

ASSESSING HOUSING PRIORITY

Priority for housing will be calculated using a banded and points based system to ensure those in agreed priority groups and with additional housing needs will be prioritised for offers.

The priority groups are as follows:

Band A - Applicants who have lived in the town continuously for a minimum of two years immediately prior to submitting an application OR retiring members of the armed services who enlisted from an address in the town.

Band B – Applicants have a close family member currently living in the town that have done so for five years prior to the submission of an application (close family members are: parents, guardians, adult children, grandparents or siblings).

Band C – Applicants who have lived in the town for at least three years, whether continuous or not, within the 15 years (too long?) immediately preceding the date of application.

Band D – Applicants who have a current job in the town which they have had for six months immediately preceding the date of application where the minimum hours worked are 16 per week OR where the applicant is running a small business operating from an address in the town which has been operating continuously for a minimum of 12 months prior to the date of application.

Band E – Applicants from surrounding villages OR those with job offers or employment with less than six months duration.

Priority within Band

Band A – The general principle is that priority will be given to applicants within band who have lived in the town for the longest period of time. Where there are two or more adult members of the household, the longest residence period will be applied to assess priority. If someone in Band A moves out of the town, they can be reassessed for Band B or Band C if they meet the qualifying criteria for that band. Applicants will be placed in the highest priority band where they fulfil the criteria for both bands B and C.

Band B – Priority will be given based on the length of residence of the family member living in the town for the longest period of time which must be continuous and current. Where the applicant has more than one family member living in the town, priority will be awarded based on the one having the longest residence period and where that person is the owner occupier or tenant of a property within the town. In households of more than one adult, only one household member needs to fulfil the residence criteria

Band C- no extra priority will be given for number of years resident within the prescribed period nor for the recency of that residence. In households of more than one adult, only one household member needs to fulfil the residence criteria

Band D – Where applicants do not work regular hours, average working hours over the six months preceding the application will be used to assess eligibility. In such cases the average must be 16 or more for the period. Where applicant’s jobs are “mobile” (i.e. they do not work from a specific address during their working hours) they will be considered eligible if the registered address of their employer is within the town and they meet the other employment criteria. Applicants can apply when they have a job offer within the town but will be in Band E or will not get additional priority within band until such time as they have been in employment for six months.

Band E - Will be awarded extra points for housing need based on the criteria below.

In all cases banding will be the first filter for priority, followed by points. If these are the same, date of application will be used to rank priority. Where someone moves to a higher band through a change in circumstances, they will be assessed from the date in that band. Where someone moves to a lower band they will be assessed on application date.

Applicants in Band D (employment) will be placed in this band if they have no residential connection to the town. If they are eligible within bands A – C they will be awarded extra priority within the band for also being in employment.

In all cases evidence must be provided to support the information given. Where there is extra priority linked to length of residency, the date used will be the earliest for which reliable written evidence can be provided.

Additional priority – Points

In addition to the above banding, extra priority within the band can be awarded based on an assessment of need. This extra priority will be in the form of points which will be cumulative meaning that those in greatest need have greater priority within their band.

This will be calculated using the following criteria –

Medical need/accessibility – where the property the household currently occupies is inaccessible or unsuitable due to disability or mobility issues and this has been evidenced by a medical professional.

Property condition – Where an applicant is living in private rented or shared accommodation and that property has been assessed by Environmental Health as being unfit for occupation or in need of extensive works or repair.

Sharing facilities – where the household is sharing facilities with another person or household who would not be moving with them.

Overcrowding – where the household has sole occupancy of a property which is too small for their needs (i.e. the number of bedrooms they have is less than the number of bedrooms Thrift assess that they require)

Under-occupying – Where the household has sole occupancy of a property which is too large for their needs (i.e. the number of bedrooms they have is greater than the number of bedrooms Thrift assess that they require)

Affordability – Where the weekly rent for a property occupied solely by the household is greater than the LHA for East Cambridgeshire for the size of property that the household is eligible for.

Where a household has no priority through residence or employment and have been placed into Band E, they can be awarded extra priority within that band if they have children within that household who are attending one of the primary schools within the town and/or the village college OR have pre-school children in a nursery, registered with a child minder or a family member (and Band B does not apply) within the town.

Household sharing rules and bedroom entitlement

Partners/Spouses will be assessed as being able to share one double bedroom.

Children of different sexes can share a bedroom until the eldest reaches 10 years of age

Children/adults of the same sex can share a bedroom until the eldest reaches 21(?) years of age.

Single bedrooms can only be occupied by one person irrespective of age.

Household size will be assessed based on the members of that household using the property as their main and principal home. This can include those living temporarily away from home and may include full time students, members of the armed services, those whose work takes them away from home for extended periods and those volunteering overseas. This list is not exhaustive and other circumstances may be considered.

Carers may be considered as part of the household if they are required to “live in” and sleep overnight in the property. In such cases evidence will need to be seen

Parents who have staying access to their children will not be awarded an extra bedroom for those children unless their custody is based on a 50/50 arrangement. In such cases evidence will need to be seen.

Households may be awarded an extra bedroom over and above their assessed entitlement where there is written medical evidence to support this or where there is a strong and evidenced social need.