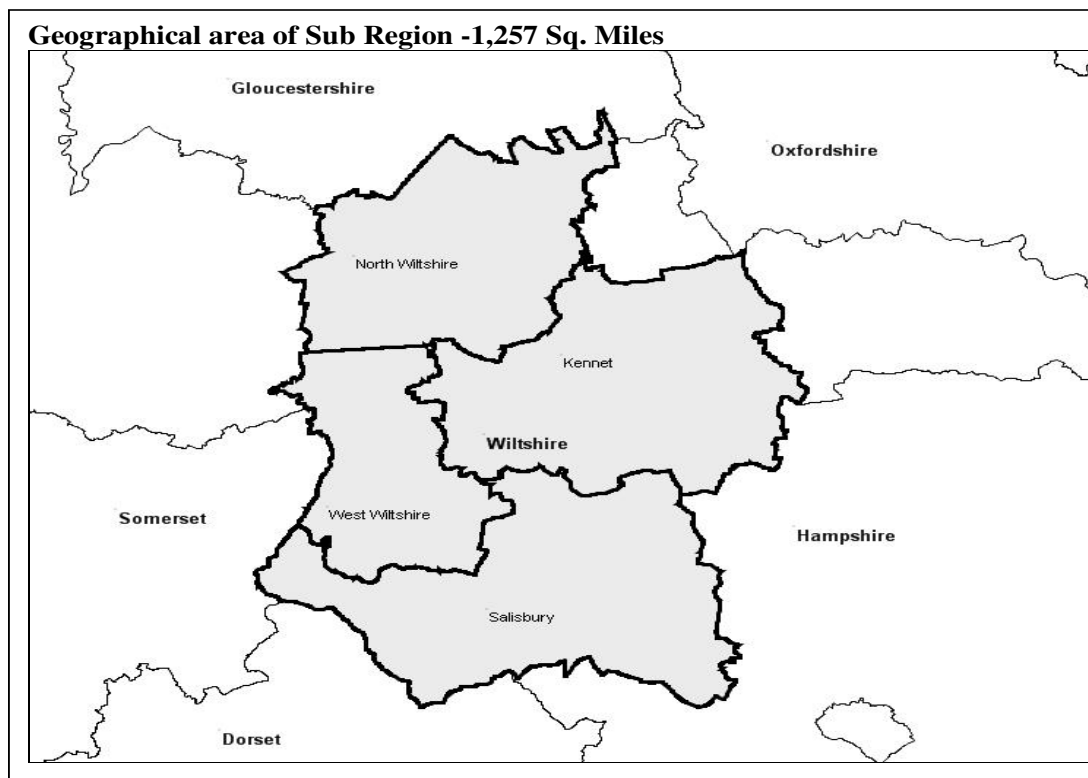


Homes **4** Wiltshire

POLICY

DRAFT 2007



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1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

A partnership of Local Authorities and housing associations within Wiltshire has come together to develop a shared vision and policy for letting and selling affordable housing in Wiltshire. West Wiltshire District Council, North Wiltshire District Council, Kennet District Council and Salisbury District Council, together with the housing associations providing affordable homes in Wiltshire intend to adopt a shared approach to providing a Choice Based Lettings service. This will lead to an integrated service across the four districts, which will improve access for housing applicants, create better opportunities for mobility for tenants and housing customers and create opportunities to share advertising and other services.

The partnership is called the Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership.

1.1 The Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership is made up of the following:

Kennet District Council
North Wiltshire District Council
Salisbury District Council
West Wiltshire District Council

New Futures	Raglan HA
A2 Winchester Housing	Ridgeway Community HA
Fosseway HA	Salvation Army HA
Guinness Trust HA	Sarsen HA
Hanover HA	Somer Community Housing Trust
Hastoe HA*	Shaftesbury HA
Homegroup	South Western Housing Society
Housing 21 HA	Sovereign HA
James Butcher HA	Swaythling HA*
Jephson HA	Westlea HA
John Groom HA	Western Challenge HA
Kennet HA*	West Country HA
Knightstone HA	West Wiltshire Housing Society*
Orbit HA	Wiltshire Rural HA

* Housing Associations without Charitable Status

1.2 The aims of Homes 4 Wiltshire

The Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership is actively working towards achieving the government target of having Choice Based Lettings Services in operation in all districts by 2010 and simultaneously developing a Countywide Choice Based Letting Scheme.

