

Eastlands Homes

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References/Links	<p>EHPL Rehousing of 16 – 18 Year Olds Procedure (2007)</p> <p>EHPL Rehousing Review List Procedure (2007)</p> <p>EHPL References Procedure (2007)</p> <p>EHPL Schedule 1 Policy and Procedure</p> <p>EHPL Mutual Exchange Policy (2006)</p> <p>EHPL Challenging Neighbourhoods Policy (2007)</p> <p>EHPL Stronger Communities Strategy (2007)</p> <p>EHPL Community Safety Strategy (2007)</p> <p>EHPL Equality and Diversity Policy (2006)</p> <p>MCC Allocations Policy (amended 2007)</p> <p>MCC Nominations Agreement</p> <p>Manchester Housing Register Manual (2004)</p> <p>Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Partnership (MEAP) Service Level Agreement (reviewed 2007)</p> <p>Housing Act 1996 amended by the Homelessness Act 2002</p> <p>Housing Corporation Regulatory Code (parts 3.5 and 3.6)</p> <p>Housing Corporation Guidance Manuals</p> <p>Housing Corporation “Delivering Choice and Mobility” (2006)</p> <p>CLG “Widening Choice” (2005)</p> <p>Core Bulletins (annual and quarterly) jointly produced by Housing Corporation and National Housing Federation</p>

Lettings Policy

Section 1. Introduction

1.1 This Policy is designed to give a clear statement of Eastlands Homes approach to lettings, providing a framework within which available properties will be let to applicants who require housing.

1.2 This Policy document includes the following sections: -

Section 1. Introduction

Section 2. Aims and objectives

Section 3. Equality Statement

Section 4. Eligibility to Register

- General Rules
- Rehousing review List
- Applications from Board Members, Eastlands Homes staff or their close relatives
- Applications from offenders
- Applicants subject to immigration control

Section 5. How applications area assessed

- Priority Groups
- Group 1
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Section 6. Entitlement and offers

Section 7. Local lettings

Section 8. Other special circumstances

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Section 11. Appeals and complaints

Section 12. Service standards

Section 13. Monitoring and review

Section 2. Aims and Objectives

- To ensure the lettings system is fair and transparent
- To address demand fairly, balancing the needs of those who apply through a range of avenues, without discrimination and with full regard for the needs of disadvantaged groups
- To help build and sustain diverse and balanced communities and strengthen networks of family support.
- To contribute to the speedy letting of properties, to make efficient use of housing resources.
- To make best use of available stock and respond to local housing need

- To co – operate fully with Manchester City Council (MCC) with nominations and especially in respect of their statutory responsibilities to the homeless
- To prevent homelessness wherever possible
- To work with other providers and agencies to make the best use of affordable housing options from all sources to meet needs
- To provide applicants with the opportunity to exercise choice wherever possible based on full and accessible information
- To provide access to specialist and support services where specific needs are identified
- To ensure access and clear, accurate and consistent information is provided in a way that meets the needs of groups and that no groups are marginalised

Section 3. Equality Statement

- 3.1 In implementing this policy Eastlands Homes will not discriminate against any person or other organisation on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, disability, sexuality, age, class, appearance, religion, responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with Aids or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.
- 3.2 Good communication will be made with all groups, respecting community diversity, and providing customers with full, clear and accurate information. Any changes to policy or procedure, which could impact on applicants, will be the subject of full consultation with all service users. The impact of this policy and the operation of procedures will be regularly monitored
- 3.3 Properties that have been adapted to meet specific requirements will be offered to the most suitable applicant.
- 3.4 All age-banded properties will be considered and reviewed as part of the annual monitoring report. Any proposed changes to the age banding will be the subject of consultation with local residents before any changes are made. Other local lettings measures will be used in line with the terms of the Challenging Neighbourhoods Policy.
- 3.5 It is important that the system for letting properties can be understood by applicants and other customers. Leaflets will be provided including service standards that are clear and understandable by all. Upon request a full copy of the policy or a summary will be made available in alternative formats including audiotapes, Braille, large text, or community languages. The policy and other relevant customer information will be available to download on the Eastlands Homes website.
- 3.6 Translation or interpretation services will be used where required to assist with any specific enquiries or for conducting re – housing interviews.

