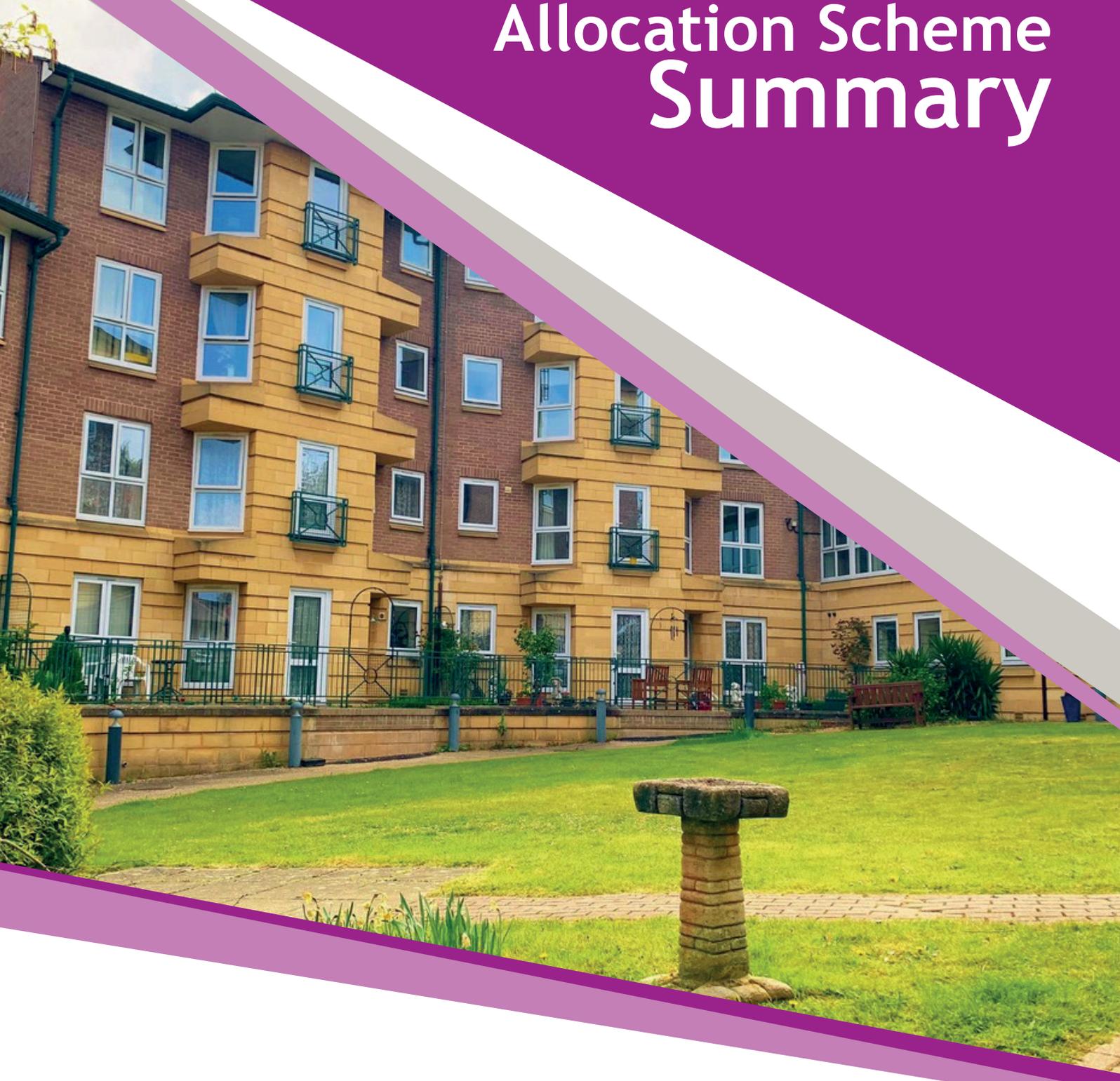


Allocation Scheme Summary



This leaflet will give you an overview of relevant information before you apply to join Homechoice at Reading.

It is a brief overview and further criteria may apply.

For further information and criteria, the full scheme can be accessed at:
Housing Allocations Scheme (reading.gov.uk)



Reading
Borough Council
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Registers

There are 2 main groups of applicants on Homechoice at Reading:

- *Transfer applicants - those who already reside in social rented accommodation.*
- *Waiting List applicants - those who do not reside in social rented accommodation.*

If you or anyone in your household requires accommodation that is adapted, you will be included on the Adapted Register and properties that are adapted, or can be adapted, will be available to this group.



Who can and cannot join Homechoice at Reading

To join Homechoice at Reading you must be at least 16 years old and have lived within Reading borough continuously for the last three years.