The objectives of the shared service will be:

- To meet the housing needs of households across the four districts, in the most effective way.
- To maximise housing opportunities for households across districts by eliminating artificial boundaries, at the same time promoting the principle of creating sustainable communities by ensuring that no areas with concentrations of households in need.
- To meet the statutory requirements of the Local Authorities, whilst working genuinely in partnership with the partner landlords to deliver a common vision for a fair and accessible service.
- To have a Common Housing Register
- To provide a simple to use, customer-friendly lettings service for all affordable housing vacancies in the County.
- To set up joint services which will improve the experience for our customers and simplify the application process.
- To widen the choice of properties for customers beyond district boundaries and provide seamless access to one housing register across a wide geographical area.
- To give preference to those with local connections but not at the detriment of those with housing need.
- To simplify processes and procedures for landlord organisations advertising their vacancies so that it does not matter which local authority area is involved, the procedures and lettings policy will be the same.
- To take full advantage of the economies of scale available through joint commissioning and procurement of services to generate savings.

2. EQUALITIES STATEMENT

Homes 4 Wiltshire and its partner associations is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services.

We aim to deliver quality services without prejudice and discrimination to meet the needs of all the community, regardless of age, cultural or ethnic background, disability, gender, marital status, religious or political persuasion or sexual orientation.

The Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership members will adhere to the Commission for Racial Equality's "Code of Practice in Rented Housing."

The Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership will continue to offer a translation service to anyone who needs to access housing services.

The homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership has adopted a corporate policy and action plan aimed at eliminating racial discrimination and valuing cultural diversity, that includes obligations on contractor organisations. Further policies and action plans are being developed to address the needs of other disadvantaged and under represented groups.

Effective monitoring of homelessness, the register and lettings outcomes will be routinely undertaken and the evaluation of this fed back into policy and service developments.

3. APPLYING TO REGISTER

Local Authorities have a duty to operate a housing register allowing members of the public to access housing. When allocating housing it needs to be allocated in accordance with need, giving priority to those in the highest need.

3.1 Who is ineligible

Homes 4 Wiltshire operates an open Housing Register.
Applicants are ineligible for the Housing Register

- (i) Persons from Abroad (s.160A(1))
- (ii) Persons whom the Authority have decided to treat as ineligible (s.106(1)(b)) – see below

Three requirements must be satisfied by an authority to treat an applicant as ineligible:

- (i) the applicant, or a member of his/her household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make him/her unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority;
- (ii) The unacceptable must be behaviour which would (if s/he were a secure tenant of the authority) entitle the authority to a

- possession order under s.84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any ground mentioned in Part 1 of Schedule 2 to that Act (other than ground 8). The Code advises that such conduct should be such as to justify and immediate order for possession ([4.22(ii)]); and
- (iii) The circumstance at the time his application is considered, he is unsuitable to be a tenant of the authority by reason of that behaviour.

The applicant will be entitled to be notified in writing of the decision and the grounds for it (s.160A(9)). The applicant may (if he considers that he should no longer be treated as ineligible by the authority) make a fresh application to the authority.

Applicants at the age of 16-17 will be required to have a support package in place and will be encouraged to engage in life skills training. A guarantor could be requested or a landlord may be more willing to accept a young person who has completed life skills training for a tenancy.

3.2 How to apply

The Wiltshire Housing Register will have one joint housing application; on this application the applicant will indicate their preferred areas within the 4 districts.

Applicants can apply for housing in a number of ways, these are detailed below:

- In person at any of the district councils or Housing Associations
- Completing an online application at www.?????.co.uk
- Completing an application and returning it to any of the district councils

Officers will be available to provide assistance in completing the application form if required.

3.3 Local Connection

Homes 4 Wiltshire covers four District Councils currently known as Kennet District Council, North Wiltshire District Council, Salisbury District Council and West Wiltshire District Council. The district councils along with Wiltshire County Council will become one council from April 2009.

Applicants with a local connection to the area covered by Homes 4 Wiltshire (please refer to Map) will be given preference over applicants with no local connection within the same band.

Further Local Connection restrictions will apply to properties subject to s106 agreements.

