

Slough Borough Council
Housing Allocation Scheme
2018– 2022

DRAFT

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Section 1

Equality & Diversity

Slough Borough Council has a long commitment to progressing the equalities agenda; our track record in delivering culturally sensitive, equitable services to an increasingly diverse community is strong. The council seeks to foster an environment in which a person has an equal entitlement to high quality services, employment and opportunities for personal development, regardless of ethnic or racial origin, religion or belief, disability, age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or family circumstance.

Section 2

The Housing Register

Slough Borough Council will operate a managed Housing Register and will accept onto the Housing Register only those applicants who are over 16 and:-

- Who meet the eligibility criteria
- Who qualify by meeting the Reasonable Preference criteria
- Do not fall into an ineligible non-qualifying category

Applicants who meet these criteria and are accepted onto the Housing Register will be placed into one of three bands.

The band they will be placed in will be determined by their circumstances. Additional Preference will be awarded to applicants who meet the criteria set out within this scheme.

Applicants who are aged 16/17 year old will not normally qualify for an allocation until reaching the age of 18.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate their ability to meet any rental costs associated with an offer of social housing.

It should be noted that the Allocations Scheme cannot cover every eventuality. In special cases where there are exceptional circumstances, the Service Lead for Strategic Housing Services has discretionary power to award exceptional priority and approve offers of housing, taking into consideration all factors relevant to housing and social needs. Where this document refers to rules and criteria for determining priority and eligibility for housing, subject to any legal constraints, discretionary powers may be used to deal with special cases which may need to be treated as exceptional.

To make sure the allocations scheme is operating fairly and within the law, the Director of Place and Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, will be able to approve any minor amendments to the Scheme.

Our policy on choice

When making an application to join the Housing Register, qualifying applicants and members of their household, will be making an application to be housed:-

- a. Anywhere within the borough of Slough
- b. In any tenure or tenancy type which meets their needs, whether council managed accommodation or a registered provider, normally a Housing Association
- c. In any size and type of property which meets the needs of the qualifying applicant and their household, as determined in this Allocation Scheme

Where more than one eligible applicant wishes to have a shared application, they will be joint applicants. Where applicants are applying jointly, both applicants must meet the qualification criteria.

All eligible and qualifying applicants will be placed on the Register but when the Council comes to decide what size or type of property the applicant is to be considered for, it will take account of whether other members of the applicant's household are eligible or qualifying persons. The Council will also take into account a number of factors in making a decision on allocation.

For the purpose of the scheme, the following persons may be considered on the application:-

- A Care Worker – where there is an identified need for a resident full time carer
- Dependant Adult – where a relative requiring care normally resides with the applicant and there are no other housing options to consider
- Husband/Wife/Partner/Civil Partner
- Dependant Children - this means the main applicant provides for the child and is in receipt or would normally qualify for Child Benefit and/or Tax Credits or other welfare benefits that include an element of provision for the dependent child

The Council will not accept the same children on more than one application and will not accept children who are housed elsewhere. A divorced or separated parent, who has staying access with a child or children, may not include them on his or her application. In the case of children, the test of normal residence as a member of the family will require residence as opposed to “staying” or “staying contact”, even in cases of joint custody or joint residence or similar orders.

If the applicant's household includes only eligible and qualifying members, due to the high demand for large properties, the council may not include

certain members of the household, such as non-dependant adult children, other adult relatives, non-relatives or lodgers, when determining what size or type of accommodation the applicant will be considered for in this Scheme. Adult non-dependants are strongly advised to make an application in their own right. The Council will take into consideration any non-dependant who is part of a statutory homeless family, only if no other solution can be offered.

In the case of large households, which may therefore not be accommodated together under this Scheme, the council may discuss with the applicant how best the other members of the household may obtain accommodation, whether from the council or otherwise.

Section 3

Eligibility

Eligibility to join the Housing Register is determined nationally by law. The categories that are not eligible are set out in the Housing Act 1996 Part 6 section 160ZA (as amended) and in regulations made under that section. Applicants covered by those categories below will not be registered.

