

# Housing placements policy:

Location of accommodation offers for homeless households



# Introduction

Newham Council has a duty to provide accommodation if there is reason to believe that an applicant may be eligible, homeless and in priority need. If criteria is met, interim accommodation is arranged for the applicant until a decision has been reached on their application. If the Council decides that it owes the 'main homelessness duty' to an applicant, they will be offered temporary accommodation (under s193 (2), Housing Act 1996 as amended) until they find their own accommodation or are made an offer of accommodation that ends the duty, or the duty otherwise ends.

Where possible, the Council will allocate accommodation for homeless households within Newham. However, this is not always possible given the scale of demand and a shortage of accommodation in the Borough.

## The Policy

The Council has a policy to provide suitable accommodation within Newham wherever possible, except in cases where there is a specific reason why the household should not be accommodated within the borough (e.g. those at risk of violence in Newham). However, we are only able to do this subject to the supply of suitable and affordable accommodation being available within the borough.

When assessing the suitability of any accommodation for a homeless household, the Council will consider if the applicant can afford their housing without being deprived of basic essentials such as food, clothing, heating, transport costs and all other reasonable expenditure.

The Council will take account of the distance to the accommodation from the borough, travel time to employment,

education or caring responsibilities, access to essential medical facilities and support. Access to local amenities, services and transport.

Any allocation of accommodation, whether within the Borough or further away, will also take into account the Council's obligations under the Children Act 2004 including the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.


## Guidelines on the Location of Accommodation




Where it is not reasonably practical to provide accommodation or a Private Rented Sector Offer within the borough, the Council will take into account the distance to the accommodation from the borough and seek to place a household into accommodation as close to Newham as practicably possible.

## How the Council decides where you will be offered accommodation

The Council allocates accommodation categorised as A, B or C zones. All households will be placed in accommodation in Zone A if sufficient suitable properties are available and if affordable to them. If no suitable properties are available in Zone A, households will be placed in suitable properties in Zone B. If there are no suitable properties in Zone B, they will be placed in suitable properties in Zone C.

# Zone Criteria

Zone	Location	Priority Group
<p data-bbox="76 213 163 239">Zone A1</p> 	<p data-bbox="208 213 418 303">Located in the London Borough of Newham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="452 213 1021 303">● Families with children due to take GCSEs, AS, A Levels or BTEC exams (or equivalent) in the next six months</li> <li data-bbox="452 319 1003 376">● Households with one child (or more) who has an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan in Newham</li> <li data-bbox="452 392 1019 481">● Households with significant medical needs or a severe learning disability where one child (or more) attends a special school in Newham</li> <li data-bbox="452 497 1030 679">● Households with one child (or more) subject of a Child Protection Plan; or families who are currently helped by Children and Young People Services where it is confirmed and accepted by the Housing Needs Service that a transfer to another area would significantly impact on their welfare</li> <li data-bbox="452 695 1039 807">● Households where one person (or more) has a severe and enduring physical or mental health condition requiring intensive and specialist medical treatment and this treatment is only available in Newham</li> <li data-bbox="452 823 1041 941">● Households with one or more persons in receipt of a significant care package administered by the Council, and/or the NHS, which cannot be transferred to another area</li> <li data-bbox="452 957 1021 1110">● Households where one person (or more) has a severe and enduring mental health problem and is/ are receiving psychiatric treatment and aftercare provided by mental health services and have an established support network</li> <li data-bbox="452 1126 1046 1465">● Households who have a longstanding arrangement to provide care and support to another family member in Newham, who is not part of the resident household, and would be likely to require statutory health and social care support if that care and support ceased and there were no other relatives willing and able to provide that care or other suitable arrangements available. The family member would usually be a parent or sibling, but other relations might also be appropriate if no other relative was willing and able to provide care</li> </ul>