3.4 Identification required

3.4.1 What is required at the point of applying (this is the identification required to activate and assess banding):

- proof of identification for every applicant on the register (drivers licence, birth certificate, or passport)
- proof of address, to show you are currently living at the address stated on the application (Utility bill, bank statement council tax statement/bill, drivers licence).
- Proof of residency of children (Child benefit letter or evidence of Child benefit being paid into a bank account)
- Proof of pregnancy (if pregnant)
- Proof of income/benefits (Most recent payslip or bank statements)
- Proof of savings/stocks and shares
- If owner/occupier of property proof of the value of that property and other savings/stocks and shares
- Confirmation of immigration status and workers registration certificate (if relevant) for persons from abroad

Change in circumstances:

We would require documents, as appropriate, supporting the change in circumstances e.g. birth of child - birth certificate

3.4.2 The RSL's will ask the following at the point of letting in addition to information above?

- Proof of income/benefits (if working, the last three payslips, if claiming benefits, proof of benefits)
- Any change in circumstances since application i.e. value of the property for owner occupiers, savings/stocks and shares)

3.5 Fraudulent Applications

If an applicant/tenant does not disclose the full facts, give false information or does not inform of any important changes to their situation between the first contact with the Homes for Wiltshire and the time a decision about their case is made, the applicant may be breaking the law as set out in s171(i) of the Housing Act. Anyone doing so may be prosecuted by the Local Authority and if found guilty may be ordered to pay fine. The applicant will also lose any property that may have been allocated to them.

3.6 Deliberately Worsening Circumstances

Where there is evidence that an applicant deliberately worsened their circumstances in order to qualify for higher banding on the Homes 4 Wiltshire register, no priority will be given.

Examples of (but not limited to) where someone may have deliberately worsened their circumstances would include:

- Selling a property that is affordable and suitable for the applicant’s needs in order to qualify for higher bands of the register.
- Moving from an assured tenancy to insecure, overcrowded accommodation with family or friends in order to qualify for higher band.
- Moving family, friend and/or any other household into the property in order to qualify for higher band.

For an applicant to have deliberately worsened their circumstances there must be evidence that it would have been *reasonable* for the applicant to have remained in their original accommodation.

4 BANDING

4.1 Banding Structure

H I G H	Band	Active Applicants (Eligible to bid)	Not active
↑ ↓ L O W	Platinum	Exceptional Circumstances Statutory Requirements Move On	The applicant placed in an
	Gold plus	Applicants meeting multiple criteria within Gold (Refer to Matrix)	appropriate band but not active due
	Gold	Overcrowded High Medical Needs Insecurity of Tenure High Welfare or support needs Unable to live independently Harassment Underoccupation Multiple need Non Statutory homeless	to rent arrears, unsatisfactory landlords reference or Anti social behaviour. The applicant will remain inactive for the time specified
	Silver	Moderate medical needs Moderate welfare or support needs, Serious disrepair, Non-statutory overcrowding, Children in flats, Sharing/Lacking Facilities, Armed Forces, Tied Accommodation, General Applicants	after which they can request a review (see 5.2)
	Bronze	No Housing Needs, Deliberately worsening circumstances, Financial Capability, No local connection, Home owners	

4.2 Banding Categories

The criteria for each band are detailed below.

Platinum

Exceptional circumstances

Such as a medical emergency, applicants under the Witness Protection Programme, extreme harassment and ADHAC (full title).

Statutory Requirements

Applicants who meet the statutory requirements of a Local Authority in the Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership:

Statutory Homeless

Statutory overcrowded

Accommodation which has been assessed as a category one hazard under HHSRS and not able to be remedied.

Move on

Applicants in shared or supported housing accommodation where there is Supporting People funding and a move on protocol in place. The applicant must have been assessed as ready to move into independent living accommodation. Relevant documentation to be provided by support provider.

Gold Plus

Applicants meeting multiple criteria within Gold. **(Refer to matrix??)**

Gold

Overcrowded

Applicants living in overcrowded accommodation (in need of at least two additional bedrooms)

High medical needs

Applicants assessed as having high medical needs, who are living in unsuitable accommodation and whose medical condition would improve by being re-accommodated.

Insecurity of tenure

Where an applicant is under written notice to leave their accommodation and this has been verified by an officer. Including armed service applicants with priority need and local connection to the Wiltshire Council who have insecurity of tenure i.e. 93 day notice to vacate married quarters.