Section 160ZA reads:-

Allocation only to eligible and qualifying persons: England

- (1) A local housing authority in England shall not allocate housing accommodation —
 - a. to a person from abroad who is ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by virtue of subsection (2) or (4), or
 - b. to two or more persons jointly if any of them is a person mentioned in paragraph (a)
- (2) A person subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 is ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by a local housing authority in England unless he is of a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State
- (3) No person who is excluded from entitlement to housing benefit by section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (exclusion from benefits) shall be included in any class prescribed under subsection (2)
- (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations prescribe other classes of persons from abroad who are ineligible to be allocated housing accommodation by local housing authorities in England

Persons who fall into these categories will not be considered by the Council to be part of the household of an applicant, even if the applicant is themselves eligible.

If a person who has been admitted to the Register ceases to be eligible, applying the above criteria, he or she will be removed from the Register.

Section 4

Who Qualifies for the Register

Eligible applicants on the Register will be those who (either by themselves or by the inclusion of a household member on their application form) fall within the persons accorded a statutory reasonable preference category. For these purposes, the Council will apply the national categories of Reasonable Preference set out in the legislation. Those categories are:-

(see Housing Act 1996, 166A (3))

- a. People who are homeless (within the meaning of Housing Act 1996 Part 7)
- b. People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under Housing Act 1996 section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3)
- c. People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- d. People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability)
- e. 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)

Section 5

Who does not qualify for the Register

Even if an applicant is eligible and would have satisfied the Reasonable Preference criteria, they will not be admitted to the Housing Register (and therefore will not qualify for an allocation) if they come within one of the following class of person, which the Council has decided are classes of non-qualifying persons for the purposes of this Scheme.

1. Applicants or those who can reasonably be expected to reside as part of their household, who have been convicted of housing or welfare benefit related fraud, where that conviction is unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Any person may re-apply once this conviction is spent.
2. Applicant(s) who have a joint gross household income exceeding £55,000.
3. Applicants or members of their household that have over £20,000 in savings, investments or equity. Monies that are gifted or transferred to another will be taken into consideration when assessing assets.

4. Applicants or members of their household who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour, which makes them unsuitable to be a tenant. Includes but is not limited to:-
 - a. Persistent failure to pay rent and/or service charges
 - b. Anti social behaviour perpetrated by the applicant or a member of his or her household which has caused a nuisance
 - c. Illegal or nuisance behaviour that has required Police or legal intervention
 - d. Threats of and/or actual violence to any persons or members of their household
 - e. Racial harassment or hate crime
 - f. Obtaining a tenancy by deception and/or attempting to obtain a tenancy by fraud or deception

When making decisions regarding unacceptable behaviour, the Council will consider when the unacceptable behaviour took place. Consideration will be given to the length of time that has elapsed and whether there has been a change in circumstances or behaviour.

5. Applicants who have been made one suitable offer of a secure (or introductory/starter) or assured tenancy anywhere within the borough of Slough, who have failed to accept the offer. Applicants and members of their household who have failed to accept a suitable and reasonable offer will be cancelled from the Register for a period of no less than 24 months.
6. Applicants who have accepted a suitable offer of a secure (or introductory/starter) or assured tenancy anywhere within the borough of Slough and have then terminated their tenancy within a 24 month period of the tenancy starting.
7. Applicants who have refused a suitable offer of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy made through the Council's Social Lettings Agency or Rent Deposit Scheme.
8. 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 (This may be waived if agreement has been reached to clear the debt through a payment plan and this has been adhered to for a reasonable period). The Council will consider a period of up to 10 years prior to applying to the Register and consideration will be given to applicants with mitigating circumstances. In the case of private accommodation, references may be sought from previous landlords/lenders.
9. Tenants who have failed to maintain their homes, have caused damage to their home or have breached the terms of their tenancy, either by their own behaviour or that of a member of their household.
10. Applicants who reside in Slough but have been placed in:-

