



DERBY CITY COUNCIL



HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

Translations and making the policy accessible

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Arabic

يمكننا ان نعطيك تلك المعلومات بأية طريقة، اسلوب أو اللغة التي تساعدك على الاستفادة منها.
من فضلك اتصل بنا على 01332 256480 مينيكوم 01332 256483

French

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Hindi

हम आपको यह जानकारी किसी दूसरे तरह और ढंग से या दूसरी भाषा में भी दे सकते हैं जिससे आपको इसे प्राप्त करने में मदद मिल सकेगी. कृपया हमसे इन नंबरों द्वारा संपर्क कीजिए 01332 256483
मिनीकाम 01332 256480

Kurdish

ئێمه دهتوانین ئەم زانیاریانە بە هەر رێگەیەکێ تر، شیوازیکی تر یان زمانیکی تر بۆ دابین بکەین بۆ ئەوەی یارمەتیت بدات لێیان تێبگەیت. تکایه په یوه ندیمان پێوه بکه له سهەر ژماره ی 01332 256480 مینیکۆم 01332 256483

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਇਸ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ 01332 256483 ਮਿਨੀਕਮ 01332 256480 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Somali

Waxanu kugu siin karaynaa war-bixintan siyaabo kasta oo kale, hab ama luuqad ka caawisa in aad geli-karto. Fadlan nagala soo xiriir 01332 256483 Minicom 01332 256480

Urdu

یہ معلومات ہم آپ کو کسی دیگر ایسے طریقے، انداز اور زبان میں مہیا کر سکتے ہیں جو اس تک رسائی میں آپ کی مدد کرے۔ براہ کرم 01332 256483 مینی کام 01332 256480 پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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1.0 Glossary and definition of terms

Allocation Policy	This explains the rules that determine how Derby City Council and the Derby Homefinder Landlords allocate social housing properties. The Policy also outlines other housing options.
Arms-length management organisation	A company set up by a local authority to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock.
Assignments	The term used when you wish to transfer your tenancy to another member of your household. The existing tenant would have to give up the tenancy and their rights are passed on to the other household member.
Bypassing	The term used when a Derby Homefinder Landlord rejects an applicant for a property because: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the applicant is not suitable, or• the property would not meet the applicant's needs.
Choice-based lettings	A scheme that gives all applicants a greater degree of choice of home.
Compulsory Purchase Order	Local authorities and government agencies have powers under various Acts of parliament to buy land and buildings that is needed to help deliver social and economic changes.
Council Cabinet	The Council Cabinet is Derby City Council's main decision-making body.
Derby Homefinder	The name of the choice-based lettings scheme in Derby.
Derby Homes	The name of the arms-length management organisation that manages Derby City Council-owned properties.
Eligibility	The term used to describe factors that match an applicant to a property. For example, the size of your household and the number of bed spaces in a property.
Expressing an interest	Your way of telling the Derby Homefinder Landlord that you would like to live in a property.
Habitual residence test	The test looks at whether the applicant's residence in the United Kingdom is of a settled nature. For example, it looks at the length and continuity of residence, work/work prospects or family ties.

Mutual exchange	A swap of accommodation between two social housing tenants that relies on each tenant moving permanently into the other persons/tenants property.
Non-statutorily homeless	A term that refers to homeless people or households to whom local housing authorities do not have a duty to make an offer of permanent housing.
Nomination	The term is used when a local housing authority provides, from its housing register, the name and details of an applicant to a landlord for an offer of housing.
Rechargeable repairs	This is damage caused by a tenant to a property during a tenancy for which the tenant is directly and/or indirectly responsible.
Registered social landlords	A housing association or a not-for-profit company registered by the Housing Corporation to provide social housing.
Rights of Residence Directive	This directive allows citizens from the European Economic Area who are not economically active to live in another member country. A condition of this is that the citizen should have enough resources to avoid relying on the benefits system of the member country.
Shared ownership	This scheme allows first time buyers and others in unique circumstances to buy a proportion of a new home and to pay rent on the remaining proportion.
Shortlist	A list of applicants that have expressed an interest in a particular property advertised on Derby Homefinder.
Social housing	The term used for affordable rental accommodation owned by a local council or housing association.
Statutorily homeless	A term that refers to people or families to whom a local housing authority have a duty to make a permanent offer of housing.
Succession of tenancy	When a tenant dies, the tenancy will automatically pass to any joint tenants, a partner or a close member of the tenant's family as long as they were living with the tenant at the time of the death and for at least 12 months before. Anyone who takes over the tenancy in this way is called a successor.
Sustainable communities	The Department for Communities and Local Government says a sustainable community is a place where people want to live and work now and in the future.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This Allocation Policy explains the rules that determine how Derby City Council and the Derby Homefinder Landlords allocate social housing properties and offer a variety of other housing options.
- 2.2 Derby City Council recognises that the availability of affordable rented accommodation will never meet the demand in the city. At the time of drafting this policy, the city had approximately 21,352 units of social housing – 13,713 Council houses and 7,411 Residential Social Landlord properties.
- 2.3 We expect that approximately 1,000 of these properties will be available for letting each year. At any time we will have between 7,000 and 12,000 people registered on the Housing Register.
- 2.4 This Allocation Policy guides the principles of how these houses will be allocated in a fair and transparent manner, taking account of both the Council's duty to take account of housing need and it's wish to offer as much choice as possible.
- 2.5 Derby City Council and the Derby Homefinder landlords recognise that homelessness is the most extreme form of housing need. The impact of homelessness does have a detrimental impact on families, childless couples and single people. The Council will do all it can to prevent homelessness.
- 2.6 The Allocation Policy aims to:
- help people in housing need choose where they would like to live
 - prevent people from becoming statutory homeless.
 - make the best use of the limited social housing available and tell you about other housing options.
- 2.7 Allocation policies were first introduced under Part six of the Housing Act 1996. This type of policy provides a framework for councils to allocate accommodation, and to give people who have the greatest need of housing a reasonable choice about their property.
- 2.8 This Allocation Policy applies to:
- existing tenants who want to transfer from one tenancy to another with their current landlord, and
 - existing tenants who want to transfer from a secure tenancy with the Council to an assured tenancy with a residential social landlord and vice versa, and
 - new applicants.
- 2.9 The Council and the Derby Homefinder landlords are committed to equal opportunities and to making sure that everyone is treated fairly.