This criteria does not apply to those applicants assessed as intentionally homeless under the Housing Act 1996.

High welfare or support needs

Where an applicant needs to move to give or receive support that the applicant is unable to give or receive from their current accommodation.
Where a support agency has highlighted a need to move.
Where a family are a split household and have once lived together or are expecting a child together.

Unable to live independently

Applicants who have been identified as being unable to live independently and need supported accommodation. To include:
Someone who is already living independently unsuccessfully.
Someone living with family or friends in need of supported accommodation.
The assessment will not be a personal assessment, but should be instigated by a support worker or agency.

Harassment

Applicants who are suffering from serious harassment, violence, or threat of violence at their current property, providing evidence exists to substantiate their claim.

Underoccupation

Current partner RSL tenants under-occupying that accommodation and willing to move into a smaller home. For example an applicant in a partner RSL property not occupying all of the bedrooms and wishing to move to smaller accommodation. This criteria will only apply to tenants of a partner RSLs who are listed at the beginning of this document.

Multiple need

Applicants meeting multiple criteria within silver. (Refer to matrix)

Non Statutory homeless

Applicants who are homeless but in no priority need and who have a local connection with the County. Also applicants who are homeless but found to be intentionally so under the Housing Act 1996

Silver

Moderate medical needs

Applicants assessed as having moderate medical needs, who are living in unsuitable accommodation and whose medical condition would improve by being re-accommodated.

Moderate welfare or support needs

Where an applicant needs to move to give or receive support that the applicant is unable to give or receive from their current accommodation.
Where a support agency has highlighted a need to move.

Serious disrepair

Accommodation which has been assessed as a category two hazard under HHSRS and not able to be remedied.

Non-statutory overcrowding

Applicants living in overcrowded accommodation (in need of one additional bedroom).

Children in flats

Applicants with a child / children under 10 and living in a flat above the first floor with no access to a garden, who did not chose to live in the property through Homes 4 Wiltshire.

Sharing/Lacking Facilities

Applicant sharing facilities - e.g. kitchen, bathroom, toilet - with non-household members. Household members are people not included on the housing register application form. This does not include sharing with family members if the applicant has always done so or people who are living in bed-sit/lodgings where this type of accommodation is suitable for their needs.

Armed Forces

Applicants from armed forces currently stationed in the Wiltshire Council area, due to be discharged within the next 12 months and in need of affordable housing.

Tied Accommodation

Applicants who are retiring, being made redundant or whose contract is being terminated on health grounds and who are in accommodation tied to their work.

General Applicants

All applicants with a need for affordable housing with a local connection to the Wiltshire Council area. This criteria will not form any part of multiple need.

Bronze

No Housing Need

Applicants who are currently housed in a property that is appropriate for their needs in terms of size and facilities.

Deliberately worsening circumstances

See 3.6

Financial capability

See 5.5

No local connection

Applicants who are not resident within Wiltshire will be placed in Bronze.

Home Owners

Applications from home owners will normally be placed in the Bronze band, unless they cannot resolve their housing problem in any other way and: -

- Are vulnerable homeowners under threat of losing their home through financial difficulties or relationship breakdown
- Have serious medical or social grounds for priority
- Have a home which has been assessed as a Category One Hazard under the Housing Health & Safety Rating system (where there is no alternative measure available to remove the hazard)
This priority will only be granted to owners who, due to age, infirmity, economic circumstances or mental health issues, have been unable to maintain their home.

Any home owner housed from the Housing Register will be expected to sell their property within 12 months of accepting a tenancy unless there are legal grounds preventing the sale.

Home owners who have sufficient resources to purchase a property with assistance will be eligible to bid for Shared Ownership and Homebuy properties through this scheme.

5. HOMES 4 WILTSHIRE HOUSING REGISTER

5.1 Assessment of applications

The scheme will assess all applicants according to their level of housing need whilst facilitating more choice of accommodation to its applicants. Upon registration, eligible applicants will be placed into one of five bands in accordance with the guidelines set out in this chapter and in the light of appropriate advice. Applicants placed into bands will be prioritised by date of application.

Reasonable preference will be given to the following categories of people, as set out in s167 (2) of the 1996 Act:

- (a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act); this includes people who are intentionally homeless, and those who are not in priority need;
- (b) people who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3);
- (c) people occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- (d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds; and
- (e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

However, there is no requirement under the Act to give equal weight to each of the reasonable preference categories.