- 3.7 Disruption and homelessness associated with domestic abuse, harassment and hate crime will be minimised by giving early advice and support, reducing the need for temporary accommodation.
- 3.8 Any changes arising from the annual monitoring report will be considered as part of a review of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Section 4. Eligibility to Register

General Rules

- 4.1 Anyone aged 16 years and over can apply to be registered with Eastlands Homes on the Manchester Housing Register.
- 4.2 Applicants who are 16 – 18 years old will require a rent guarantor if they are not entitled to Housing Benefit.
- 4.3 All customers must complete and sign a Common Housing Register application form and provide two references. Applications will only be made active on receipt of acceptable references. New references will be sought at offer stage if the reference is more than 12 months old
- 4.4 There are some people, however, who will be suspended from the register.

Eastlands Homes, along with Manchester City Council and other members of the Manchester Housing Register, operates a Review List of applicants who will be or who are suspended from the Register.

Owner-occupiers who are able to buy a property will also be suspended from the list. This will be determined by considering the average current value of the property type and size in the area of choice, the amount of equity released from the sale, and the ability of the applicant to meet any mortgage requirements. Owner-occupiers experiencing a relationship breakdown or who have been awarded Medical priority will not have possible future capital gains taken into account where the property is unlikely to be sold in the near future.

The Rehousing Review List

- 4.5 The criterion for suspension from the register is: -
- Owe Eastlands Homes money.
 - Caused wilful and substantial damage to property owned by Eastlands Homes
 - Have been violent, threatening or disruptive in the area
 - Have been involved in significant instances of anti social behaviour or have relevant unspent convictions.
 - Where Eastlands Homes has taken legal action against a tenant for a breach of the Tenancy Agreement.

- Where legal action has been taken by Eastlands Homes for not allowing access to carry out the annual gas servicing check. The review list entry will be removed when access has been allowed
- Applicants on the shared Manchester Housing Register Review list

4.6 To be removed from the review list, applicants will need to:

Reduce any outstanding debt by 50%; maintain a payment pattern for 6 months, and the outstanding debt must be below £1000. There must also be no legal action outstanding.

Demonstrate that they will be able to maintain a satisfactory tenancy. For example, there should be a minimum period of 12 months to demonstrate a sustained change in behaviour. Depending on the nature of any anti social behaviour in the community, an applicant may not be able to register for specific areas.

4.7 Applicants can appeal against a review listing. (see section 11.12)

4.8 There are some circumstances in which a review listing can be overridden. Each case will be considered on its merits, but circumstances such as a severe medical condition, harassment, or a personal tragedy may result in a suspension being removed.

Applications from Board Members, Eastlands Homes staff or their close relatives

4.9 If an application form is received from a Board Member, a member of Eastlands Homes staff or their close relative, this should be declared on the application form. In addition, applicants are asked at the six monthly application review stage and when an offer is made to advise of any connections. Any lettings that fall into this category are dealt with under Schedule 1 Policies and Procedure. The Governance Committee, as defined in the Standing Orders, will approve any allocation made.

Applications from offenders

4.10 As part of the Manchester Housing register, Eastland's Homes has signed up to the City Council Serious Offenders Policy

4.11 It is the policy of the City Council to exclude from the Housing Register anyone who has been convicted of a 'community offence' and is considered to present a significant risk to potential neighbours and/or communities.

4.12 At the time of registration, an applicant is asked if s/he or anyone moving with them have a conviction of a criminal offence or anti-social behaviour order.