Exceptions

Or meet one of the following exceptions (further criteria will apply):

- you have a permanent job in the Reading borough for the last three years
- you have immediate family members living in the Reading borough and who have lived here for the last three years
- you are a key worker with permanent employment in Reading
- you are a carer to a Reading borough resident
- you have fled an abusive relationship and are in a refuge or other Safe Accommodation in Reading
- you meet the criteria for armed forces personal or bereaved spouse - see full scheme for more detail
- you have been accepted by Reading Borough Council as being owed the Main Housing Duty (full homeless duty), and the duty still exists
- you were placed outside of the borough by any department of Reading Borough Council and they still have a duty towards you
- you mutually exchanged to social housing in the borough
- you are a social housing tenant living in another area and need to move closer to your current employment in Reading borough or to take up an offer of employment within Reading borough and if you don't move it would result in hardship
- you are a person who is or has been a victim of domestic abuse and needs to move as a result of the abuse
- you are a care leaver and/or have been placed in the borough by another local authority

Eligibility for social housing in the UK

Even if you meet the qualifying criteria or one of the exceptions listed above you won't be allowed to join Homechoice at Reading if you are not entitled to receive this service based on your immigration status.

Non-Qualifying criteria

If any of the following applies you will not be included on Homechoice at Reading for the following period:

Action

Period

You have been evicted from a social rented tenancy, or a private rented tenancy following the service of a Section 8 notice, for **rent arrears or other breach of tenancy**.

3 years from the date of eviction.

You have been evicted from a social rented tenancy, or a private rented tenancy following the service of a Section 8 notice, for **serious, threatening or violent behaviours** which have not been addressed to the council's satisfaction.

5 - 10 years from the date of eviction.

You have behaved in a way to make you unsuitable to be a tenant.

At least 1 year, depending on behaviour.

You have refused three reasonable offers of accommodation within a six-month period.

1 year from date of last refusal.

You are an introductory tenant.

Until you become a secure or assured tenant.

You have a joint social housing tenancy and wish to apply on your own.

Until the joint tenant issue has been resolved.

You own residential accommodation.

Will not be able to join unless criteria are satisfied.

You have accepted a formal offer of housing.

Who can be included on the application?

You can only include your partner and any dependent children. You cannot include children if you do not have the main responsibility for them. We may make exceptions for any of the below:

- A household member who moved in with you at the beginning of your current tenancy and is still living with you.
- A relative who provides essential care and support.
- A live-in carer who provides essential personal care during the day and overnight.
- Any household member due for release from prison within four weeks.
- Children who are living with you and are studying at university or serving in the armed forces.

What size of property can you bid for?

A bedroom will be awarded to each of the following:

- Single person.
- Couple.
- An adult over 18 years old.
- Up to two children of either sex under 10 years old.
- Up to two children of the same sex under 18 years old.
- Live in carer.
- Someone requiring their own room for medical reasons (based on assessment).

If anyone in your household is pregnant we will review your bedroom entitlement when the pregnancy reaches 30 weeks.

In certain circumstances we can consider you for smaller sized accommodation than you need as long as this does not result in:

- statutory overcrowding.
- children 10 years plus of different sexes sharing a room.
- more than 2 children sharing one room.



Allocation Scheme
Summary



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How are applications prioritised?

When we receive your application, we will assess your situation and take the needs of all the household into account to place you in a band.

Reasonable preference

By law we are required to give higher priority (reasonable preference) to applicants who:

- have been assessed as homeless under homeless law
- have been accepted by Reading Borough Council as being owed the Main Housing Duty (full homeless duty) and the duty still exists
- are living in unsanitary, overcrowded or other unsatisfactory conditions
- have to move on medical or welfare grounds
- have to move to a particular area in the borough, where failure to do so would cause hardship to themselves or others (this includes out of borough social housing tenants who need to move to take employment or an offer of employment in Reading)

Additional preference

We can give further priority to applicants who have a reasonable preference to reflect the urgency of their situation - we base our decision on evidence provided by relevant professionals involved.

We apply these additional preferences to applicants:

- where there is a risk of violence or threats of violence that are likely to be carried out
- who are witnesses or victims of crime where there is a risk of violence or threats of violence if they remain in their current home
- who need to move for urgent medical or welfare reasons
- who are members, or former members, of the armed services or reserves
- who meet an 'Exceptional Strategic Lettings' criteria

Exceptional Strategic Lettings

We use exceptional strategic lettings criteria to manage our housing stock in the best interest of current tenants and those applying for accommodation. This includes:

- Reading Borough Council tenants:
 - whose current accommodation is now larger than they need
 - whose homes are being demolished
 - who need to move out of their current home because it requires major renovations
 - who live in accommodation that has major disabled adaptations where these are no longer required

If your circumstances change you must inform us immediately. This could be an additional household member or a move to an alternative address, or simply a change in your contact details. If you fail to inform us we may remove your priority. Please be aware that some changes in circumstances may impact your priority.