Factors that may be taken into account include:

- The financial resources available to the applicant.
- The behaviour of the applicant (or any member of the household) which affects his/her suitability to be a tenant. Examples may be unacceptable behaviour or rent arrears.
- Any local connection between the applicant and the area covered by the allocations scheme

Additional preference can also be given to people with an urgent housing need, such as victims of domestic violence, racial harassment, witnesses of crime and victims of crime at risk of intimidation amounting to violence and people with urgent medical reasons.

5.2 Transfers

All existing Housing Association / Council tenants living in the area covered by Homes 4 Wiltshire can register for transfer and will be assessed and banded accordingly.

Transfer applicants will be eligible to bid subject to a satisfactory landlord reference which includes;

- Right to transfer
- Clear rent account
- Satisfactory condition of the property

If an applicant is a joint tenant of a housing association/council and wishes to give up their part of the tenancy to live elsewhere they will be registered inactive until they have:

- Agreed in writing to relinquish their interest in the tenancy, or
- The application is supported by the housing association landlord, or made a successful application as a homeless household in priority need.

Existing tenants are entitled to apply to the partnership and will be subject to the same conditions as general applicants.

If an applicant is a joint tenant of a Council or Housing Association property and wishes to give up their part of the tenancy to live elsewhere, they will be inactive until they have:

- Agreed in writing to relinquish their interest in the tenancy, or
- The application is supported by the Council or Housing Association landlord, or
- Made a successful application as a homeless household in a priority need group

5.3 Inactive applicants

Any applicant eligible for accommodation will be placed in the appropriate band, however, where the applicant has rent arrears, Anti Social Behaviour or an unsatisfactory landlords reference they will be placed in the “inactive” section of the register. Applicants considered inactive will not be able to bid for accommodation until they are activated.

5.3.1 Rent Arrears:

General needs applicants with rent arrears will be allowed to register but they will be ineligible to bid for advertised vacancies until all debts are cleared.

Applicants with rent arrears will be assessed for activation if they have maintained a repayment plan for 3 months if in Platinum band. Applicants placed in Gold + and Gold band will be able to request a review of activation if they maintained a repayment and if there is an over riding need.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to request an assessment. As part of this assessment, consideration will be given the applicant’s personal circumstances, the level of the debt, the applicant’s history of arrears and any other factors that in “Homes 4 Wiltshire’s” opinion may be relevant.

Existing Housing Association/Council Tenants with rent arrears or any other forms of indebtedness to any other partners will have to clear all debts before they can request a transfer. Where the tenant with rent arrears has high need to move the landlord will consider whether to make an exception to this rule based on the individual merits of the case.

If at the point of nomination a debt is discovered discretion will be used to allow the nominee to clear it before a decision to withdraw the nomination is made.

Applicants with persistent history of rent arrears in any accommodation may have their application *excluded* from the Homes 4 Wiltshire Register. The decision exclude any application because of rent arrears will be taken by “Homes 4 Wiltshire”.

5.3.2 Anti-Social Behaviour

Applicants (or member of their household) with history of violent or anti-social behaviour, where an action such as NSP, ASBO/injunctions or other sanctions have been taken by an agency, will need to engage with appropriate support agencies and demonstrate change in their ways for 2 years before they can be activated. For applicants placed in Platinum band and temporary accommodation, this period can be reduced to 1 year and their behaviour while in temporary accommodation can be used to demonstrate the change in behaviour.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to request this review.

5.3.3 Unsatisfactory Landlord Reference

Applicants who are in breach of their tenancy for any other reason (such as the condition of the property) will not be activated until they satisfied the landlord of the condition.

5.4 Waiting Time

Applicants placed into bands will be prioritised by date of application; the date of application will be determined by the date the application has been received by the local authority. Applicants who are subsequently reassessed and are moved to a higher band will begin a new start date (the date moved into the higher band) and those applicants who are moved to a lower band will retain their original start date. [add start and application date – Laura]

5.5 Vulnerable Applicants Assessment

We will identify applicants who may need support from the information contained in the application form.

Where it is evident from the application form that a person may require support, contact will be made to establish what support or advice is required. This may in some cases require a home visit to assess a person's need.

A vulnerable applicant's policy has been produced to enable us to identify potential vulnerable people who may have difficulties in accessing Homes 4 Wiltshire.