4.13 The list of the offences that will be taken into account is listed below.

- Aggravated Burglary
- Rape
- Aggravated vehicle taking
- Robbery
- Any offence where racial motivation has been proved
- Second or subsequent offences of burglary
- Arson and criminal damage endangering life
- Serious offences against children including sex or violence
- Breach of anti social behaviour order
- Three or more serious motor vehicle crimes which will include taking without consent, criminal damage to vehicles
- Dealing, being concerned in the supply or intending to supply any controlled drug
- Use of firearms
- Wounding/GBH with intent
- Homicide and attempted murder
- Wounding/GBH without intent
- Indecent Assault

4.14 Convictions that have been 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 cannot be taken into account. However, if the sentence was for 2½ years or more, or was a Life sentence, we need to know about the offences.

4.15 Rehousing applications from serious offenders are currently assessed for eligibility through a multi agency risk assessment panel, which comprises representatives from the Probation service, Social Services and Manchester Housing at a senior level (called the Serious Offenders Panel). Some of these applicants will be assessed as ineligible for rehousing due to evidence of past unacceptable behaviour, which would warrant a possession order through the courts.

4.16 For those applicants that pose a lower risk providing they adhere to a supervised tenancy, additional policies and conditions are in place to ensure that there is transparency and consistency in decision-making and a balanced distribution of such tenancies in the city.

Therefore, offers will only be made to these applicants when the appropriate package of support /supervision is available, when the applicant has agreed to the additional terms of the tenancy and in accordance with housing need and length of time registered for rehousing.

Additionally, for certain individuals, offers will only be made when serious consideration has been given to child protection issues and where accommodation is an integral part of the risk management plan.

- 4.17 The full details of this policy can be found in the Manchester Housing Allocations Policy document.

Applicants subject to immigration control

- 4.18 Eastlands Homes will rehouse applicants who may be subject to immigration control. Unlike Local Authorities, there is no restriction on RSL's on allocating to people who are subject to immigration control, providing that the applicant can meet their rent payments, and that they are not entitled to Housing Benefit.

Section 5. How applications are assessed

Priority Groups

- 5.1 Applicants who are suitable to be tenants are placed in one of three groups according to their assessed needs and entitlement. The allocation groups are:

Group 1 Star medical priority (highest level of medical award) and Housing Improvement Programme (HIP).

Group 2 City Wide applicants, General housing need applicants
Community applicants,

Group 3 All other applicants

All applicants are assessed for eligibility, which allocation group they should join, and the size of property that they need.

The assessment of an applicants' housing need, results in them being placed in one of the priority groups in date order and in determining the areas, size and type of property required.

If an applicant is not eligible to join the register information will be provided about where to seek advice and how to access other housing options.

5.2 GROUP 1

There are 2 priority categories in this group which are defined as follows:

5.2.1 Star Medical Priority

This priority is awarded where an applicant or member of the moving group suffers from severe chronic illness (physical or mental) or

disability, resulting in the person being unable to occupy their current property in an acceptable manner and where rehousing is considered to be the most appropriate solution by an Occupational Health Visitor or GP/Consultant. Examples of this would be:

- The applicant does not have access to toilet facilities.
- The housing problems are such that unnecessary pressures are brought to bear on providers of community care
- The applicant is in danger of becoming institutionalised or homeless.

5.2.2 Housing Improvement Programme (HIP)

Manchester City Council awards this priority where an applicant's home is subject of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Eastlands Homes may also make an award where its own tenants are affected by proposals which would result in them qualifying for a homeless payment.

5.3 GROUP 2

There are 3 priority categories in this group which are defined as follows:

1. City Wide Applicants
2. General Housing Need Applicants
3. Community Lettings Applicants

Inclusion in any group 2 priority category is not exclusive. An applicant could well qualify under both general housing need and community categories. The system maximises individual's housing opportunities in the most flexible and equitable way.

5.3.1 City Wide Applicants

Applicants who the Partnership has assessed as having an urgent housing need are placed in this category.

A City Wide applicant is allowed to be specific in terms of areas requested and property types unless it is decided that certain areas and/or property types are unsuitable (subject to size/type entitlement rules).

For the first four weeks after the award, the applicant only appears on shortlists according to their requested areas/size/type/height. After this time, if no properties have become available in the specific areas requested, the applicant will also appear on shortlists for any area within the city.

