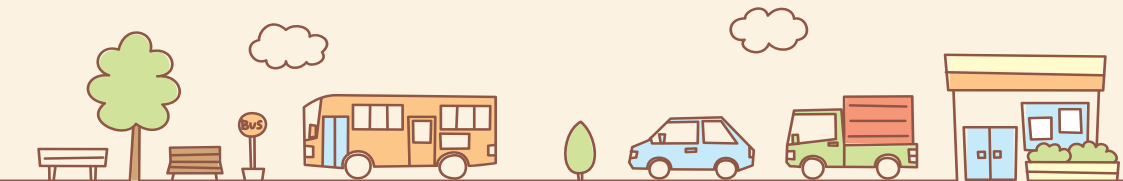


Housing Allocation Scheme 2013-2018

How the scheme works





This booklet is a guide to making an application to join the housing register in Slough.

It explains what is needed to assess an application, who can and cannot apply and how offers of accommodation are made.

It is a summary of the Housing Allocation Scheme 2013-2018. The full version can be viewed on the website www.slough.gov.uk.

Fraud prevention

The Housing Act 1996 Section 171 makes it an offence for anyone seeking assistance from a housing authority under Part 6 of the 1996 Act to:

- knowingly or recklessly give false information, or
- knowingly withhold information which the housing authority has reasonably required the applicant to give.

Ground 5 in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by section 146 of the 1996 Act) enables a housing authority to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by the tenants or a person acting as the tenant's instigation.

The council will not hesitate to prosecute any applicant(s) who have either been allocated a home or applied for a home by using false or fraudulent information.

At any point during this process applicants may be required to attend council offices to have photographs taken for identification purposes.



Making an application

The application is to join the housing register for an allocation of social housing. The application must be completed in full to be accepted.

An offer of accommodation may be anywhere in the borough, with any social landlord and for any property that meets housing need.

Applicants must be over 16 years of age and eligible within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

If you are a Slough Borough Council or housing association tenant you must contact your area housing officer for details of any other housing options that may be available.

Only main applicants and those persons that may reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant can be included on the application. Extended families must make separate applications. An unborn child does not count as part of the household.

The following supporting (photocopied) documents must be submitted with the application. These documents will be verified if an offer of accommodation is made:

- For each person listed on the application a birth certificate or valid passport.
- Proof of current and previous five years residence.
- Proof of current income and employment details.
- Proof of savings or equity.
- Evidence of training or volunteering.
- Proof of immigration status if subject to immigration control.



The council will inform the applicant in writing if the application has been successful and what priority has been awarded. Applicants will be given a unique reference number. This number must be given when making any enquiry to the council concerning their application.

If the application has not been successful the applicant will be notified in writing as to the reasons why.

Who can join the housing register

The law sets out groups of people who are considered to have reasonable preference or a need for the allocation of social housing.

People who are homeless (within the meaning of Housing Act 1996)

People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability)

People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)

Unsatisfactory/overcrowded or insanitary housing conditions

If an applicant or any member of the household ceases to be eligible then the application will be removed from the register.

If an applicant or any member of the household has a change in circumstance then any extra priority may be removed/added and/or the application removed from the register.



Who cannot join the housing register

The council has decided that the following applicant(s) or any person included on the application do not qualify for an allocation of housing and cannot join the housing register:

Applicants or members of their household who have not had a fixed address in the borough of Slough for a minimum of five consecutive years

Those who do not have a reasonable preference

Those who have been found guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a council or housing association tenant at the time of the application

Applicant(s) who have a joint gross household income exceeding £55,000

Applicants or members of their household that have over £20,000 in savings, investments or equity

Applicants who have refused two suitable offers of a secure (or introductory), assured or one of an assured shorthold tenancy

Applicants, or members of their household, that have any housing related debt, including rent arrears or mortgage arrears, in respect of their current property or previous accommodation

Transfer tenants (from social housing) who have failed to maintain their homes, have caused damage to their home or have breached the terms of their tenancy

Applicants, or members of their household who own any property or have exercised a council Right to Buy scheme within the past 10 years

Applicants, or members of their household who have been placed into Slough by any other local authority



How priority is awarded

Applicants on the housing register will be placed into one of three bands.

Band A	Urgent requirement to move
Band B	Requirement to move due to reasonable preference and additional preference
Band C	Requirement to move due to reasonable preference

Access to Band A

- Exceptional medical, welfare or disability cases will be referred by housing officers to the housing needs panel. Senior officers from housing and health services will decide Band A status. In all cases this priority is not given solely on the existence of a health problem but when the problem is exacerbated by the current living accommodation. A move to other accommodation must greatly improve this situation. Information received from any health professional will be taken into consideration. The council will not make payment for any medical information unless it specifically requests it. The council may also take advice from an independent medical advisor.
- The housing needs panel will also consider Band A status on urgent cases of hardship. Each case will be considered on its own merit. An example of Band A status maybe an urgent need for a full time carer to live near to the person they care for.
- If the accommodation occupied has extreme insanitary housing conditions we will ask for an assessment by our private sector housing officer. Only if these conditions are urgent or cannot be remedied will Band A status be given. An example of Band A status may be if a prohibition notice has been served.



- Severe overcrowding means that the property occupied is insufficient by at least two bedrooms of the standard the council uses to allocate property. Applicants who are severely overcrowded must be able to demonstrate that all other housing options have been exhausted.

In all cases the panel may recommend a move to accommodation in the private rented sector as a solution to any urgent housing need.