The policy aims to highlight vulnerable applicants when initially assessing the application and from this the local authority will contact the applicant to arrange an assessment.

Please refer to the policy for full terms, which is located within the appendix. ([appendix to be added](#))

5.6 Financial Capability

The aim of the CBL scheme is to provide affordable housing for people who need it most. People who have the financial means to provide for themselves will be placed in Bronze on the register.

All applicants will be asked to provide evidence of their income, savings, capital assets and outgoings, which will be assessed against an affordability matrix.

The affordability matrix will assess the current house prices and rents and will be updated quarterly. A copy of the matrix is available on request.

Homes 4 Wiltshire reserve the right to check an applicants financial capability at the point of offer.

5.7 Adaptations

Properties that have been adapted to meet the needs of older or disabled people will be offered in the first instance to those applicants requiring adaptations.

5.8 Excluded Dwellings

Occasionally the Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership will exclude properties from the letting system. This will be on the following occasions.

- A vacancy is required to enable Local Authority to discharge their duty to statutorily homeless households.
- A vacancy is required for a customer with acute support needs from the supported housing
- A RSL needs to carry out a decant
- A vacancy is required under the high risk offenders' protocol.
- A vacancy is required because a Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership member has serious management reasons to provide accommodation.
- Other exceptional circumstances agreed by the partnership.

At the end of each year, the partnership will publish how many excluded dwellings have accrued.

5.9 Homeless Applicants

Applicants who are homeless, or believe they are under threat of losing their home will be assessed under a separate housing approach.

The Wiltshire Council will identify the applicant within one of the following categories:

5.9.1 Statutory Homeless

Applicants with a homeless duty accepted will be placed in platinum band and will be expected to actively bid for suitable accommodation. The applicants will be monitored and where an applicant is not bidding for accommodation a member of staff will actively work with them to ensure they bid when suitable properties become available ([see s?? of vulnerable applicants policy](#)).

Applicants with a homeless duty will be considered to have an urgent need for accommodation and will, therefore, be expected to accept an offer of a property they have bid for, should they refuse a property the reason for refusal will be considered. When a homeless applicants duty is discharged due to one offer being refused, they will be re banded accordingly and still allowed to bid, however, any temporary accommodation provided by Homes 4 Wiltshire will be withdrawn.

The applicant must put their refusal reasons in writing to Homes 4 Wiltshire and the RSL to assess if it is reasonable.

Applicants who are owed the main homelessness duty and occupying our temporary accommodation:

Temporary accommodation is in short supply throughout the county and we are under pressure from government targets to reduce the number of households and amount of time spent in temporary accommodation.

If the homeless applicant has not bid successfully within a 3 months period bidding assessment will take place. The assessment will take in to account the pressure on social housing in the area of their choice, the applicants' reasons for not bidding and any special requirements. Homes 4 Wiltshire may then bid on the applicant's behalf in order to make them a final offer of accommodation under Part IV of Housing Act 1996 and discharge the duty owed to them. The homes 4 Wiltshire will try to bid for a property in the community area of the applicant's choice but this cannot be guaranteed.

Where the applicant has been accepted under the homelessness legislation Wiltshire Council will cease to be subject to the homelessness duty if the final offer of accommodation is considered to be suitable and reasonable to occupy

5.9.2 Homeless & Insecurity of Tenure

Applicants who have insecurity of tenure or are homeless, however do not have a priority need will be assessed and placed in Gold band. Their circumstances will be monitored every 6 months to identify if they still require this priority.

5.9.3 Intentional Homeless

Applicants who have been found to be intentionally homeless can register their need unless they or a member of their household has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant (see point 3.1 ineligible applicants)

6. FINDING A PROPERTY

The majority of properties will be advertised through Homes 4 Wiltshire. The properties will be advertised in local newspapers, on the website and in all local authorities and housing associations main reception areas.

6.1 Bidding Cycle

The properties will be open to bidding on Thursday 00:01am and will close on Monday 23:59 pm.

6.2 Bidding Method

- Online – www.????
- By phone – Bid line 08???
- In person at Local Authority offices
- By text - ???

6.2.1 Assisted bidding

Staff are available to take bids over the phone for vulnerable applicants who have no way of accessing any option of bidding.