The only exception to this is where fear of violence is likely within particular sub-areas within the city in which case these areas can be

excluded, for example, if the perpetrator of violence has family or know associates in an area.

For the first four weeks after award any special features requested can be taken into consideration whilst selecting, but after this period all special features with the exception of medical special features entered by the Manchester Housing Medical Team, are disregarded.

A City Wide applicant who refuses a reasonable offer will be sent a 3-day letter. This letter explains that if the applicant refuses the offer without good reason, their priority will be withdrawn. Applicants can then re-join the General Housing Need category (subject to them still being in housing need) and the queue date will be advanced by one year.

5.3.2 General Housing Need

Applicants are considered to be in General Housing Need if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Overcrowding
2. Under-occupation
3. Poor Property Condition
4. Medical Need
5. Insecurity of Tenure
6. other homeless applicants

(1) Overcrowding

Overcrowding exists where there is a lack of a bedroom or bed space. A large bedroom is treated as two bed spaces and a small bedroom is one bed space. Each person living in the property requires a bed space, and a separate bedroom is required for: a couple; the parent of a single parent family; and each other person over 8 years, unless they share with a sibling of the same sex.

An expected child is not included in the overcrowding calculation until born. Where lodgers are the cause of overcrowding they are not included as members of the household as part of the staying or moving group. Any applicant who is overcrowded will automatically have their queue date backdated by 6 months.

(2) Under-Occupation

Under occupation occurs when an applicant's home is too large for their needs. Applicants with two or more bedrooms additional to their needs may be placed in Group 2.

(3) Poor Property Condition

These points will be awarded if the applicant's present home is in poor physical condition and is unfit for human habitation and cannot be made fit in the short term or where there are serious health hazards. Examples of this include dangerous electrical wiring, rotting or dangerous flooring, and subsidence.

(4) Medical Need

This is awarded where an applicant (or member of their household who will live with them) suffers from a serious permanent medical condition, illness or disability. There are two levels of award.

Medical A Priority is awarded to applicants or a member of the moving group who has a chronic illness or disability, or may not have a specific illness but suffers from general ageing debility. Applicants awarded medical A priority are placed in Group 2 and their queue date is backdated 3 years to reflect additional priority.

Medical B priority is awarded to applicants who have a less severe medical condition but would benefit from a move to a property type, which would assist in improving their current health. Applicants awarded medical B priority are placed in Group 2 and their queue date is backdated by six months.

More information is provided in appendix A

(5) Insecurity of Tenure

Eastlands Homes will award Group 2 Priority, either city wide or general housing need, where the applicant is:

- An assured short-hold tenant or licensee.
- Living in housing provided with their job.
- Living in temporary accommodation.
- Lodging with family or friends.
- Living in hospital or HM Prison.

To be entitled the applicant should provide full written supporting evidence.

(6) Other Homeless Applicants

This is awarded where the applicant is

- No Fixed Abode. In such cases the applicants should be advised that the Partnership does not have emergency accommodation and that they should present themselves to the Local Authority. These applicants should be asked to supply a "care of" correspondence address.

- Are threatened with homelessness within 28 days and have supporting written evidence, e.g. Notice to Quit, an eviction note from their landlord or Building Society Order which specifies and eviction date.
- Are being forced to leave temporary accommodation, e.g. a hostel, in the next 28 days and have supporting written evidence from the Hostel Manager.
- Are leaving the Armed Forces, hospital or HM Prison and have to leave their present accommodation within 28 days and have supporting written evidence from the Superior Officer, Hospital Manager or Prison Authorities.

An applicant will also be considered to be homeless if they have accommodation but:

- Occupation could lead to them suffering violence (this is most usually people fleeing domestic violence), threats of violence, or racial or sexual harassment, supporting written evidence from a doctor or the police should be provided.
- Are a family who normally live together but are now living in separate homes because they have nowhere to live together.
- They are about to lose their home with their job in 28 days and have supporting documentary evidence
- They have been asked to leave by family/friends within 28 days. It will be necessary for the person who has legal claim to the property to verify the situation in writing.

