

# Housing Allocations in Camden Webinar for Family Early Help

18 January 2021



# Housing Allocations Scheme overview



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# Camden housing context

- Around 260,000 residents
- Around 100,000 dwellings, a third owned, a third privately rented, a third social housing (23,000 council homes, 11,000 housing association homes)
- Average house price = £850-900,000
- Median weekly rent for PRS 2 bed = £500 (up to £2000!) vs LHA of £366 v council rent £120
- Demand for social housing unsurprisingly high

# The current housing allocations scheme

- Implemented January 2016 (find the scheme [here](#))
- Scheme created following large scale public and statutory consultation to better meet the priority outcomes of the Camden Plan:
  - a. to maintain the borough's social mix
  - b. to provide new solutions to tackle inequality
  - c. to get things right first time.

It achieves these by

- encouraging sustainable communities by giving higher priority to local people
- helping to tackle child poverty by enabling families living in severely overcrowded conditions to find new homes.



# The process

- Apply [online](#) (pre-application qualification checker then full application)
- Initial verification by Accommodation Placements Team – check qualification, confirm points awards, confirm bedroom need, confirm any housing needs on medical grounds
- If qualifies bidding account set up to bid on [Home Connections](#)
- Homes advertised every Thursday with bidding window open until midnight Monday



# Process (cont.)

- Shortlist created after bidding window closed
- Highest pointed bidder for an eligible home invited to view (process very different in pandemic)
- Viewings arranged by Landlord Services
- Highest pointed viewer that wants the property is re-verified and formally offered the home
- If formal offer accepted bidder signs the tenancy agreement (all new council tenancies are on a trial period of one year before tenants become secure tenants. During this trial period a tenant is known as an introductory tenant. They have fewer rights and less security than secure tenants.



# Who qualifies?

- People whose immigration status makes them eligible for assistance from public funds
- People who have resided in Camden for at least 5 of the last 7 years (long list of exemptions)
- People who do not have a lot of savings (less than £32,000) with exemptions
- People who have not been involved in unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them an unsuitable tenant of the Council
- People with less than 10 weeks worth of rent arrears
- People who do not own a home



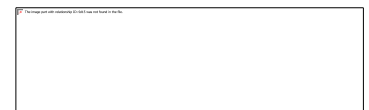
# Who qualifies (cont.)

- People who have a “housing need” and are awarded points for any of the following main reasons:
  - Homelessness
  - Insanitary or unsuitable housing
  - Overcrowded
  - Under-occupying a council or housing association home & want to downsize
  - Serious disrepair
  - Home subject to regeneration
  - Need to move for medical reasons
  - Escape violence or harassment
  - Care leavers
  - Move on from supported housing
  - For fostering/adoption purposes
  - Need to move to give or receive long-term substantial care in Camden



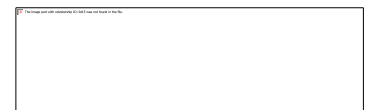
# How big is the housing register?

	Applicants	
	Total	%age
Studio	691	11.33%
1-Bed	886	14.53%
2-Bed	2325	38.13%
3-Bed	1718	28.17%
4-Bed	426	6.99%
5-Bed	49	0.80%
6-Bed	3	0.05%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6098</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



# Demand vs supply

	No. of h'holds on register	Average no. of applications per annum (qualifiers in brackets)	No. of allocations per annum on average	Average wait for those housed (years)	Average no. of bidders when advertised
<b>Studio</b>	597	889 (282)	101	3.26	51
<b>1 bed</b>	804	954 (325)	340	2.92	34
<b>2 bed</b>	2153	1004 (601)	250	4.05	128
<b>3 bed</b>	1631	375 (256)	161	5.63	109
<b>4 bed</b>	397	60 (46)	37	8.59	31
<b>5 beds +</b>	50	8 (5)	6	9.31	5
<b>Totals</b>	5632	3290 (1515)	895	n/a	n/a



# Overcrowding

- Around half our housing stock is made up of studio flats and one beds = big overcrowding problem
- Since Jan 2016 55% of housing offers have been made to households experiencing overcrowding (**up from 36%** under the previous scheme)
- 752 offers accepted by severely overcrowded households containing 1234 children.
- A comparator sample from the previous scheme gives 251 offers to severely overcrowded households containing 608 children.



# How many points do people need?

## How many points do I need?



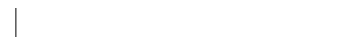
The number of points you need for a home depends on many factors, including the:

- size of the home
- number of people that bid for the home
- number of points the other bidders have

## Average points per successful bid

We cannot tell you how many points you will need, but we can tell you the average and lowest points that successful bidders have had for homes of different sizes recently.

Number of bedrooms	Average points held by recent successful bidders	Lowest points held by recent successful bidders
Studio	300	75
1	220	50
2	493	275
3	455	105
4	465	355
5 or more	765	765



# What if someone is not happy with a decision?

- Two stage review process for decisions such as “you don’t qualify” or “you aren’t entitled to points for that” or “you can only bid for homes with xx bedrooms”
- Stage 1 = adviser
- Stage 2 = Manager
- Exceptional cases not covered by the scheme or where an error has caused injustice can be referred by HNG to Exec Director



# Contacts for professionals

- Verifications (qualification, points, bedrooms, medical assessments etc) = **Maxine Smythe** (Accommodation Placements Manager) x 3662
- Home Connections, bidding, supply, properties, shortlisting = **Sabina Khanam** (Accommodation Placements Manager) x 1950
- Service Manager = **Julie Newsam** x 5515
- Head of Housing Needs = Shaun Flook



# Don't forget other options

- Mutual exchange <https://www.camden.gov.uk/home-swaps>
- HousingMoves <https://www.housingmoves.org/>
- HomefinderUK <https://homefinderuk.org/>
- Seaside and Country Homes <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/renting/seaside-and-country-homes>
- Intermediate housing <http://camdenliving.co.uk/>