Access to Band B

Applicants must first meet the reasonable preference criteria and then meet one or more of the following additional requirements to have Band B status:

- Social housing tenants in Slough occupying a home in demand and willing to accept a smaller or lower demand home.
- Young people requiring move on accommodation from young persons accommodation.
- Approved two year record of fostering/adoption by SBC.
- Armed forces applicants with housing need as set out in section 166A (3) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended.
- Engagement with Family First programme.
- Leaving residential care.
- Relevant and eligible children leaving care.
- Working households - continuous full time employment for the past 12 months.
- Training or education - towards a recognised qualification.
- Volunteering - continuously for a registered charity for at least 12 months.

The information given in the application form, proof of circumstances or disclosure from any other council or other statutory agencies will be used to assess Band B status.



Access to Band C

Applicants must have a housing need as given in the reasonable preference criteria.

- Applicants who have been assessed as unintentionally homeless and in priority need.
- Applicants who have some need to move due to medical/welfare/disability or hardship grounds. Slough Borough Council or other social housing tenants must have approval from their neighbourhood manager to meet this requirement. The lettings manager will consider if this need cannot be resolved by renting in the private sector.
- Overcrowding means the property is insufficient by one bedroom of the standard the council uses to allocate property.
- Applicants sharing kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities with a separate household. Applicants who choose to sublet their home will not be considered.
- Applicants with some need to move to a particular locality in Slough, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship. An example of this may be a frail older person needing designated housing and living outside of the borough with close family living in Slough. The lettings manager will consider if this need cannot be met by renting in the private sector.



Making an offer of housing

Offers are made to those who have been waiting the longest in each band and match an annual lettings plan. The plan will be an estimate of the number of vacancies expected each year. Occasionally when a property becomes available which is particularly suitable for an individual applicant who has specific needs it may be allocated to them even if they are not at the top of the housing register.

New affordable social housing developments may require a policy to enable a balanced and sustainable community. This local lettings policy will be aimed at social households opting to downsize.

Applicants well positioned for an offer of housing will be visited at home to confirm that the information given to the council is correct.

Original documents will be verified and suitability to be a council or housing association tenant will be confirmed. Staff will also make enquiries with third party organisations to verify the information on applications. References and/or credit checks may be sought. Applicants who are unable to provide any information requested or whose circumstances have changed will be removed from the housing register and/or placed in the relevant band. Applicants who give false information will be prosecuted.

If the council is unable to contact an applicant, using contact details provided, within 24 hours (excluding weekends) the application will be cancelled. Any potential offer that may have been made will be counted as a refusal.

Applicants nearing the top of the housing register may be invited to multiple viewings on vacancies. If the offer is declined by the first applicant then it will be offered to the next person on the list until the property is accepted.

If an applicant is unable to respond to any deadline in accepting an offer then it will count as a refusal. Second viewings are not normally considered.



The property size that will be allocated for a particular household will be assessed according to the following guidelines and will be based only on the actual household composition. The council uses the Government's bedroom standard for housing benefit. It is recommended that applicants confirm any housing benefit entitlement when accepting a property.

Applicants are entitled to a bedroom each for the following groups:

- Single or co-habiting couple.
- Any child over the age of 16 years.
- Any two children of the same sex under the age of 16 years.
- Any two children any sex aged under 10.

Any applicant who rejects two offers that would have reasonably met housing need will be removed from the housing register.

An applicant may re apply to join the register after a minimum period of 24 months. Any future application will be assessed according to the eligibility criteria.

Renewing applications

An application must be renewed every 12 months.

The application will be reassessed annually to ensure that the eligibility and qualification criteria are met and the correct priority band is awarded.

If a renewal request is not returned within one calendar month then the application will be cancelled. No reminder will be sent and any late responses will not be considered.

Changes in circumstance

The housing needs section must be notified if there are any household changes that may affect an application. A new application form must be completed.



The application will be reassessed and any extra priority may be removed and/or the application removed from the register.

Applicants who fail to notify the council of any changes may be prosecuted.

Cancelling an application

An application will be cancelled under the following circumstances:

- If an applicant is re-housed.
- If an applicant fails to respond to annual review letters or to officer contact requests.
- If an applicant is no longer eligible or qualifies.
- At an applicant's request.

Appeals and reviews

An applicant can request a review of the following:

- The assessment of an application.
- The priority awarded or decision to reduce priority.
- The cancellation of an application.
- The suitability of any offer made.
- The housing panel decision.

A senior officer will conduct any review relating to eligibility and qualification for the housing register.

A reviewing officer will conduct any review regarding the suitability of offers of accommodation.

The request for a review must be made within 21 days of the original decision.

Applicants may wish to take independent legal advice.

This document can be made available on audio tape, braille or in large print, and is also available on the website where it can easily be viewed in large print.

Housing Allocation Scheme 2013-2018 - How the scheme works

If you would like assistance with the translation of the information in this document, please ask an English speaking person to request this by calling 01753 475111.

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज में दी गई जानकारी के अनुवाद किए जाने की सहायता चाहते हैं तो कृपया किसी अंग्रेजी भाषी व्यक्ति से यह अनुरोध करने के लिए 01753 475111 पर बात करके कहें.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ 01753 475111 ਉੱਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ।

Aby uzyskać pomoc odnośnie tłumaczenia instrukcji zawartych w niniejszym dokumencie, należy zwrócić się do osoby mówiącej po angielsku, aby zadzwoniła w tej sprawie pod numer 01753 475111.

Haddii aad doonayso caawinaad ah in lagu turjibaano warbixinta dukumeentigaan ku qoran, fadlan weydiiso in qof ku hadla Inriis uu ku Waco 01753 475111 si uu kugu codsado.

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز میں دی گئی معلومات کے ترجمے کے سلسلے میں مدد چاہئے تو، براہ کرم ایک انگریزی بولنے والے شخص سے 01753 475111 پر کال کر کے اس کی درخواست کرنے کے لئے کہیں۔