What are the priority bands?

Based on your circumstances, you will be placed in one of the following bands:

BAND 1

Circumstances that would result in a threat to life or require an urgent move due to time limited obligations.

For example, witness protection, management transfer, a medical or welfare concern that would result in a risk to life, or delayed hospital discharges.

BAND 2

Circumstance where a home is significantly no longer suitable/ accessible and/or there is a recognised need for this accommodation to become available.

For example, RBC tenants under occupying homes, living in a home with adaptations that they no longer required, or move on from supported accommodation.

BAND 3

Legislative direction to provide a higher priority than reasonable preference.

For example, qualifying forces personnel and bereaved spouses/partners.

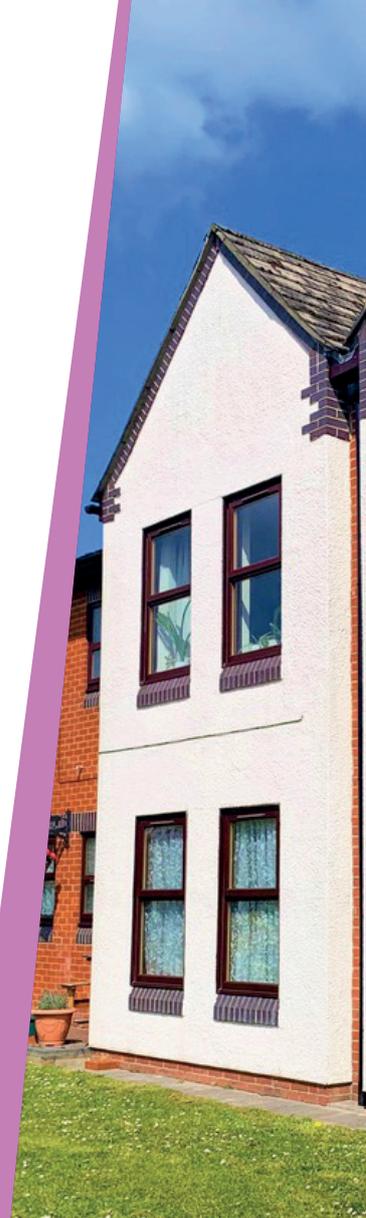
BAND 4

Circumstances that meet the definition of reasonable preference - as previously set out, and to facilitate a move for council or Affinity tenants who do not meet any reasonable preference categories.

No Priority For Housing (NPFH)

None of the reasonable preference categories apply or any other listed above and those assessed as having No Priority for Housing - see next section.

The above examples are not an exhaustive list - please see full scheme for criteria



Why could the priority be removed?

We may also reduce your priority to 'no priority for housing' permanently or for a set period of time if you:

- have a current or proven history of rent arrears, nuisance, anti-social behaviour or other unacceptable behaviour
- deliberately make your living conditions worse to try to increase your priority for housing
- fail to tell us that your circumstances changed
- are subject to possession proceedings by us or a registered provider because you have breached conditions of your tenancy or licence agreement
- have neglected/mistreated your council or registered provider home and/or garden and it is now not in a tenable condition
- have applied to buy your council property or are being considered for a help-to-buy scheme
- have financial assets, savings or a level of disposable income that you could use to secure alternative accommodation
- have made unauthorised alterations to your council property and have not carried out the work to reinstate the property, or repaid us for the cost of this work
- received a Disabled Facilities Grant to pay for major adaptation to your home (you will have no priority for housing for a period of five years)
- have made yourself intentionally homeless (your priority will be removed for at least one year)

Direct lets

In certain circumstances we may bypass the Homechoice bidding process and offer a vacant property to a specific applicant. We will tell you if we are considering you for a direct let and explain what will happen if you refuse a direct offer of housing.

Refusals

We consider you to have refused an offer of accommodation if you:

- fail to turn up to a viewing - unless you have given us good reasons
- fail to complete a Registered Providers Application Form which would have led to an offer of accommodation
- turn down an offer of a property you bid on
- turn down a direct offer of a property
- have been assessed as a homeless household or as needing Management Transfer and you fail to participate with the Homechoice process - these groups will have fewer offers

What if you disagree with the decisions made?

You have the right to ask us to review our decision:

- to exclude or remove you from the Homechoice scheme
- if you believe the property offered to you through Homechoice was not suitable
- if you disagree with our assessment of the facts of your Homechoice application



Full Scheme

*You can access the full scheme and criteria by visiting:
Housing Allocations Scheme (reading.gov.uk)*



Allocation Scheme Summary