website.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. This right is not dependant on you raising a complaint with us first but we would encourage you to contact our Data Protection Officer: infogovernance@salford.gov.uk so we can consider your concerns as quickly as possible

The Information Commissioner is the UK's independent regulator responsible for upholding and enforcing the rights of individuals under data protection law.

You can email the Information Commissioner's office: accesscoinformation@ico.org.uk or write to:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Full information about your rights is also available on the [ICO's website](#):

5.4 Changes in Circumstances:

All applicants registered with Salford Home Search are required to notify the Housing Options Service of any changes in their circumstances and to provide any relevant supporting evidence of the change. It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify any changes.

Applicants who fail to notify the Housing Options Service of any change and this is subsequently found to be the case may have their registration suspended or cancelled depending upon the nature of the change in circumstances.

Where a change in an applicant's circumstances results in a change to the category that they are registered in, the applicant will be notified in writing of this change.

Where a change in an applicant's circumstances results in their registration being cancelled, the applicant will be notified of this in writing.

Applicants are again advised that it is an offence to provide false information (including not informing the Authority of any change in circumstances) as per point 3.8 above and that court action may be taken against you in these cases.

5.5 Cancellation of Applications:

Applications will be cancelled in the following circumstances:

- The applicant requests that the application is cancelled
- The applicant is housed through the Allocations Policy
- The applicant completes a mutual exchange
- The applicant becomes ineligible for an allocation
- The applicant ceases to be a qualifying person for an allocation
- The applicant is found, following an investigation, to have made false or deliberately misleading statements in connection with their application
- An applicant fails to respond to a request for further information within a reasonable time, usually 14 days unless there are extenuating circumstances. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- An applicant unreasonably refuses 2 offers of suitable accommodation, or if homelessness duties are owed (Prevention, Relief, Full duty) the application will be cancelled after one unreasonable refusal offer of suitable accommodation and the homelessness duty owed to the applicant has been discharged.

Applicants will be notified in writing that their application has been cancelled and the reason for the cancellation.

Applicants will have the right to request a review of the decision to cancel their application. (see Reviews, section 5.6).

5.6 Reviews

Under section 166A (Housing Act, 1996, as amended) applicants have the right:

- to be informed of any decision about the facts of their case which has been or is likely to be taken into account in considering whether to make an allocation to them
- to a review of any decision made about their application, including a decision that they do not qualify to join the scheme.

This can include if:

- Their application has been refused or cancelled on the grounds that they are not eligible
- Their application has been refused or cancelled on the grounds that they are not a qualifying person
- Their application has been cancelled as they have been found to have made false or deliberately misleading statements in connection with their application
- Their application has been cancelled because they failed to respond to a request for further information
- A decision has been made about the facts of a particular application which have been taken into account to assess where an applicant should be placed on the banding/category system, the size of the property they should be allocated or whether an allocation should be made.
- The majority of applicants can request a review if they have refused 2 direct allocations of accommodation which were considered to be reasonable offers and their application has been removed

In cases where the Council has discharged the statutory homelessness duty (Prevention, Relief or Main housing duty) after a homeless applicant has refused a reasonable and suitable offer, any requests for a review will be dealt with under the statutory homelessness review procedures (section 202) under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

Requests for reviews must be made within 21 days of being notified of the decision. Details of where to send the request will be included in the written decision letter received by the applicant.

Requests for reviews can be submitted by a representative of the applicant on their behalf – but must be accompanied by the applicants signed consent to do so.

Reviews will be carried out on behalf of the Council by someone more senior than the person who made the original decision and who was not involved in making the original decision.

The applicant will be informed of the outcome of the review in writing, as soon as practicable, or in the case of homelessness section 202 Housing Act 1996 reviews in line with homelessness legislation requirements.

5.7 Exceptional Circumstances:

The Council retains the ability, in exceptional circumstances, to exercise its discretion when applying any of the disqualification rules or rules relating to this policy (i.e. bedroom need, local connection, etc). It is for the applicant to request that discretion should be applied for exceptional circumstances and this will be undertaken by a senior officer within the Housing Options Service, usually as a review (see section 5.6). The senior officer will consider the request and notify the applicant of the outcome in writing.

The council cannot waive the eligibility rules for any applicant who is not allowed to access social housing under the 'person from abroad' legal eligibility rules set by Central Government.