- a. Temporary accommodation or assured shorthold accommodation by another Council or Housing Association or agents, acting on their behalf
 - b. Institutional or residential accommodation by any other local authority, housing provider, health service or specialist provider
11. Any applicant who has committed acts of violence and/or aggression against any employee of the Council. Any person using threats (verbal or other) or actual violence towards council staff will be removed from the register or will not be allowed to join the register.
12. Applicants or any members of their household who have previously purchased their home through right to buy/acquire (in the last 10 years), will also not be allowed to join the Register.
13. Applicants or any member of their household who own property in this Country or abroad. This includes and is not limited to:-
 - a. Those who are acquiring or have an interest in a freehold or leasehold residential property, including any property purchased under the right to buy/acquire/shared ownership/equity scheme
 - b. Those who may have gifted a residential property or equity to another within the last 10 years
 - c. Those who own or part own a houseboat or a fixed site mobile home
 - d. Those who have a financial interest in any such property where there are unresolved legal or financial issues
14. Secure, assured, flexible or fixed term tenants, holding a joint tenancy, where one tenant is absent.
15. Applicants who have continuously lived in Slough for less than five years up to and including the date of their application or the date on which a decision is made on their application whichever is the later.

The requirement of five year continuous residence may not apply where the applicant or any member of the applicant's household, falls into one of the following:-

- a. Forces applicants meeting additional preference
- b. A person who:-
 - i. Is already a secure or introductory tenant of the Council or of any other local housing authority in England, or who is already an assured tenant of housing accommodation held by a private register provider of social housing in England and
 - ii. Works in the district of the Council or has been offered work in the Council's district and the Council is satisfied that he or she has a genuine intention of taking up the offer of work

- (work or an offer of work which is short-term or marginal, ancillary to work in another district or voluntary work will not be considered as “work” for these purposes) and
- iii. Has a need to move to a particular locality in the Council’s district because of (ii) above.
 - c. Victims of domestic abuse escaping violence from another area and currently living in a charitable registered refuge in Slough
 - d. A person with a custodial sentence who would otherwise meet the residence criteria
 - e. A young person immediately taking a higher education course after leaving secondary education and who would otherwise meet the residence criteria
 - f. Households who have been awarded Reasonable Preference under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII s.193(2)
 - g. Relevant and looked after children residing in Slough
 - h. Key workers

Priority on the Register

Applications will be placed into one of three bands, as per assessment by the allocations officer.

The three bands are:-

Band A	Urgent or exceptional need to move
Band B	Need to move due to Reasonable Preference AND Additional Preference
Band C	Need to move due to Reasonable Preference

Band A –Urgent need

The Council will consider whether a person has a need to move due to an urgent circumstance:-

1. Where an applicant, or any member of his or her household, has a life-threatening illness or disability and the accommodation occupied poses an immediate and exceptional risk of serious harm
2. Where an applicant is in severely overcrowded accommodation which poses a serious health hazard and that housing need cannot be met by other options, such as renting in the private sector. The property occupied must be insufficient by at least three bedrooms, as per the standard the council uses to allocate property. The council will consider if severe overcrowding has been brought about intentionally to gain any advantage
3. Where an applicant or any member of his or her household requires urgent re-housing on welfare grounds as a result of violence or threats of violence, including intimidated witnesses and those escaping serious anti-social behaviour or domestic violence

4. Where the local authority have served a demolition or prohibition order under the Housing Health and Safety Rating system where category 1 hazards exist and cannot be rectified and continuing to occupy the accommodation will pose a significant and immediate risk to the applicant's health or any member of his or her household
5. Where a Slough Borough Council tenant has succeeded to a tenancy and the property is too large for their needs
6. Slough Borough Council tenants who are required to move due to the redevelopment of their homes or where major works are required
7. Agreed statutory homeless cases in temporary accommodation where there is an urgent need to free up accommodation
8. Where the Service Lead has agreed an exceptional case

The Housing Needs Panel will make decisions concerning the award of urgent needs. The Allocation Manager in conjunction with the temporary accommodation team will prioritise the need to move an agreed homeless household.