Training will be given to external agencies that would also be in a position to help their clients with bidding.

Vulnerable applicants will be identified from the application form. Homes 4 Wiltshire staff will contact potentially vulnerable clients and offer them a home visit or interview. Staff will seek to establish what the support needs are, and identify ways of enabling the applicant to participate in the lettings system.

If the applicant agrees, staff will contact any professional or voluntary worker from health or social services with whom the applicant is involved, to ensure that they understand the procedures and that necessary support is provided. All agencies funded through Supporting People will be able to provide their clients with help on housing issues.

6.3 Advertising

All properties are advertised to all active bands. There may be occasions when Platinum may not have the highest priority. This could be because of one of the following:

- Landlord wants to let a property sensitively. With agreement by the local authority the property will be advertised to a lower band.
- Following a new build development the landlord and the local authority will agree to a letting criteria. This will involve setting a quota of bands. For example 30 properties have been built 10 x Platinum, 8 x Gold Plus, 7 x Gold, 3 x Silver, 2 x Bronze.
- A Local Lettings Plan (LLP) may have been agreed between the landlord and the local authority. LLP's are considered when there is a specific problem on an estate. Certain criteria will be agreed and all adverts are adhered to this plan for a set period of time. For example, for a period of 6 months it may be agreed that any properties that become available on the estate will be allocated only to applicants in Band Gold.

Occasions where properties will not be allocated to applicants within the highest band will be at the Local Authorities discretion in agreement with the landlord.

The partnership will use an advert format, and the description of the property will include the following:

- Type of property
- Location of property
- Number of bedrooms
- Any adaptations done to the property
- Any services provided (e.g. warden)
- Rent level
- If you are able to have pets
- Heating type
- If it is a shared ownership property

- Service charges
- If the property is only suitable for an applicant with a local connection to that village
- Any restrictions to applying (i.e. age restrictions for sheltered housing)

6.4 Property Labelling

Properties will be advertised to:

Singles
Couples
Family + 1 child
Family + 2 children
Family + 3 children
Family + 4 children or more
Adult Households <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ People living with carers ➤ Brother & Sisters ➤ Joint tenancy (i.e. friends living together)

6.5 Monitoring of labelling and its effects on Lettings

Homes 4 Wiltshire will be responsible for monitoring the effect of labelling to ensure consistency and fairness throughout the letting process by monitoring;

- Number of properties advertised by type, area and landlord
- Number of properties with s106
- Number of bids and method of bidding
- Number of bids for each property by band
- Profile of those bidding, i.e. ethnicity, transfer, vulnerable, homeless applicant
- Number of accepted offers by band and application type
- Number of tenancies refused and reasons
- Number of properties re-advertised due to hard to let

The allocation policies of individual RSLs should complement the Lettings Policy agreed by Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership Members.

Under exceptional circumstances RSLs may refuse the application. In that case, it is RSL's responsibility to inform applicant of the reasons.

6.6 Short listing

From the close of bidding, properties will be available for shortlisting by Homes 4 Wiltshire. Properties will be shortlisted in accordance with banding priority (see 4.1) and waiting time. The details of the successful applicant will be forwarded to the RSL and the applicant will be notified.

7. FEEDBACK

All properties advertised will appear on the website once they have been accommodated. This will provide details of the successful applicant such as Application date and Band (no personal details will be advertised). This will indicate to applicants of the housing register what bands have been successful and how long they have been waiting for accommodation.

8. OTHER HOUSING OPTIONS

8.1 Supported Housing

(To be added)

8.2 Affordable Housing

Homes 4 Wiltshire will not only advertise affordable housing but will also aim to advertise:

8.2.1 Low Cost Home Ownership

Discounted homes will be advertised through the Homes 4 Wiltshire scheme. This is where market value is paid for a property less a percentage discount. The home is owned outright by the purchaser but when re-sold the price is set at market value less the percentage discount received when purchased.

All low cost home ownership purchasers must be on the Homes 4 Wiltshire register. All new properties and resale will be advertised through Homes 4 Wiltshire.

The applicant with the highest priority will be put forward to the vendor.

8.2.2 Homebuy

There are a number of schemes available for people who would like to buy a property but lack the financial resources to purchase on the open market:

Open Market Homebuy

From time to time we will advertise that funding is available for this scheme. In order to proceed the approved applicant will need to identify a suitable property to purchase with the benefit of a discounted loan. Priority is given to current council or housing association tenants.