In exceptional circumstances only, discretion may be applied to an application in the following ways:

- Allowing access to the housing register, where the applicant was subject to a disqualification criteria, such as owner occupiers and those above the income / savings threshold but have been assessed by the Housing Options Service as requiring social housing assistance due to their financial situation / urgent need to be rehoused
- Award of additional 'management points' to an application to expedite the rehousing process. For example this could be for
 - a household where there is an urgent need to move because of a life-threatening illness / disability / serious and evidenced health hazard,
 - those who are homeless and require urgent rehousing as a result of immediate or very high-risk violence including intimidated witnesses, those experiencing cuckooing or exploitation and those escaping very serious anti-social behaviour
 - If someone is vulnerable as a consequence of being a young person in care after the age of 14 years, for a minimum 13 weeks, but who are not a looked after young person at the age of 16, but who do qualify for advice and guidance from the councils Next Steps Care Leaver Service
- Award local connection where an applicant doesn't meet the policy's local connection criteria
- Award of an additional bedroom(s) to a household where it is demonstrated there is a need for this and is financially viable to the household (see section 4.5). An example of this would be a person within a household who has a severe disability where the impact of sharing may have a direct and serious adverse impact on the individual. An example of such could include needing an additional bedroom for the use of medical equipment, or a person with a severe neurodiverse condition whose condition would be negatively impacted further whilst sharing a bedroom.

This list of examples is not exhaustive. The Policy allows for cases to be considered when there are direct and very severe consequences/impacts of

housing needs on an individual's personal circumstances such as someone with a very severe disability/life threatening illness or an extremely vulnerable person such as a care leaver who has struggled to gain independent living skills due to wider needs/experiences, and vice versa, and those needs/circumstances are not frequently demonstrated/evidenced by the majority of housing applicants.

Any decision made to award discretion to an application must be fully recorded with reasons for the applied discretion detailed. Enquiries to support the exceptional circumstances of an application should be made with relevant agencies and third parties with the consent of the applicant.

5.8 Complaints:

If an applicant is not happy with the service that they have received in relation to the allocation of housing they should first complain to the Housing Options Service, Salford Civic Centre, Chorley Rd, Swinton, M27 5AW or via Email: housing.advicecentre@salford.gov.uk

If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint or with how their complaint has been handled then they can make a complaint to the Council on the [Comments, compliments and complaints webpage](#), and an independent investigation into your complaint will be conducted.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint i.e. if your problem has not been put right or you have not had a response within a reasonable time (within 12 weeks) then you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman who can be contacted:

By telephone: on 0300 061 0614 for help making a complaint
Text 'call back' to 0762 481 1595 - use a textphone via the Next Generation Text Service (formerly known as Text Relay and Type talk)

Lines are open:

Monday 8.30am to 12 noon.

Tuesday to Friday: 8.30am to 5pm

Online: If you have a complaint, please use the [complaint form](#) supplied by the Local Government Ombudsman

6.MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 The effectiveness of the Allocations Policy will be monitored by:

- Publishing the results of allocations made through the choice-based lettings system on the website of Salford Home Search
- monitoring partner agreements and performance
- reporting on allocations, including performance information from the housing register to appropriate bodies

This Allocations Policy will be reviewed in 2027/28 or earlier if required by new legislation or government guidance.

7.APPENDIX A – SALFORD’S ALLOCATION POLICY POINTS SYSTEM

Category	Points
<p>Insecurity of tenure – Award of 10 points to the application in total</p> <p>Awarded in cases where applicants are living in insecure accommodation</p> <p>Exceptions: Applicants who have been awarded a Prevention Duty (section 195) or Relief Duty (section 189b) - under homelessness legislation <u>will not be</u> awarded these points.</p> <p>This is <u>with the exception of</u> those applicants in supported accommodation (including care leavers) provided by trusted providers i.e. commissioned supported accommodation and those supported housing services which have achieved the Charter of Rights and Quality Standards.</p>	10 in total
<p>Non-physical health need - Award of 10 points to each household member this applies to on the application</p> <p>Applicants or household members, who have a non-physical health need (for example: mental health, learning or neuro-divergent disabilities) which are being <u>significantly negatively impacted by the housing need / problem</u>.</p>	10 to each household member this applies to
<p>Care and support: Award of 10 points to the application in total</p> <p>This applies to an applicant who needs to move to receive or give (informal*) care and/or support to or from a family member/named carer, where a serious disability exists – without which the health and/or wellbeing of the recipient of care/support would be seriously negatively impacted.</p> <p>* This does not apply to those receiving professional care and support from a service such as health professional / Adult Social care / Children’s Services etc. Any care and support based arrangements as a result of a disability will need to be evidenced and contact made with the care giver / receiver to establish the facts.</p>	10 in total