To become entitled to Group 2 citywide priority, the applicant must provide full supporting documentary evidence.

5.3.3 **Community Lettings**

This priority category gives consideration to the wider needs or long-term sustainability of communities, considering second generation tenants and those who are actively contributing to their local community, whilst still balancing the need to ensure reasonable preference is afforded to vulnerable groups. The categories are: -

1. Second generation application
2. Transfer applicants with a positive tenancy history
3. Supporting people in employment and training
4. Contributions to the local community
5. Wider family connection
6. Foster parents
7. Agency recommendations
8. Providing support on medical grounds

The Housing Officer will supply a case file on all applications seeking rehousing under the Community Letting category to the Customer Services Manager, who if in agreement will approve the case.

(1) Second Generation Applicants

These are applicants who have a parent or legal guardian living in the desired area (regardless of tenure) for at least 3 years before the application was made. If the parent or guardian is, or was, an Eastlands Homes tenant however, then the 'Positive Tenancy History' criteria applies to their current and/or any former tenancies. Positive Tenancy History means that:

- The applicant's parent or legal guardian will have been a tenant for a minimum of 3 years continuously (although not necessarily at the same address).
- The tenancy will have been conducted in a satisfactory manner at all times.
- The rent account or mortgage account must be clear (or a satisfactory repayment plan is being adhered to where there are arrears).
- The property will be (or have been) in sound repair and good decorative order.

(1) Transfer Applicants with a Positive Tenancy History

As detailed above will be entitled for this award when they wish to move within the local management area to a property for which there is lower demand than their present home, provided that they meet the property entitlement criteria regarding type and size.

(3) Supporting People in Employment or Training

Applicants who require accommodation to support them in maintaining or gaining access to employment or training i.e. Accommodation is needed within easy reach or reasonably affordable travelling distance from work, or training or child care facilities which would enable the applicant to go to, or remain, in work or training.

(4) Contribution to the Local Community

Applicants qualify for inclusion in this category if they meet any of the criteria listed below:

- Applicants, or members of the moving group (including children) who satisfactorily demonstrate involvement in local voluntary work and/or community activities that they have been involved in for a minimum of six months prior to the date of application to join the housing register.
- Applicants who create local employment or provide local services and who need to live in an area to maintain this.

(5) A wider Family Connection than Second Generation

The Director of Neighbourhood Services shall have discretionary authority to award additional priority in lower demand areas to those who wish to move to an area closer to other family members. BUT, in higher demand areas priority is given to second generation only, as already outlined.

(6) Foster Parents

(7) Agency Recommendations

Where Social Services or other agency recommends rehousing to larger or more appropriate accommodation for an applicant who needs to live in an area, to enable them to become or continue to be a foster parent. An agency recommendation could include, Social Services, Care Managers, and or any other medical or professional body. Please note this list is not exhaustive

(8) Providing Support on Medical Grounds

If an applicant needs to move to be nearer to a friend or relative who has a medical problem, to enable them to provide support. The applicant will provide supporting letters from either a doctor or consultant for consideration.

5.4 GROUP 3

The only assessment criterion for forming this group is that the applicant must be eligible to join the housing register or, if an existing tenant, be eligible for a transfer. All those not assessed as being in any other group are placed in Group 3 in registration date order.

Section 6. Entitlement and offers

- 6.1 One of the key objectives of Eastlands Homes is to make best use of available stock and to respond to local housing need.
- 6.2 Offers will be made in line with quotas that will be reviewed and set on an annual basis. Quotas for groups and categories within groups will provide a guide and be used as targets for staff.

50% of all voids (excluding those created by transfer) to be offered for MCC nominations.

Of the remaining voids

Group 1 applicants considered, if there are non suitable

Group 2 applicants considered in the following proportions
 40% City Wide (formerly called Emergency Band)
 30% Housing Need
 30% Community Award

This approach was approved as a way to balance the needs and demands of each group against the regulatory and legislative requirements placed on Eastlands Homes and wider issues such as community sustainability

- 6.3 Generally, the following household types will be considered for the property types and sizes listed. Exceptions may include, for example, rehousing due to demolition or other special circumstances that should be approved by the Director of Neighbourhood Services or other Director in their absence.