3.0 Statement of choice

- 3.1 Derby City Council believes in offering applicants on its Derby Homefinder Register the freedom to choose the properties they are interested in. The Derby Homefinder scheme gives all its applicants the freedom to express an interest in suitable accommodation that is available. The scheme also provides information and advice on other housing options to help applicants solve their housing needs.
- 3.2 Through this Allocation Policy, the Council aims to offer choice to applicants as well as meeting its legal duty to house people who have an urgent need for housing.

4.0 Equalities and diversity statement

- 4.1 Derby City Council and the Derby Homefinder Landlords are committed to: promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity; and tackling social exclusion.
- 4.2 The Council approved its current Equality and Diversity Policy, called Achieving Equality and Valuing Diversity, in May 2005. You can get a copy of this policy by contacting 01332 255384, minicom 01332 258427 or by downloading it from www.derby.gov.uk
- 4.3 The Council is committed to doing its best to prevent the people it serves, from suffering unfair discrimination however caused. This includes:
- age
 - disability, including people living with AIDS/HIV
 - ethnic or national origin, race or colour
 - marital status
 - religious or political beliefs
 - responsibilities for children or dependants
 - gender and gender identity
 - sexuality
 - trade union activities
 - unrelated criminal convictions, where this is possible

This list is not exhaustive.

5.0 Data protection statement

- 5.1 You have the right to access the personal information we hold about you. We will use the information you provide for the purpose of re-housing. We may also use the information for issues of child protection, public protection and for preventing and detecting fraud and other criminal offences. This includes information we hold as paper and electronic records. If you would like to access your file, please contact Derby City Council's Data Protection Officer on 01332 256262 for an application form.

6.0 Legal framework

- 6.1 This Allocation Policy has been written to meet the duties of Part six of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.
- 6.2 Part six of the Housing Act 1996 covers:
- allocating local authority properties to new tenants
 - transfers that are requested by local authority tenants
 - allocating local authority properties to current tenants of registered social landlords
 - nominations that the Council makes to registered social landlords.
- 6.3 The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, also sets out the housing circumstances of those applicants we must give reasonable preference to when we decide who will be offered a property.
- 6.4 This Policy takes account of the Allocation of Accommodation Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities.
- 6.5 There are instances where this Policy does not apply. These include:
- assignments/transfer of tenancy
 - mutual exchange
 - succession of tenancy.

This Policy does not apply to assignments, mutual exchanges or succession of tenancies. In each of these instances, neither the Council nor any of the other Derby Homefinder Landlords are required to identify a new tenant for the relevant property or properties from the Derby Homefinder register. A definition of each of these terms can be found in the 'Glossary and definition of terms' in Section 1.0.

7.0 Aims and objectives of this policy

- 7.1 The aim of this Allocation Policy and of having choice-based lettings is to help people with housing need choose where they would like to live and to prevent people from becoming statutory homeless. Any choice is subject to sections 14.0 and 15.0 of this policy.
- 7.2 The objectives of the Policy are:
1. to allow applicants to look for a property in the area of their choice
 2. to encourage common standards of working for all the partners of Derby Homefinder
 3. to reduce the number of properties refused by applicants
 4. to ensure properties are let as quickly as possible
 5. to reduce the number of difficult-to-let properties.

8.0 Housing providers working together

- 8.1 The Council and most of the registered social landlords, known as housing associations, who have homes to rent or buy in Derby are working together as Derby Homefinder Landlords. They have all agreed to use this policy and to allocate properties through Derby Homefinder.

The Derby Homefinder Landlords are:

- Derby City Council – Derby Homes manages the Council’s properties
- Anchor Trust
- Derwent Living
- English Churches Housing Group
- Friendship Care and Housing
- Guinness Northern Counties
- Home
- Raglan Housing Association
- Riverside
- Salvation Army Housing Association Ltd
- Tuntum
- Spirita Ltd
- William Sutton Trust

See section 27.0 for full address and contact details.

- 8.2 Derby City Council will encourage other registered social landlords with homes in Derby to become Derby Homefinder Landlords and to sign up to this Allocation Policy.

9.0 Who can apply to go on the Derby Homefinder Register?

- 9.1 The Derby Homefinder Landlords keep a joint housing register, called the Derby Homefinder Register. This means applicants only have to fill in one housing application form to be considered for housing by all the Derby Homefinder Landlords.

- 9.2 We will accept a completed housing application from people who are aged 18 or over. We do, however, have some rules that could affect an application – see sections 9.3.1 to 9.5.2 – and we can not accept applications from people in certain circumstances – see section 10.2 to 10.3.3.

9.3 Local connection rule

- 9.3.1 A local connection is a link to the city such as living, working, having close family, support or other special needs in the city.

9.3.2 If you do not have a local connection with Derby, you can still register for housing. However, this will mean that you will not be eligible for some properties advertised on Derby Homefinder.