<p>Overcrowding</p> <p>The number of bedrooms needed and the number of people requiring those bedrooms is based on the principles described in section 4.5 of this policy - when applicants and their household members are assessed as being overcrowded then the points system described below will be applied.</p> <p>5 points allocated per extra bedroom needed and 5 points allocated to each household member needing the additional bedroom.</p>	<p>5 Points for every additional bedroom required, plus every person who requires that additional bedroom</p>
<p>Under occupying</p> <p>An award of a set 25 points to the application in total, regardless of how many rooms are under-occupied</p> <p>This award only applies to under-occupiers of social rented housing.</p>	<p>25 in total</p>
<p>Care leavers: A child leaving care - Award of 20 points to the application</p> <p>This applies to care leavers up to the age of 25 (regardless of any disability or other support need) where Salford are the corporate parent.</p> <p>Should an applicant, aged 25 years and below and who has previously been a care leaver - be in need of (re)housing, their application will be allocated the 20 child leaving care points, even if they have previously been registered and rehoused via Salford Home Search (and that previous application was also awarded child leaving care points).</p> <p>The legal definition of a care leaver comes from The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 which states that a Care Leaver is someone who has been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday.</p> <p>All care leavers will be referred into the Housing / Leaving Care Panel for joint assessment for re-housing options with Next Steps, Housing Options and Children's Services.</p>	<p>20 in total</p>

<p>Homelessness prevention – Award of 25 points to the application in total</p> <p>Awarded when the applicant is threatened with homelessness and is owed a Homelessness Prevention Duty (s.195) under the Housing Act 1996</p> <p>Time limited for the period this duty is owed</p>	<p>25 points in total - time limited for the period the duty is owed</p>
<p>Homelessness Relief – Award of 20 points to the application in total</p> <p>Awarded when the applicant is currently homeless and is owed a Relief Duty (s.189b) under the Housing Act 1996</p> <p>Time limited for the period this duty is owed</p>	<p>20 points in total – time limited for the period the duty is owed</p>
<p>Move on points – Award of 20 points to the application in total</p> <p>Awarded when an applicant is ready to move on from supported accommodation to their own settled accommodation</p> <p>This only applies to supported accommodation delivered by trusted providers – for example: commissioned supported accommodation or where providers have achieved the Charter of Rights and Quality Standards.</p>	<p>20 in total</p>
<p>Foster carer – Award of 20 points to the application in total</p> <p>Applicant is an approved Foster Carer and needs to move to facilitate the foster caring role</p>	<p>20 in total</p>
<p>Armed Forces – please see breakdown for details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Applicant is a serving or previous member of the armed forces. Points to be awarded regardless of the date the applicant last served with the armed forces: 5 points per full year of service. b. Applicant is a bereaved, divorced or separated spouse/civil partner of service personnel, who needs to move out of accommodation provided by the ministry of defence - 5 points per full year of service of the deceased/ex armed forces partner 	<p>A & B - 5 points per full year of service</p> <p>C - Plus, where appropriate,</p>

c. Any member / former member of the armed forces who have an urgent housing need, have a disability and / or serious injury resulting from their service – and have less than 5 years' service , will receive an additional 10 points (management point award) to ensure they are not disadvantaged by short service in the forces.	10 points (management point award)
Management points – Award of 10 points to the application in total, time limited for 6 months Awarded in exceptional circumstances – please see section 5.7 for more details	10 points in total – time limited for 6 months

8.Appendix B: Salford Home Search Partners

Arcon Housing Association

Salix Homes

Derive Group

Salix Living

ForHousing

Great Places Housing Group

The Guinness Partnership

Irwell Valley Homes

Mosscafe St Vincents

New Barracks Tenant Management Co-Operative

Onward Homes

Pendleton Together

Places for People

Riverside

Salford Property Link

Windsor Albion Co-operative

Your Housing Group

Nominating Partners:

Clarion Housing