

Allocation of Temporary Accommodation Policy – Procedure Document

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has a legal obligation to provide housing for some homeless clients and for some Social Care clients.
- 1.2 The housing market in Brighton and Hove has become very expensive and that it is projected to rise. Changes in Welfare Benefits means that increasing numbers of households are unable to afford to rent accommodation within the City.
- 1.3 As a result affordable temporary and emergency is increasingly difficult to procure within the city boundaries. BHCC, procures accommodation outside of Brighton and Hove (but within, or immediately adjacent to, our broad rental market area – the area a person could reasonably be expected to live taking into account access to facilities and services as defined by the Valuation Office Agency) where the cost of housing is less than it is in the city.
- 1.4 The decision in a recent Supreme Court case, *Nzolameso v Westminster City Council* [2015] UKSC 22), held that where a local authority is unable to accommodate homeless households in its own local authority area it must have a policy agreed by elected Members that outlines the process of allocating housing out of the local authority area.
- 1.5 BHCC Policy was ratified by Housing Committee on the 25 September 2015.

2. BHCC Policy

- 2.1 The policy separates households requiring temporary accommodation into three main groups. There will be circumstances when it is appropriate to allocate outside of these categories and each case will be considered on its own merits.
- 2.2 The category guidelines are:

Group A, where possible, offered accommodation in Brighton & Hove. The group consists of households who include:

- a child in secondary school within the city in their final year of key stage 4 (generally year 11)
- a child who has a Statement of Special Educational Needs and or an Educational health Care Plan and is at school in the city
- a child who is the subject of Child Protection Order Plan from BHCC
- someone who is officially caring for another person in the city as part of a care plan agreed with the relevant social care department.
- someone in permanent or settled employment who works anti-social hours within the city and would risk losing their employment (unless they can be transferred by their employer)

- someone who is receiving medical treatment that can only be provided by a specific medical facility within the city and that treatment requires a high volume of attendance at that medical facility (a minimum of 2 – 3 times per week).

Group B are prioritised for temporary accommodation in adjacent districts within the broad market rental area, or neighbouring districts in the Sussex sub-region which is approximately one hours travelling distance on public transport from the city. The group consists of households who include:

- An applicant who has their own transport to enable them to travel into the city
- a child in secondary school either in the city or neighbouring boroughs
- someone who is receiving medical treatment that can only be provided by a specific medical facility only available within the city
- someone who is receiving NHS treatment for mental health problems other than from their GP and/or is on the Care Programme Approach.

Group C all other homeless households would be offered temporary accommodation wherever the borough is able to procure it, provided that it is suitable for the household's needs. In all cases the council will seek to find accommodation as close to the city as possible. This group can include a household where there is no local connection with the city.

2.3 **Assessment of cases and procedure**

It is important to note that a household's individual circumstances (i.e. the household's needs) must always be taken into account when making an allocation of temporary accommodation. This means factors such as the distance from B&H, any disruption caused to employment, education or caring arrangements, access to medical facilities and proximity to other amenities.

2.4 At point of contact Officers making a referral must consider;

- Distance outside of the area.
- Own Transport – including additional costs and the impact of these
- Public Transport
- Employment
- Children's schools, including availability of school places to transfer to in the new area, any statement of special educational need or educational health care plan, and whether any child is at a pivotal point of education, i.e. GCSE or A level years.
- Medical Factors
- Other factors as raised by the applicant

2.5 The Officer must make a preliminary assessment on the available information and record this on Locata.

Go to client case; click on cases in sidebar; click single tick icon in top bar; choose go to temporary accommodation icon in drop down menu; click create task; complete drop down questionnaire; create task

- 2.6 Ensure that the task information and Housing Referral Form and banding has been provided to the duty officer securing emergency placement and has been passed to the temporary accommodation allocations team.
- 2.7 Emergency Placement and Temporary Accommodation will ensure that the client's banding is identified on the waiting list.
- 2.8 Any change to the banding as the result of new information provided must be recorded on Locata tasks and forwarded Emergency Placement and Temporary Accommodation Allocations.
- 2.9 Prior to any placement/allocation the Officer will check Locata to ensure that the banding has not changed and that the allocation remains sound.