9.4 **Young people under-18 rule**

9.4.1 We will consider applications from anyone aged 18 or over.

9.5 **Councillors, board members and employees and their close relatives rule**

9.5.1 Councillors, board members and employees of Derby Homes, Derby City Council and the housing associations and their close relatives can apply to go on the Derby Homefinder Register. However, they must make their position or relationship within the Council or with the Derby Homefinder Landlord known on their application form. If they do not do this and it is discovered later that such a relationship exist, then it will affect their tenancy.

9.5.2 The Council will neither give an advantage to nor disadvantage an applicant falling into this category. The other Derby Homefinder landlords have their own policies on lettings to some or all of those identified in 9.5.1. You may need to contact them to get details of their policies – see section 27.0.

10.0 Who cannot apply to go on the Derby Homefinder Register?

10.1 We cannot accept applications to go on the Derby Homefinder Register from people in certain circumstances – see sections 10.2 to 10.3.3.

10.2 **People from outside the United Kingdom**

10.2.1 The Council cannot accept applications to go on the Derby Homefinder Register from:

- people who are subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- people from outside the United Kingdom who fail the habitual residence test
- people from outside the United Kingdom who are in breach of, or whose residence does not comply with, the European Union Rights of Residence Directive and statutory instruments.

10.2.2 If you are subject to section 10.2.1 the Council has no duty to offer you a home. We will offer you advice on your other housing options.

10.3 **People who behave in an unacceptable way**

10.3.1 We will accept your application to go on the Derby Homefinder Register but may not allocate you a property if you or a member of your household has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour, within the meaning set out in section 160A of the Housing Act 1996, which makes you unsuitable to be a tenant.

10.3.2 We will base any decision, in 10.3.1, not to allocate you a property on:

- any history of bad behaviour and
- any evidence of that behaviour that would justify a possession order being made against you had the behaviour been carried out while you were a tenant
- your current behaviour, or that of any member of your household, at the time of your application.

We will look at all the relevant factors to reach a decision.

10.3.3 We will tell you in writing if we cannot allocate you a property on the Derby Homefinder Register because of unacceptable behaviour. You have the right to ask for a review of the decision. See section 23.0 on Your Right to a Review for more information. You can ask us to reconsider our decision at any time if you can demonstrate that your behaviour has changed and that you can sustain a tenancy.

11.0 How to join the Derby Homefinder Register

11.1 You need to fill in a housing application form, which you can get from a variety of places:

- from the Derby Homefinder website -www.derbyhomefinder.org

or contact/visit:

- the Housing Options Centre – see section 26.0 for details
- any Derby Homes Local Housing Office – see section 27.2 for details.

12.0 Housing application processing standards

12.1 When we get your housing application:

- we will let you know within five working days of receiving it
- if we need to visit you at home or arrange an office interview, we aim to contact you to arrange this within ten working days of receiving your application
- we aim to contact you within five working days of receiving your application to tell you if we need any extra proof to confirm your details
- we aim to contact you to confirm that your application is active within 28 days of receiving your form and all relevant information we require

- We will let you know if we can not register your application within 28 days of receiving your form. The delay may be due to us requiring additional information from you or another relevant agency.

12.2 Confirming your details

- 12.2.1 You need to give us all the information we ask for so that we can confirm your details. If you do not give us this information it will delay your application.
- 12.2.2 We will check all housing applications when they are received. We will make any checks we consider necessary with current and former landlords, and other relevant agencies. If this information is not given to us quickly it may delay the processing of your application. We may also check your details with a credit-referencing agency. See section 5.0 on data protection for how we use and protect the information you give us.
- 12.2.3 It's your responsibility to give us the proof that we ask for to confirm your details. We will suspend your housing application until we get this information.
- 12.2.4 If, after a 28-day period, you have not given us the information we have asked for, we will have to cancel your housing application.
- 12.2.5 If you have given false and/or misleading information on your application form and during its processing, we will cancel your application. We may also take legal action against you. This action may include prosecuting you in the criminal courts.
- 12.2.6 You must say on your housing application form if you and/or other members of your household have current and past rent arrears or re-chargeable repairs from any Council or housing association tenancy. If you do not tell us this information and is later discovered, we may cancel your application and take legal action against you.
- 12.2.7 You must also tell us, and if possible provide evidence, why you have rent arrears or rechargeable repairs. You also need to provide evidence of payments made or arranged payment plans to reduce any arrears.
- 12.2.8 We may be able to offer advice or refer you to free money advice to help you reduce your debts.

13.0 How is a housing application assessed?

- 13.1 We assess your housing application based on the information you have given on the form and any other evidence or details you have provided.

We assess this information against the:

- Derby Homefinder Bands – see section 14
- Property eligibility table – see section 15.

13.2 Home visits and office interviews

13.2.1 If, when we assess a housing application, we need to get further information from you, we may have to arrange a home visit or office interview. We will contact you to arrange a convenient appointment.

13.3 **Disability, mobility and medical needs**

13.3.1 If you, a joint applicant, or other member of your household or any number of you identified on your housing application have:

- a permanent physical disability
- a mobility problem, or
- a medical condition

we may need to do a further assessment.

13.3.2 This will help us to decide:

- whether your current home is having a detrimental impact on you or anyone in your household's health or mobility and
- what type of property would best suit your/their needs, if a move is necessary
- how to match your specific needs to properties that are adapted

13.3.3 You will still be able to express an interest in properties that do not have the adaptation you need. The Derby Homefinder Landlord may be able to adapt the property to your needs.