Household criteria	Type of property
Single person	1 bed flat
Couple	1 bed flat
3 adults	2 or 3 bed house or flat
Single parents or couple with child(ren)	2 or 3 bed house
Single parent or couple with minimum 5 children	4 bed house or 3 bed parlour type house
Single / couple over age 55+ Medical need for Cat 1	Category 1 bungalow or flats
Single / couple over age 60+	Sheltered scheme
Single /couple varied age limits	Age restricted flats (varied)

Section 7. Local Lettings

- 7.1 Housing Corporation standards allow for provision to be made for Local Lettings Policies to be introduced to 'prevent or reverse an area of decline'. LLP's are basically variations to the mainstream Lettings Policy and are a means of tailoring the lettings on specific schemes in order to protect, regenerate and sustain communities. The key to LLP's is flexibility in the way they are applied to a scheme or area taking into consideration local factors and circumstances.
- 7.2 LLP's are not to be used as blanket policies that will exclude certain groups. They should also be time limited and subject to regular review. Local lettings tools will be used sensitively in line with the framework set out in the Challenging Neighbourhoods Policy.

Section 8. Other special circumstances

- 8.1 Squatters and illegal occupiers

Provision for these groups is covered in the separate "Squatters and Illegal Occupiers Policy.

8.2 Succession

Where a tenant dies, and a member of the family would have a right to succeed in law, but cannot do so because there has already been one succession, the applicant will be offered a property which meets their needs, as stated in the tenancy agreement, unless the applicant is on the Rehousing Review list.

8.3 Out of turn offers

Occasionally there may be a need to allocate properties out of turn to meet local needs or specific circumstances. Any such lettings must be authorised by the Director of Neighbourhood Services or other Director in their absence. All such cases would be the result of exceptional circumstances and would be formally recorded.

8.4 References

All applications must have two references. (See eligibility section 4.3). When an offer is made new references will be required if the original references are more than 12 months old. The separate document called Reference Procedure sets out the requirements for references.

8.5 Multiple Needs

Eastlands Homes recognises the requirement to give a higher priority to those applicants who are in greatest need. The date the priority is awarded is the effective date from which the applicants place in the list is determined. If an applicant has multiple needs in the categories listed below, additional time of 6 months for each type of priority will be awarded to reflect the greater need. For example, a severe medical need and a social need would result in an additional 6 months queuing time being awarded. To receive a multiple needs award the needs must be in two separate categories.

8.6 Opportunity Transfers

When an Eastlands Homes tenant approaches the Neighbourhood Service Team enquiring after a specific property in the same area in which s/he currently lives (perhaps to be nearer family, school etc.) but is not at or near the top of the relevant shortlist, the Customer Services Manager may authorise an opportunity transfer in the following circumstances:

- The tenant has satisfied the requirements of both the rent arrears and pre-transfer inspection policies; and
- The tenant's current property is relettable within 3 days; and
- The property is in the same rehousing area as the tenant's current property; and

- The tenant's current property meets the needs of the applicant at the top of the shortlist for the property that the tenant is requesting.

8.7 Pre-Transfer Inspection

When a tenant transfers to another Eastlands Home s/he must leave the property in a condition that is suitable for letting to a new tenant. At registration, the Housing Officer inspects the current property and rehousing can only proceed if the property is in an acceptable condition. A further inspection will take place when the Housing Officer is ready to make an offer of accommodation to the transferring tenant. Again the rehousing will only proceed if the property is in an acceptable condition. If it is not, rehousing will not proceed until the tenant has rectified the problems that have been identified. Exceptions to this policy are the same as the Rent Arrears policy exceptions listed below.

8.8 Rent Arrears

Eastlands Homes tenants who owe more than £100 and less than £500 can register and be considered for rehousing as long as they sign an undertaking to reduce the arrears.