Access to the Housing Needs Panel is made on a strict referral basis. For Slough Borough Council tenants, Neighbourhood Housing Officers will refer those experiencing urgent management problems. All other cases will be referred by the Allocations Officer.

The panel is made up of at least three of the following core representatives:-

Housing Allocations Manager or equivalent (Chair)
 Neighbourhood Housing Manager
 Community Mental Health - Housing Representative
 Specialist Health Visitor
 Senior Occupational Therapist

In the case of a split decision, the Chair will have the final decision.

If required qualified medical opinion will be sought from the Council's independent medical advisor (IMA).

Additional Preference – Band B

The Scheme allows the Council to give additional preference to particular descriptions of people who are already within the reasonable preference categories. Taking into account local priorities and circumstances, the Council have identified the following descriptions of people to give additional preference.

1. Applicants making a community contribution, as defined below:-
 - a. Working Households - Applicants where at least one applicant is in employment. For the purposes of this scheme 'employment' means:-
 - Single applicants working 16 hours or more per week

- Joint applicants working 24 hours or more per week

Employment must be in the UK and for a continuous period of 6 months up to the point of application and the same at the point of offer. The council will disregard a period of up to three months whereby an applicant ends employment and becomes a job seeker and finds other employment within this timeframe. Workers employed in educational establishments will not be penalised for unpaid holiday closures.

b. Training and Education - Applicants where at least one applicant is in training or education. For the purpose of this scheme studying or training means:-

- Single applicants studying or training 16 hours or more per week
- Joint applicants studying or training 24 hours or more per week

Studying or training must be in the UK and for a continuous period of 6 months up to the point of application and the same at the point of offer. It must also be work related and lead to a recognised qualification. It may also be supplementary to any requirement by an employer.

c. Volunteering - Applicants where at least one applicant is volunteering. For the purpose of this scheme, volunteering means:-

- Single applicants volunteering 16 hours or more per week
- Joint applicants volunteering 24 hours or more per week

Volunteering must be for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer. Volunteering must be on a formal basis and for an organisation accredited by the Slough Council for Voluntary Services.

2. Young people aged 16 to 21 (or up to 24 if in further/higher education), who have housing, or support needs and who have left or are due to leave the care of Slough Borough Council.
3. Single applicants leaving residential care.
4. Applicants who have been approved by Slough Borough Council to foster or adopt and have an existing track record of fostering or adopting for not less than 2 years.
5. Armed forces applicants with urgent housing needs who fall within the criteria for additional preference set out in section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended. This is applicable to a person who:-
 - a. Is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service
 - b. Formerly served in the regular armed forces

- c. Has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner where the spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces; and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
 - d. Is serving or has served in the reserve forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service
6. Households who have actively and positively engaged with the Council's Troubled Families programme and have shown real progression within the programme.
 7. Social Housing tenants who are under occupying a secure or assured tenancy that require a move to smaller accommodation. Private Registered Providers must agree that the resulting vacancy is given to the council as a nomination for another household in need on the councils housing register.
 8. The Right to Move - Local housing authorities are required by law to give additional priority to applicants who meet the criteria as set out within the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015.

The Council will take into consideration:-

- The distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home
- The availability and affordability of transport, taking into account level of income
- The nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home
- Single applicants must be contracted to work 16 hours or more per week and joint applicants for 24 hours or more per week
- Other personal factors, such as medical conditions and child care, which would be affected if the tenant could not move

When a tenant has been offered a job and needs to move to take it up, they must be able to demonstrate a genuine intention to take up an offer of work. The Council will need to verify evidence that confirms the intention, which could include a contract of employment or a formal offer letter. The Council may contact the employer to verify an application at the point of joining the Housing Register and also when considering an offer of a property.

9. Households assessed with a need to move on medical grounds where the current housing conditions are having an adverse impact on the medical condition of the applicant or a member of the applicant's household. The condition or disability will be severe and remaining in the current home will contribute to deterioration in health. Such needs may relate to:

- A mental illness or disorder
- A physical or learning disability
- Chronic or progressive medical conditions (e.g. MS, HIV/AIDS)
- Infirmity due to old age

If required qualified medical opinion will be sought from the Council's independent medical advisor (IMA).