13.4 **Placing you in a different Derby Homefinder band**

13.4.1 In some cases, we may place your housing application in a different band than your circumstances call for – see section 14 for all bands. We may do this, for example, if you or anyone in your household has:

- abandoned a previous tenancy
- moved to new housing that is worse than your previous housing without good reason
- sold a property or given notice on a tenancy without getting other housing first.

13.4.2 If we think that you have deliberately made your own housing circumstances worse we will place your housing application in a different Derby Homefinder Band for 12 months from the date of application. The band we place you in will best reflect your housing needs from your previous accommodation.

13.5 **Owner-occupiers and applicants with enough resources to meet their own housing needs**

13.5.1 If you own a property or you have enough financial resources to enable you to get your own accommodation, you can still apply to go on the Derby Homefinder Register.

13.5.2 However, due to the high demand for social housing in Derby, it is unlikely that we

would make you an offer of housing. This may not apply if you are aged over 60 because there are generally a large number of properties for older people across the city. In any event, we would be able to tell you about other available housing options. See section 25 on Other Housing Options for further information.

13.6 **Community Safety**

13.6.1 The Council works in partnership with the Police, the Probation Service, the Community Safety Partnership, and housing providers to manage risk to the community.

13.6.2 If your application leads us to believe there are implications for community safety, we may refuse you housing in certain areas.

14.0 **The Derby Homefinder Bands**

14.1 We will categorise your housing circumstances into one of four bands.

The bands are:

Emergency Band	A Band	B Band	C Band
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14.2 There is a limited number of properties available each year. We aim to allocate a percentage of available properties to applicants from each band. The bands aim to deal with individual and multiple needs. We advertise properties to bands and give priority to applicants who we have placed into each band.

14.3 The Council, in consultation with the Derby Homefinder landlords, reserves the right to change the percentage of properties allocated in each band to meet the housing needs within the city every three months.

14.4 We will detail the percentage of allocations to each band on Derby Homefinder. This information will be available on the Derby Homefinder property list, published every week, and the website www.derbyhomefinder.org

14.5 **Emergency band**

14.5.1 We will place you in this band if:

- Derby City Council has accepted you are 'statutorily homeless'.

14.6 **Homeless final offers**

14.6.1

If, within one month, you have not been successful in getting permanent housing, the Council reserves the right to make you a 'final offer' of suitable housing. We will always try to take account of your preference for an area and type of property. However, due to high housing demand and a lack of supply, this may not always be possible.

We will make any final offer in writing, and state that it is a final offer, and that it discharges our homeless duty.

If you feel that a final offer property is not suitable, you may ask for a review of the offer. You can ask for a review whether or not you accept the final offer.

When reviewing a final offer, we will check that the property:

- is of the right size and type for your family
- is safe for you to live in
- takes account of any special needs you or your family have

and we will check that we have taken into account of any other relevant circumstances you have told us about before we made a decision.

You may refuse a 'final offer' of housing. If you do, the Council's legal duty to find you a new home will change and you will lose your emergency status and be moved to a new Band that reflects your housing need.

If you are thinking about refusing a final offer, you should discuss it first with your Housing Advisor at the Housing Options Centre.

14.8 **A band**

14.8.1 We will place you, a joint applicant, any other member of your household or any number of people identified on your housing application in this band if:

- Derby City Council has accepted you as 'non-statutorily homeless'
- the Council prohibits the use of the property you are living under the terms of the Housing Act 2004 and considers that it is not reasonable for the property to be brought back into use
- the Council's medical advisor or Occupational Therapist has assessed you as having an essential need to move on medical or mobility grounds. This is because your current housing is having a serious detrimental impact on you or members of your households health or ability to live independently
- you have an urgent need to move on welfare grounds. This is defined as:
 - your discharge from hospital is prevented by your housing situation
 - there is a likelihood of admission to residential care or hospital if re-housing is not made
 - there is a likelihood of a child being accommodated by the local authority if

- re-housing is not made
- you, or a member of your household, are at serious risk of harm in your present accommodation. This can include but is not limited to:
 - victims of domestic violence
 - serious racial harassment
 - homophobic attacks
 - witnesses of crime
 - victims of crime
 - serious anti-social behaviour.
- you have an urgent need to move to a particular locality where failure to do so would cause hardship to you or other member of your household. This is defined as:
 - it is unreasonable for you to stay at your current accommodation due to exceptional financial hardship
 - you need to move to either give or receive essential care and support
 - you need to move to access specialised medical treatment
 - you need to move to take up particular employment or training opportunities
- you are currently living in a hostel or supported housing and are ready for independent living
- you are currently living in a house owned by a Derby Homefinder Landlord that is too big for your needs, and you are willing to move to a smaller property
- you are a tenant of a Derby Homefinder Landlord and no longer need the adaptations made to your property

In all circumstances – you cannot reasonably be expected to secure suitable accommodation for yourself.

14.9 **B band**

14.9.1 We will place you, a joint applicant, any other member of your household or any number of you identified on your housing application in this band if:

- the Council's medical advisor or an Occupational Therapist has assessed you as having a need to move on medical or mobility grounds
- you currently live in an upper floor flat and you have children under 12 years of age
- you need more bed spaces

- you are sharing facilities
- you have had a relationship breakdown, and are living in the same property as your partner and a move would allow the partner and family to remain in the property
- you are a tenant of a Derby Homefinder Landlord and have received a Compulsory Purchase Order or your property is due for demolition
- you are suffering from anti-social behaviour or harassment
- you have a non-urgent housing need to move. This can include but is not limited to a move nearer to:
 - a child's school
 - a place of worship
 - family/friends for non-essential support
 - shops and other local amenities.