Zone	Location	Priority Group
<p><b>Zone A2</b></p> 	<p>Located outside Newham but within 30 minutes' travelling time by public transport from the nearest boundary of Newham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Households with children in key stages 4 and 5 but not due to sit GCSEs, AS, A Levels or BTEC exams (or equivalent) in the next six months</li> </ul>
<p><b>Zone B</b></p> 	<p>Located outside Newham but within 60 minutes' travelling time by public transport from the nearest boundary of Newham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Households with children in key stages 1, 2 and 3</li> <li>Households where one person or more is/are in permanent and settled employment where they have been continuously employed for a period of six months and for 16 hours or more per week. Women who are on maternity leave from employment and meet the above criteria are also included</li> <li>Households interested in moving out of Newham</li> </ul>
<p><b>Zone C</b></p> 	<p>Located outside Zone B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Households where risk of gender-based or gang and drug-related violence makes a move outside London preferable</li> <li>Households interested in moving out of London</li> <li>Households not meeting the criteria for Zones A1, A2 and B</li> </ul>

All homeless or potentially homeless households are individually assessed prior to placement to determine the suitability. Before an offer of accommodation is made, a matching exercise will be carried out, taking into account the specific requirements of the household.

## Where it is not possible to provide temporary accommodation or a Private Rented Sector offer within the borough for all households

The following circumstances will be taken into account when prioritising between households:

- Level of need relating to the welfare and safeguarding of any children in the household
- Level of educational need
- Identified risks posed by living in particular areas
- Permanent or flexibility of employment and number of hours worked per week
- Access to transport
- Level of need to be close to services and amenities
- Level of need to be close to health services
- Level of need to be close to support networks
- Level of need to be close to cultural or religious amenities
- Impact on caring responsibilities
- Affordability of the accommodation



- Impact of the relocation, and of occupying the accommodation on a continuing basis, on the wellbeing of household members
- Impact of the relocation, and of occupying the accommodation on a continuing basis, on the wellbeing of any children in the household, having regard to the Council's duty under the Children Act 2004 to safeguard and promote their wellbeing

## Emergency housing

The Council aims to keep a small number of vacant properties in order to provide accommodation for households who are homeless on the day and meet one or more of the local placement criteria, or to accommodate any household with an exceptional and emergency requirement to transfer immediately from temporary accommodation that is not local.

If no accommodation is immediately available that meets the household's identified needs, a homeless household can be placed on an emergency basis into

suitable accommodation that may only be suitable for a short period. This may be in a location that would not be suitable longer term. If it is deemed unsuitable for their longer-term occupation a household will be given priority to be transferred to alternative temporary accommodation as soon as a more suitable unit is available.

## Supporting households placed in accommodation out of Borough

All households provided with accommodation will be assessed at the point of placement in order to identify any support or resettlement needs arising from the location of the accommodation.

Households with identified support needs (for example, those with mental or physical health issues or learning disabilities, those with substance misuse issues, care leavers, and older people) will be offered assistance to contact any of the statutory services needed by that applicant as soon as possible and the offer will be made to the applicant for the Council to contact services on their behalf.

Where a particular area outside the borough is used by the Council on a regular basis for the provision of accommodation for homeless households, an information pack will be provided to households covering local services and facilities in that area.

The Council will also confirm the admissions policy and process for school places, and where possible develop links with schools admissions services, in any areas outside Zone B where large numbers of temporary accommodation placements are likely to be made.

## Reviewing the Policy

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually in consultation with the Lead Member with the responsibility for Housing to ensure its effectiveness.

Amendments to this policy will be made as and when required.

## Alignment with National Policy

This policy fully complies with the requirements of:

Sections 206, 208, and 210 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)

The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012.

The relevant sections of the DCLG Allocations and Homelessness Codes of Guidance

The DCLG Supplementary Guidance on the homelessness changes in the Localism Act 2011 and on the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 (November 2012) and the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 1996

Decisions and guidance from the Courts to local authorities regarding the suitability of temporary accommodation including the leading case of *Nzolameso vs Westminster Council*.

## How to apply

Applications for housing can be made online through My Newham ([my.newham.gov.uk](https://my.newham.gov.uk)) at home, our libraries have free computer usage and internet access ([newham.gov.uk/libraries-arts-culture](https://newham.gov.uk/libraries-arts-culture))