10. Households who and have been awarded Reasonable Preference under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII s.193(2) and meet the qualification criteria for the scheme
11. Key worker - The council is aware that there are some vital services, for example in education and social care, which are being hampered in their recruitment of key staff because of the difficulty of securing suitable and affordable accommodation.
The council plans to adopt a scheme for assisting key workers who may not be able to afford to buy a home or to pay market rents. Key workers can also be prioritised for other re housing opportunities including shared ownership schemes with our housing partners and affordable rented homes through the Council's subsidiary housing company.
The scheme will only apply to those with an identified recruitment and retention need.

Reasonable Preference – Band C

The Council will apply the national categories of Reasonable Preference set out in the legislation.

1. Households who and have been awarded Reasonable Preference under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII s.193(2) and do not meet the qualification criteria for the scheme
2. People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under Housing Act 1996 section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3)
3. Households occupying overcrowded housing. Overcrowding means the property is insufficient by one bedroom of the standard the council uses to allocate property. Where a property has two separate living/reception rooms, the second and any subsequent living room will be counted as a bedroom for the purpose of assessing overcrowding. Applicants who choose to sublet may not meet this criteria
4. Households occupying insanitary housing conditions and lack or share kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities with a separate household. Applicants who choose to sublet may not meet this criteria

5. Households 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)
6. People living in supported hostel accommodation

If a person who has been admitted to the Register ceases to qualify applying the above criteria, he or she will be removed from the Register.

Section 6

Offers of Accommodation

Properties becoming available for allocation under this Scheme will normally be treated as available for letting to qualifying applicants in a particular band or bands. Such a property will be allocated to the applicant who has waited longest in the relevant band, unless there are circumstances that support the objective of effectively matching available housing stock. Such exceptions are:-

- When a property becomes available which is suitable for an individual applicant who has specific needs, in particular relating to a disability or medical condition or for extra care accommodation
- When dealing with under-occupation or assisting a transfer chain
- When decanting tenants whose homes are to be included in regeneration programmes or have major works
- Where there are a defined permitted number of persons allowed to occupy a property
- Where a sensitive let is required
- Where there is an exceptional circumstance
- Key worker

In these or similar circumstances, a senior officer will need to agree that the applicant may be allocated the property ahead of applicants who have waited longer.

Size, Type and Suitability of Housing Offers

Those accepted onto the Housing Register will be given one offer of suitable accommodation.

If a Council or Housing Association tenant is prepared to move to a property with fewer bedrooms then it is in the Council's interest to ensure that a move is facilitated as quickly as possible. The number of direct offers made will be at the discretion of the Allocations Team.

All other applicants who have failed to accept one suitable offer of accommodation will be removed from the housing register.

The council are unable to consider pet ownership when allocating property, unless it is a registered assistance animal such as a guide dog. Any refusal of an offer of accommodation on these grounds will be considered as unreasonable.

Due to the limited supply of accommodation in the borough, we are unable to consider the personal parking requirements of applicants.

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. In some cases the council will count any second living room as a bedroom for allocation purposes.

Applicants are normally 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 the age of 10
- A disabled child who cannot share a bedroom with another child
- A resident Care Worker

Applicants offered property due to the redevelopment of their homes or where major works are required will be entitled to the bedroom number on a like for like basis of their current home.

The Council will discharge any duty owed under s.193 (2) where one offer of accommodation is refused. The offer will constitute the final offer for the purposes of s.193(7).

Each year the Council will publish the number of lets made to each band by bedroom size. Consideration will always be given to applicants in higher priority bands. Applicants in Band A will always be considered first followed by those with an additional preference, Band B and then a reasonable preference, Band C.

Transfer Chains

In order to maximise the use of our stock and meet the needs of as many applicants as possible, the process of establishing transfer chains will be supported. Transfer chains may also be used to enable a particular type, size or location of property to be made available for a specific priority housing need. A transfer chain is created when an identified 'chain' of social housing tenants is waiting to move into the next property in the chain. To ease this process, the council will consider offering a suitable vacancy to the tenants at the head of the chain, enabling everyone in the chain to move.