In all circumstances – you cannot reasonably be expected to secure suitable accommodation for yourself.

14.10 **C band**

14.10.1 We will place you in this band if:

- you are already adequately housed
- you can afford to get your own housing or improve your current accommodation to be more suitable to your needs.
- you have unreasonably refused three offers of housing from Derby Homefinder. We will place your application in this Band for a six-month period from the date of the last refusal. This does not apply to Emergency Band applicants.

14.11 **Applicants with multiple needs**

14.11.1 We take account of multiple needs in this policy.

14.11.2 When we receive your Derby Homefinder application we will assess you, a joint applicant, any other member of your household or any number of you identified on your form. We will give priority to individuals and families with multiple needs.

14.11.3 We will instruct, if necessary, a designated officer to assess your needs. The 'Assessing Housing Applications' procedure details which officer/team will assess each need.

14.12 **Reviewing banding**

14.12.1 Applicants in any band have the right to ask us to review their banding by

contacting the Housing Options Centre. See section 26.0 for details.

14.12.2 We will regularly review all of the housing applications that we place in the Emergency Band.

15.0 Property eligibility table

15.1 The size and type of property we normally offer you will depend on the size of your household. This table only gives a general guide.

	Studio flat	1 bedroom flat	1 bedroom bungalow	1 bedroom house	2 bedroom flat	2 bedroom maisonette	2 bedroom bungalow	2 bedroom house	3 bedroom flat	3 bedroom maisonette	3 bedroom bungalow	3 bedroom house	4 bedroom house	5 bedroom house
Single person under 60 years	✓	✓		✓										
Single person over 60 years	✓	✓	✓	✓										
Single person or couple expecting a baby					✓	✓	✓	✓						
Single person under 60 with access to children					✓									
Couple with no children, under 60 years		✓		✓										
Couple with no children, over 60 years		✓	✓	✓										
Couple under 60 with access to children					✓									
Household with one child					✓	✓	✓	✓						
Household with two children of the same sex under ten					✓	✓	✓	✓						
Household with two children of the same sex, one or more over ten					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Household with two children of different sexes					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Household with three children									✓	✓	✓	✓		
Household with four or more children									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

15.2 Similar properties can be different in the size of bedrooms and the ideal number of people living in the property. We will tell you which size of property we consider is most suitable for you when we accept your housing application.

15.3 A Derby Homefinder landlord could identify a property as being suitable to meet the needs of:

- an applicant who is a disabled person or who has mobility needs

- another member of the applicant's household who is a disabled person or who has mobility needs.

Where a property is identified as suitable in this way, only disabled people or people with mobility needs will be able to apply for these properties.

15.4 If you have a permanent carer or a medical condition, we will normally offer you a property with an extra bedroom – as long as you have given us proof that shows you need an extra bedroom.

15.5 When we advertise a property, we will state:

- the minimum age for the main applicant or partner, and
- the minimum age if the main applicant or partner is getting Disability Living Allowance.

It is always the Derby Homefinder landlord who decides on the allocation and who considers wider issues about the property's suitability.

16.0 Contacting you about your housing application

16.1 Once we have made all our assessments, we will write to you and tell you:

- that we have accepted your housing application and you can start to look for properties advertised on Derby Homefinder
- your unique housing application number for you and your family
- the Derby Homefinder band we have placed you in
- if you have been awarded a multiple, twin or single need
- the date we place you in the band
- the mobility group we have placed you in, if this applies
- the type and size of properties for which you qualify
- how to use the Derby Homefinder scheme to look for properties
- whether you have a local connection with Derby and how this affects your eligibility for properties
- the terms of the scheme and details of your rights and responsibilities under the scheme.

17.0 How Derby Homefinder works

17.1 Derby Homefinder advertises a variety of properties, including:

- social housing for rent
- private landlord housing for rent
- low-cost home ownership properties, such as shared ownership.

It also offers a 'mutual exchange scheme' for its applicants who already have a tenancy with any Derby Homefinder Landlord.

- 17.2 We advertise properties to create an open and clear allocation scheme. This also allows you to choose which properties you would be willing to accept, if offered.
- 17.3 All properties available are advertised on Derby Homefinder every Wednesday from 12 noon. The property advertisements close on Tuesday at midnight.
- 17.4 During the weekly advertising cycle, you can express your interest in up to three properties. Expressing an interest in a property means that your name will appear on the shortlist for that property.
- 17.5 If you do not express an interest, your name will not appear on the shortlist for that property.
- 17.6 Each Derby Homefinder landlord allocates their own properties from the shortlists provided by Derby Homefinder.
- 17.7 Derby Homefinder will provide information on how properties were allocated.
- 17.8 For more information on Derby Homefinder, visit www.derbyhomefinder.org, telephone 01332 256483, or e-mail derby.homefinder@derby.gov.uk

18.0 Advertised properties on Derby Homefinder

- 18.1 Each Derby Homefinder Landlord is responsible for describing and labelling its properties on Derby Homefinder.
- 18.2 Each property will be advertised with:
- the criteria for eligibility
 - property details.
- 18.3 We will advertise each property to applicants from at least one band.
- 18.4 If you do not meet the criteria for a property, you will not be able to express interest in that property.
- 18.5 **Property details**
- 18.5.1 To help applicants choose the properties that would best suit their needs, we will advertise all properties with information on size, location and features. The adverts will also include:

- which Derby Homefinder Landlord owns the property
- landlord contact details for further information
- weekly rent and any other charges
- if known, an estimated date that the property will be available to move in to
- the closing date for applicants to express an interest
- other available information on the property.