New Build Homebuy (Previously Shared Ownership)

Applicants are able to purchase a new build home from a Housing Association. The part rent/part buy scheme allows approved applicants to purchase a share of a property and pay rent on the remainder. New Build Homebuy properties will be advertised through Homes 4 Wiltshire. Applicants

will be assessed for eligibility for the scheme and put forward to RSL's by Homes 4 Wiltshire in order of priority.

All shared ownership resales will also be advertised through Homes 4 Wiltshire.

8.3 Shortlisting of Affordable Housing ??

8.4 Private rents

Privately rented properties will also be advertised through the Homes 4 Wiltshire system. Landlords accredited with the Wiltshire Council can advertise their properties on Homes 4 Wiltshire. Applicants will be advised at the initial application stage what they will be eligible to apply for, including private rented properties.

8.5 Mutual Exchanges

Mutual exchanges will be advertised for those tenants who live in a council or housing association house within the Homes 4 Wiltshire area who wish to house swap.

It will work alongside the HomeSwapper site.

There will be no need for the tenant to be on the housing register for this service, however, the tenant must be a secured / assured tenant.

The tenant will enter their details on the website which will prompt an e-mail to a Housing Officer who will then upload the property into the advertising cycle.

Applicants will be able to contact each other direct via telephone or e-mail, details of which will be included in the advert.

Both tenants have clear rent accounts before an exchange will be granted.

Ingoing tenant able to agree to take on repair work, if required.

Restrictions may apply i.e. s106, household size, adapted properties etc.

9. REVIEWS & APPEALS

An applicant has the right to request a review of Homes 4 Wiltshire partnership decisions on the following:

If

- They consider they have not been awarded the correct banding.
- They want to appeal against being made inactive to bid.

A senior officer from the Homes 4 Wiltshire who has not been involved in the original decision will carry out the review

If

- Not having their application included on the Homes 4 Wiltshire register.
- Removing someone from the Homes for Wiltshire register other than at the applicant's request

The Homes 4 Wiltshire will advise an applicant in writing with the reasons why they have not been put on the register or have been removed.

Applicants will be notified of their right to request a review of this decision. The Homes 4 Wiltshire Partnership board will carry out the review. Anyone wishing to do so must advise the partnership in writing within 21 days, giving their reasons for doing so.

If the applicant does not agree with the outcome of the review, they have a further right to appeal on legal grounds only.

10. MONITORING

The scheme will be closely monitored by the Homes 4 Wiltshire to ensure that it is operating equitably and fairly. This will include:

- Number of registrations received
- Number of registrations completed within ten working days
- Number of exclusions
- Number of suspensions
- Number of properties advertised by type, area and landlord
- Number of properties with local connection label
- Number of bids and method of bidding
- Number of bids for each property by band
- Profile of those bidding, i.e. ethnicity, transfer, homeless applicant
- Number of accepted offers by band
- Number of tenancies refused at sign up
- Number of properties re-advertised due to hard to let
- Number of review requests
- Number of complaints

Other information will be collected in order to complete the P1E returns and in order to assess any additional areas of operation, as appropriate.

The partnership will review the policy on a quarterly basis and minor amendments will be made. Should any significant amendments be required, consultation would be undertaken with relevant stakeholders prior to a decision being made.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Acts of the UK Parliament

This policy has been framed with reference to the following Acts of the UK Parliament

Data Protection Act 1998

Homes 4 Wiltshire is committed to adhering to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. Individuals are entitled under the Act to request details of their personal data held by Homes 4 Wiltshire. There may be a charge for providing this information.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful for Homes 4 Wiltshire to discriminate against disabled people.

Freedom of Information Act 2004

Homes 4 Wiltshire complies with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2004.

Human Rights Act 1998

In accordance with articles 8 and 14 of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Lettings Policy ensures that the right to respect for applicant's private and family life is taken into account when assessing housing need. The housing need is assessed taken into consideration a variety of factors including support requirements; bearing in mind the need to not discriminate on grounds such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, or association with a national minority.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places the Council under a general duty to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. Homes 4 Wiltshire will not tolerate any form of racial discrimination.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 makes it unlawful for Homes 4 Wiltshire to discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in the provision of housing.

11.2 Vulnerable People

To be added