Where arrears stand at between £500 and £1000, rehousing cannot proceed until a repayment pattern has been satisfactorily maintained for a three-month period.

Where arrears stand at over £1000, rehousing cannot proceed until a repayment pattern has been satisfactorily maintained for a six-month period.

Housing need will still be investigated and updated on to the application. Exceptions to this policy are:

- Those who can demonstrate that either they or their family face life threatening circumstances, and as a consequence require immediate rehousing.
- Applicants in need of temporary rehousing as a result of fire or flood damage.
- Applicants with medical need who have maintained regular payments for at least 8 weeks.
- Applicants with a social award for domestic violence.

Category Group 1	Need
Demolition / decant	Need to move due to home being demolished / under major repair.
Star medical*	Support cannot be given in current home Hospital/care & property needed for discharge No access to toilet facilities Cannot get in/out of current home
Two for one transfers / release high demand property	Tenants with 2 properties queuing for 1 property
Social Need A	Care of children conditional on having adequate accommodation Domestic Violence Harassment as defined in the ASB Strategy and associated procedures Landlord harassment (MCC Advice Centre determine) Fear of violence Bereavement/personal tragedy Members of the clergy needing to move to the Eastlands area Prevent a child being taken into care / released from care Foster parents with a need to move to foster
Insecurity Level 1-3	Homeless within 2 months No Fixed Address (rough sleepers only) Elderly person leaving nursing/residential care after medical assessment Split family
Category Group 2	Need
Overcrowding	Couples are expected to share a bedroom except: Children of opposite sex 8+ Parent & child 1 bedspace per person: Large bedroom = 2 bedspaces Small bedroom = 1 bedspace
Insecurity 4-6	Wants own home (not homeless within 2 months) Split couple Forces applicants with local connection (work, relatives, previous residence) Group E if discharge & homeless within 2 months Prisoner release with local connection (work, relatives, previous residence) Group E if release & homeless within 2 months
Children in flats	Children under 16 in flats above ground floor Children under 16 in ground floor flats (transfers only)

Property in poor condition / lack of facilities	Property is unfit or where there are repair problems considered a health risk or are dangerous as determined by an Environmental Health Officer
Medical priority (A&B)*	Move to a different property would improve current condition.
Social B need	Applicants who need to give / receive support / care Relationship breakdown Moving near college/work Bereavement / personal tragedy

Section 9. Choice

- 9.1 Eastlands Homes is committed to providing applicants on the Housing register with choice in line with the government's agenda for developing approaches to choice based lettings. The main benefits of this approach will be improved tenancy sustainability, improved void performance, and higher rates of satisfaction amongst applicants.
- 9.2 Options for providing choice will be introduced including measures such as mailings to the top 10 applicants for new voids and advertising inviting expressions of interest in partnership with Manchester City Council and other landlords.
- 9.3 Advice on all Housing options across all sectors will be provided, targeted on those applicants with no realistic opportunity of receiving an offer of accommodation from Eastlands Homes.
- 9.4 Eastlands Homes will provide advice, support and publicise options including local and national mutual exchange schemes for existing tenants.

Section 10. Local Authority Nominations

- 10.1 Eastlands Homes will work in partnership with Manchester City Council in helping to meet their statutory responsibilities. 50% of all voids, excluding those arising due to transfers, will be offered to MCC for nominations in line with the Nominations Agreement.

Section 11. Appeals and Complaints

- 11.1 Applicants can appeal against decisions made as part of the implementation of the Lettings Policy.
- 11.2 The Customer Services Manager will in the first instance, review appeals regarding decisions about the rehousing review list. If the appeal is unsuccessful and the applicant remains dissatisfied they can make a complaint through the Complaints process.

- 11.3 All other appeals or complaints will be made in line with the “Are you Satisfied?” customer complaints process. Where the appeal concerns an interpretation of the policy this will be referred straight to stage 2 to be investigated by a Director in order to accelerate the process and to prevent applicants from potentially missing any offers of accommodation that they may have received.