18.6 **Furnished tenancies**

18.6.1 We may advertise some properties as 'furnished tenancies'. These properties are designed to meet the needs of people on low incomes who do not have any furniture or would struggle to meet the costs of buying furniture.

18.6.2 There are several different types of furnished tenancies available:

- **fully-furnished tenancies** - these include carpets, curtains, beds, wardrobes, tables, chairs, cooker, fridge-freezer and so on
- **electrical goods only** - these include fridge-freezer, cooker and washing machine.

18.6.3 Furnished tenancies cost more, so the advertised weekly rent will be higher than other similar sized properties.

18.7 **Grouped property advertisements**

18.7.1 At times, we will group some properties together and advertise them with one reference number on Derby Homefinder. In these cases, you would only have to express an interest once to cover all the properties within the group.

18.7.2 This situation would happen, for example:

- a new development of the same type of properties
- an existing scheme where there are empty properties of the same size and type.

19.0 **Expressing an interest in advertised properties**

19.1 You can express an interest by:

- internet – www.derbyhomefinder.org
- automated telephone service
- one of six kiosks located around Derby
- visiting the Housing Options Centre or any Derby Homes local housing office.

You can get further information by contacting the Derby Homefinder team on 01332 256483 or visiting our website www.derbyhomefinder.org

- 19.2 Derby Homefinder has the facility to allow you to view or hear your position on a shortlist before you express an interest in the property. The Derby Homefinder information leaflet gives details of how to do this. See section 19.1 for details on how to contact Derby Homefinder.

20.0 Allocating properties

- 20.1 A shortlist is created once the advertising period has ended.

20.2 How we prioritise applicants

We place applicants in one of four Bands. These are:

- Emergency Band
- A Band
- B Band
- C Band

For the Emergency and C Band, we prioritise applicants according to waiting time. For Bands A and B, we prioritise applicants by:

(1) housing need

and

(2) waiting time.

We base our assessment of each application on all of the information we receive.

- 20.3 At all times, the landlord is responsible for allocating properties.
- 20.4 When allocating, the Derby Homefinder landlord gives preference, where possible, to applicants who specifically need the services or facilities that are part of the property.
- 20.5 **Bypassing**
- 20.5.1 The Derby Homefinder Landlord's have the right to 'bypass' an applicant if they do not feel they are suitable. Their decision to bypass may be because of their own policies and procedures.
- 20.5.2 You will not automatically be by-passed for rent arrears or rechargeable repairs. The Derby Homefinder landlords' decision to bypass you will vary depending on their own policies and procedures. Normally you will need to be able to show that you have made satisfactory payment arrangements to repay the debt.
- 20.5.3 If a Derby Homefinder Landlord bypasses you, we suggest that you contact the

Derby Homefinder team on 01332 256483 for further details.

20.5.4 If you disagree with any decision and want to complain, please see section 24 - Making a Complaint.

20.6 **Offers**

20.6.1 The landlord will contact the successful applicant with details of the potential offer. Each landlord may have a different process.

20.6.2 All Derby Homefinder Landlords reserve the right to:

- carry out checks on your personal circumstances, as well as those made as part of your housing application
- withdraw an offer if checks reveal issues that are not on your housing application
- make offers to more than one applicant on properties to make sure that the property is let as quickly as possible.

20.6.3 If you are under 18 years of age you will not be offered a property unless you have had an independent living interview and can provide details of a guarantor.

20.6.4 You must tell the Derby Homefinder Landlords whether you wish to accept the offer. There will be deadlines for responding to offers.

20.6.5 **Refusing Offers**

If you unreasonably refuse a third offer of housing, we will reassess your application and will place it in Band C for a six-month period from the date you refuse a third offer. If we have offered you a property which you have bid for and you have refused it (without giving us a reason for refusing it), we will presume that your refusal is unreasonable.

At the end of the six-month period, you can have your application reassessed. If you don't contact us, we will keep your application in Band C.

If we reassess your application and you unreasonably refuse a further third offer of housing, we will place your application in Band C for a further six months.

This does not apply to:

- applicants where auto bids have been placed on their behalf automatically by the Derby Homefinder system
- applicants who are in the Emergency Band.

20.7 **Special initiatives and 'sensitive' allocations**

20.7.1 We may hold back some properties from the Derby Homefinder scheme to make allocations that are at our discretion to support 'estate sustainability' and other corporate initiatives.

- 20.7.2 The Derby Homefinder Landlords have the discretion to offer properties to their existing tenants who are in exceptional housing circumstances. The decision to make an offer of housing will be made in conjunction with the Housing Options Manager. Once the tenant has moved, the vacated property will always be advertised on Derby Homefinder.
- 20.7.3 In some cases, the Derby Homefinder Landlords, together with Derby City Council, may decide to let properties within a local area or new development on a slightly different basis from normal. This would be done to help create 'sustainable communities' within an area.
- 20.7.4 We will advertise any properties that fall into this category and, where possible, will set out the criteria – the factors we have taken into account – for doing this.
- 20.8 **Monitoring allocations**
- 20.8.1 Derby Homefinder will regularly monitor the percentage of properties allocated to each of the bands.