Older Persons Accommodation

In order to qualify for older person's accommodation, all applicants must meet the qualifying criteria as set out in the Scheme.

In addition the applicant(s) must meet the following qualifying criteria:

1. Be a minimum age of 50

Extra Care housing for the over 55's will be considered on the basis of care and support needs.

Local Lettings Plans

New affordable and social housing developments (both housing association and Council and through an agreed partnering arrangement) and some existing estates or communities, may be subject to a local lettings policy adopted by the Council.

A local lettings policy will set criteria for nominations or allocations (including transfers, beneficial transfers and moves due to best use of stock) to homes in the relevant area, aimed at achieving or maintaining balanced and sustainable communities or to address or prevent management problems and/or antisocial behaviour.

Priority will also be given in a local lettings policy to households opting to downsize.

Section 166A(6)(b) of the Housing Act 1996 enables local housing authorities to allocate a particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall into the reasonable preference category. This section enables the council to set aside homes on a particular estate or certain types of properties across the housing stock, for applicants who meet specific criteria, as set out in a Local Lettings Plan applicable to those properties.

Section 7

Administration of the Scheme

The guide 'How the scheme works' will outline all the procedural elements for the Scheme.

Following receipt and processing of an application, applicants will be informed in writing as to whether or not:-

1. They have met the Eligibility criteria
2. They have met the Reasonable Preference criteria
3. They are in a Non-Qualifying class

4. They have been registered on the Housing Register (if so, with the date of registration)
5. Any Additional Preference has been awarded

If requested by applicants, the council will provide in writing:-

- Information relating to decisions taken based upon the facts of the case which determine whether or not to allocate particular housing
- Information providing, and as far as is possible, the predicted waiting time until accommodation is likely to become available. The time period an applicant on the Housing Register is likely to have to wait is difficult to predict due to the unpredictable availability of suitable properties and varying volume of applications

Requesting a Review

1. An applicant may request a review of the decision within 21 days of the original decision:-
 - a. Whether or not the offer made to them is suitable
 - b. That they are ineligible to join the Housing Register for an allocation due to them being subject to immigration control (160ZA (2))
 - c. That they are not a person qualifying to join the Housing Register
 - d. That any particular facts are or are not going to be taken into account in considering whether to allocate them accommodation
2. The applicant shall be notified in writing of the decision of the review and the grounds for that decision. The Council aims to respond to review requests within 56 days.
3. An applicant found not eligible or to be non-qualifying may make a fresh application if they feel that they should be treated as an eligible or qualifying applicant. A new application will only be considered should there be a material change in circumstances, which would reverse the original decision.

There is no further right to a review of a decision. If an applicant remains dissatisfied, they may seek independent legal advice. Applicants may also pursue a complaint through the council's formal complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied, having done so, they may then take their case to the Housing Ombudsman.

Fraud Prevention

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
- 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 same test applies to assured tenants of private registered providers of social housing (Ground 17, Schedule 2, Housing Act 1988).

It is important for Slough Borough Council to protect scarce housing resources. Any applicant seeking to obtain housing by making a false or misleading statement, failing to inform the Council of a material fact relevant to the outcome of their application or of a change in circumstances, will have their application immediately cancelled.

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.

Deliberate worsening of circumstances

Where appropriate, a decision may be made to exclude the applicant from the Housing Register, where an applicant or member of the household has deliberately worsened their circumstances in order to gain priority.

Members of the Council, Staff Members and their Relations

In order to ensure that the Council is seen to be treating all applicants fairly, any application for housing or re-housing from Members of the Council or employees of the Council or associated persons, must be disclosed.

These applications will be assessed in the normal way but any allocation of housing will require specific approval by the Service Lead for Strategic Housing Services.

Failure to disclose such matters as set out above, will lead to the necessary disciplinary actions being taken, as set out in the Council's Governance and Policies.