Section 12. Service standards

- 12.1 The following service standards will be publicised and annual reports on performance will be produced.
- Applications will be processed on receipt within 5 working days.
 - Requests for advice and assistance will be responded to within 5 working days
 - Applicants will be informed of the needs based assessment and the group they are in, and how to appeal.
 - Applicants will be invited to re-register every 6 months.
 - Applicants will be given a choice of property type and area (within the criteria)
 - Accompanied viewings will take place for all offers
 - Up to date information will be available on average waiting times in each area
 - There is a right of appeal against decisions made including needs assessment, suspensions and review list entries.
 - Applications for mutual exchanges will be visited within 10 working days and a decision made within 30 working days.

Section 13. Monitoring and Review

- 13.1 Monitoring of the Service Standards will be carried out as part of an Annual Lettings Review. This will also include monitoring of: -
- Percentage of properties nominated to MCC
 - Percentage of lettings to people in work
 - Percentage of lettings to BME households
- 13.2 Targets will continue to be monitored in the monthly Performance Management Report.
- 13.3 Quotas will be set for the balance of offers between groups and categories within groups. These will be reviewed at least annually as part of the Annual Lettings Review with any changes being recommended to Operations Committee.
- 13.4 Reports will be submitted quarterly to Operations Committee reporting retrospectively on any areas where Directors discretion has been used including out of turn offers, offers of property type or size outside of the usual household type criteria, the outcome of any appeals and the use

of local lettings policies as part of the Challenging Neighbourhoods Policy.

13.5 Returns will be made to the National CORE (Continuous Recording) system. The annual data and benchmarking information provided from CORE will be used to inform the Annual Lettings Review

Group 2 Medical Need

This priority is awarded where an applicant (or member of their household who will live with them) suffers from a serious permanent medical condition, illness or disability. There are two levels of award

- Medical A priority
- Medical B priority.

Medical A Priority

This will be awarded to applicants or a member of the moving group who have a chronic illness or disability, or may not have a specific illness but suffer from general ageing debility. The housing need at the current property will be clarified and may be based on the following:

- Inability to move around within the current property.
- A risk to current health.
- A need to move to a different area for support or amenities.
- A need for a particular property type to suit the family members e.g. for possible disabled adaptations.
- A need for a different type of heating e.g. not warm air for some Asthma sufferers.

If this award is made it is linked closely to the use of medical special features specifying what must/must not be present in the next home.

Applicants awarded medical A priority are placed in Group 2 and their queue date is backdated 3 years to reflect additional priority.

Medical B Priority

Medical B priority is awarded to applicants who have a less severe medical condition but would benefit from a move to a property type, which would assist in improving their current health. It relates closely with other housing problems like overcrowding, poor property condition and neighbour/estate problems where the applicant's health is deteriorating because of these other factors.

The award of Medical Need will be backdated to the date on which Eastlands Homes was notified of the circumstances, which warranted the award. This could be:

- The date that a home visit was requested.
- On receipt of a consultant's letter which gives a good detailed description of the patient's diagnosis, prognosis and housing problems.

- On receipt of information provided by Social Workers/Care Managers detailing information about an applicant living above ground floor, without a lift service, who is incapable of stair climbing because of amputation, stroke etc.

There are some cases where it is most unlikely medical need would be awarded. The following circumstances do not warrant medical priority:

- Uncomplicated pregnancy where the applicant is seeking to be rehoused because of stair climbing difficulties caused by the pregnancy
- Stress/anxiety related to social/environmental factors rather than the property, unless the applicant is particularly unable to cope with these stresses because of pre-existing chronic mental illness or disability.
- Wishing to move nearer to a friend or relative to receive support when they live close by already. Close is defined as within three A-Z squares (from the A-Z Greater Manchester Street Atlas) or on a direct bus route with bus stops close by.

Applicants awarded medical B priority are placed in Group 2 and their queue date is backdated by six months or to the date Eastlands Homes were notified of their circumstances, which ever is the greater.

Re-assessments

Applicants who have been refused medical priority in the past can re-apply for consideration if their medical condition deteriorates or if new information is known that was not taken into account at the time of the original assessment.