21.0 Non-secure tenancies

- 21.1 All new tenancies within Derby City Council properties, managed by Derby Homes, will be 'introductory tenancies'. You can get further information about these tenancies from any Derby Homes Local Housing Office – see section 27.2.
- 21.2 Introductory tenancies aim to make sure that, during the first 12 months of a tenancy, people act responsibly and comply with the conditions of the tenancy agreement. If there are no problems during that period, an introductory tenant automatically becomes a 'secure tenant'.
- 21.3 The Council and Derby Homes may extend the first 12-month period of an introductory tenancy by a further six months if you do not keep to your terms and conditions of tenancy. Alternatively, the Council may seek to evict you if you do not keep to the terms and conditions of tenancy.
- 21.4 The other Derby Homefinder Landlords reserve the right to offer an assured short-hold tenancy.
- 21.5 You will always be told whether you are being offered an introductory or assured short-hold tenancy, and of any other conditions attached, before you sign the tenancy agreement.

22.0 Changes to your housing application

- 22.1 You must let us know if the circumstances of you, a joint applicant, or other members of your household or any number of you identified on your housing application change as this may affect the band we have placed you in.
- 22.2 **Change of circumstances**

- 22.2.1 This can include but is not limited to:
- a change of address
 - a change of contact telephone details
 - people leaving your household or more people coming into your household
 - your health getting better or worse.
- 22.2.2 If we later discover a change in your circumstances that you have not detailed to us it could affect your housing application and/or you could be in breach of your tenancy.
- 22.2.3 It remains your responsibility to check with us whether or not a change of circumstances is relevant and/or affects your banding.
- 22.2.4 We may need you to fill in a change of circumstances form so that we can do a new assessment of your Derby Homefinder Band.
- 22.2.5 If there is a change in circumstances we may have to change your band and the date you were placed in the band. We will always write to tell you of any changes we make to your banding.
- 22.2.6 Derby City Council tenants should contact their Derby Homes Local Housing Office – See Section 27.0 for details. Other applicants should contact the Housing Options Centre – See section 26.0 for details.
- 22.2.7 We aim to process your change of circumstances within 28 days of receiving all the information we need from you and other relevant agencies.
- 22.3 **A change in your needs**
- 22.3.1 If you, or a member of your households needs change you can ask us to review your Derby Homefinder Band.
- 22.3.2 If you have previously completed a medical assessment form and your housing circumstances change, you will need to fill in a new form. This is because the Derby Homefinder Band takes into account how housing impacts on the medical problem rather than the medical problem itself.
- 22.4 **Derby Homefinder Register review**
- 22.4.1 We will carry out a review of the Derby Homefinder Register every year.
- 22.4.2 We do this review to make sure that:
- the number of applicants on the register reflects the immediate needs for social housing

- applicants still want to stay on the register, and
- applicants' details are accurate and up-to-date.

22.5 **Cancelling your housing application**

22.5.1 Your housing application will be cancelled if, for example:

- you have asked us to cancel it
- you have not replied to our review letter
- you have been re-housed by a Derby Homefinder Landlord
- you have moved and not told us of your new address
- we have contacted you and you have not responded within 28 days
- you have given false or misleading information on your housing application
- you have not given us all the information we have asked for to support your application within 28 days.

22.5.2 If we cancel your application, we will tell you why in writing. See section 23.0 on Your Right to a Review for more information.

22.6 **Suspending Your Housing Application**

22.6.1 We could suspend your housing application if, for example:

- you are not eligible for an allocation under section 10.3 of this policy
- you have been assessed by The Housing Options Centre or any other relevant support agency and it is determined that you are not ready for independent living
- there are reasons why you cannot move - for instance, you are due to go into hospital
- you need housing with support and are refusing a support package to help you keep up your tenancy
- we have written to you asking for information to support your application and we are waiting for your reply
- we have written to a support agency or worker to request information about you and are waiting for a reply.

- 22.6.2 If we suspend your housing application, we will tell you why in writing. See section 23.0 on Your Right to a Review for further information.

23.0 Your right to a review

- 23.1 The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, gives you the right to ask for a review if we decide not to allow you to join the Housing Register or make any decision that affects your housing application.

23.2 To request a review

- 23.2.1 You, or your representative, must make your request to the Housing Options Manager at the Housing Options Centre in writing within 21 days of getting our written decision. You, or your representative, may give your reasons for requesting a review in person, if it is difficult to tell us your reasons in writing. We will give you a form of receipt that acknowledges your contact with us.

23.3 The decision about your review

- 23.3.1 A senior officer, who has not been involved in the original decision, will look at your request for a review.
- 23.3.2 The officer will base his or her decision on the known facts at the time of the review. In some cases, they may need to ask you for more information to help them make a decision.
- 23.3.3 They will write to you about their decision and explain their reasons for it within 28 days.

24.0 Making a complaint

24.1 The Housing Options Centre

- 24.1.1 We are committed to giving you the best possible housing service. We will always try and get it right, but we need you to tell us if we are getting it wrong.
- 24.1.2 If you are unhappy with the service the Housing Options Centre provides please contact them to try to get the problem settled there and then. If you telephone or visit them please ask for the names of the people you speak to.
- 24.1.3 If you are not satisfied with the reply, you should write to the Senior Housing Advisor of Customer Services. You will receive a written response to your complaint within 21 days.
- 24.1.4 If you are still not satisfied with the response, you need to get the 'Making a Complaint about Council Services' form, available from the Housing Options Centre or the Council House, Corporation Street, Derby.
- 24.1.5 The Council's Corporate Complaints Officer will independently investigate your complaint.

24.1.6 If you are unhappy with the Corporate Complaints Officer's reply, you can make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. This is an independent service run by central government to make sure that local authorities provide a certain standard of service to their customers – see 24.2.2 for contact details.

24.2 **Complaints against Derby Homefinder Landlords**

24.2.1 If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have not been given a professional service by any Derby Homefinder Landlord, you should complain directly to them. All the Derby Homefinder Landlords have their own formal complaints policies and procedures.

24.2.2 If you have followed the Derby Homefinder Landlords complaints procedure but are still unhappy, you can contact:

- the Local Government Ombudsman for complaints about Derby Homes

Local Government Ombudsman
Beverley House, 17 Shipton
Road, York YO30 5FZ

Telephone: 01904 380200
Fax: 01904 380269

- the Independent Housing Ombudsman for complaints about registered social landlords.

81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 020 7421 3800
Fax: 020 7831 1942

25.0 **Other housing options**

25.1 We offer other housing options. This includes providing information on:

25.2 **Low cost home ownership**

25.2.1 There are a range of low cost home ownership products which are intended to help people buy a home that they would otherwise not be able to afford. These products are known as HomeBuy.

25.2.2 There are three parts to the HomeBuy scheme:

25.2.3 **New Build HomeBuy** – where you share ownership of your home with a housing

association. You buy a share of a property, usually 25%, 50% or 75% by way of a mortgage or cash payment, and pay rent on the remainder.

- 25.2.4 **Open Market HomeBuy** – where you part-buy a property and get a loan from a housing association for the rest. You will need to use your own money and raise a mortgage for around 75% of the cost of the property. The housing association will provide an interest free equity loan of up to £50,000 to cover the balance. Please note that funds for this scheme are limited.
- 25.2.5 **Social HomeBuy** – where housing association and local authority tenants are helped to buy their current home, either outright or on shared ownership terms with the benefit of a discount. Social HomeBuy does not apply to all tenants as the landlord must have decided to take part in the scheme.
- 25.2.6 If you would like further information on these schemes, including whether you are eligible to apply, you need to contact EMHomebuy on 0844 892 0112 or www.emhomebuy.org.uk
- 25.2.7 As a 'HomeBuy' agent they help people in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire access low cost home ownership schemes, and provide information and advice relating to the different products available.
- 25.3 **Right to buy**
 - 25.3.1 The Right to Buy scheme allows you, as a council tenant, to buy your home for less than its full market value. The length of time you have been a tenant is used to decide on the level of discount you are given.
 - 25.3.2 The rules on right to buy are complex. You can contact the Housing Options Centre for further information. Alternatively, you can download a leaflet on right to buy from the Department for Communities and Local Government website www.odpm.gov.uk
- 25.4 **Mutual exchange**
 - 25.4.1 A swap of accommodation between two social housing tenants that relies on each party moving permanently into the other partner's property.
- 25.5 **Private landlord properties**
 - 25.5.1 Derby Homefinder advertises private landlord properties that are available to rent. The Council's Housing Standards team inspects each property before advertising to ensure it meets their standards.
- 25.6 **Bond Bank Scheme**
 - 25.6.1 The Bond Bank scheme helps people who cannot afford a deposit or rent in advance when they want to rent a home in the private sector.

The Council provides a written guarantee to your new landlord. This gives you six

months to save up the deposit for your landlord.

You can get more information by contacting the Housing Options Centre.

25.7 **Derby Care Link**

25.7.1 Derby Care Link is a monitoring service provided by the Council.

25.7.2 Some of the services provided by Derby Care Link are:

- personal alarm buttons
- smoke alarm sensors
- bogus caller buttons
- personal fall detectors
- home flood detectors
- regular courtesy calls and home visits.

25.7.3 You can pick and choose which services would help you. The services provide you with the reassurance and peace of mind you need to live your life independently.

25.7.4 You can get more information by contacting Derby Care Link by:

- telephone 01332 256062
- Minicom 01332 256000
- E-mail carelink@derby.gov.uk

26.0 Derby City Council

Housing Options Centre

Bio House
Derwent Street
Derby
DE1 2ED
Tel: 01332 256489 / 256490

27.0 Derby Homefinder Landlords

27.1 Registered Social Landlords

Anchor Trust

Milestone Place
100 Bolton Road
Bradford BD1 4DH
Tel: 01274 381600 .

Raglan Housing Association Ltd

22-24 Oxford Road
Bournemouth
Dorset BH8 8EZ
Tel: 0845 070 7772

Derwent Living

1 Centro Place
Pride Park
Derby DE24 8RF
Tel: 01332 346477

Riverside

Riverside House
49 Western Boulevard
Leicester LE2 7HN
Tel: 0845 330 4900

English Churches Housing Group

Suites 1 and 2
First Floor Chatsworth House
Prime Business Centre
Raynesway
Derby DE21 7SR
Tel: 0845 0707073

Salvation Army Housing Association

26a Booth Close
Curzon Street
Nottingham NG3 1DH
Tel: 0845 3000 008

Friendship Care and Housing

5 The Triangle
Enterprise Way
NG2 Business Park
Nottingham NG2 1AE
Tel: 0845 6088110

Tuntum Housing Association

90 Beech Avenue
New Basford
Nottingham NG7 7LW
Tel: 0115 916 6066

Guinness Northern Counties

38 Moyne Gardens
Chellaston
Derby DE73 6UE
Tel: 0845 605 9000

Spirita Ltd

New Enterprise House
St Helens Street
Derby DE1 3GY
Tel: 01332 375800

Home

2 St Andrews House

William Sutton Homes

Holme House

Vernon Gate
Derby DE1 1UJ
Tel: 01332 294505

Manor Lane
Holmes Chapel
Cheshire CW4 8AF
Tel: 01477 539250

27.2 **Derby Homes**

Derby Homes
Floor 2 South Point
Cardinal Square
10 Nottingham Road
Derby DE1 3QT
Central allocations Tel: TBC
Contact Centre Tel: 01332 711000