



**KEYWAYS HOUSING
ALLOCATION POLICY**

Consultation

**September 2015
Housing Options Team
Corby Borough Council**

This document/publication is also available on our website www.corby.gov.uk and the Keyways website www.keyways.org.uk

Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to:

Housing Options Manager
Housing Options Team
Corby Borough Council
The Corby Cube
Parkland Gateway
Corby
Northants
NN17 1QG

or email housing.options@corby.gov.uk

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CONSULTATION PROCESS AND HOW TO RESPOND

Topic of this consultation:	Corby Borough Council Keyways Housing Allocation Policy
Geographical scope:	Corby Borough

Basic Information

To:	This consultation is aimed primarily at service users, internal sections of Corby Borough Council, Housing Providers, representative groups, community and voluntary organisations.
Responsible for consultation:	This consultation is being lead by the Housing Options Manager of Corby Borough Council.
Duration:	This consultation will run for four weeks from Wednesday 16 September to Tuesday 13 October 2015.
Enquiries:	For enquiries, please contact the following: Housing.options@corby.gov.uk 01536 464629/31
How to respond:	By email to: Housing.options@corby.gov.uk Or by post to: Housing Options Manager Housing Options Team Corby Borough Council The Corby Cube Parkland Gateway Corby Northants NN17 1QG

After the consultation:	A summary of the responses to the consultation will be published on the Corby Borough Council website within 3 months of the end of the consultation.
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BACKGROUND

Following the introduction of new regulations by the Secretary of State (see link below); a full review was undertaken of the Corby Borough Council Keyways Housing Allocation Policy.

The review is conducted to ensure that the local authority continues to:

- give preference to households who are in the most housing need (including the reasonable preference categories),
- allocates social housing efficiently,
- considers any impact from the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and subsequent benefit changes,
- and complies with the Regulations made by the Secretary of State for social tenants who need to move to take up or live closer to work (Right to Move).

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418437/Right to move - statutory guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418437/Right_to_move_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

Members of Corby Borough Council's One Corby Policy Committee approved the above policy changes on 8 September 2015, subject to consultation.

CONSULTATION

Local Connection

Following the powers within the Localism Act 2011, a Local Connection criterion was introduced to the Keyways scheme. Since then, applications have been received from households, for whom Corby Borough is clearly their “home”; however, do not qualify due to having moved away for a very short period of time. The current local connection criteria for residency requires 3 **continuous** years from the point of application.

RIGHT TO MOVE

The new Right to Move regulations introduced on 20 April 2015 requires all local authorities to amend their allocations policy accordingly.

Therefore the proposed revision for this criteria is:

3 out of the last 5 years residency in the borough.

Right To Move;

All social tenants in England who:

- have reasonable preference because of a need to move to the local authority’s district to avoid hardship, and***
- need to move because the tenant works or has been offered work in the district of the authority and has a genuine intention to take up the offer***

AGREE

DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW

COMMENTS

Sheltered Accommodation

Experience gained from operating the Keyways scheme has shown that due to the initial age criteria of sheltered accommodation, households with an urgent housing need are being bypassed for a household with a lesser housing need but have a greater age. Sheltered properties are currently offered to a household in the first instance to an applicant over 65, then 60 and lastly over 55 years of age.

Therefore the proposed revision is;

Sheltered accommodation will be allocated to a household with the highest housing need incorporating the age criteria within each band.

AGREE

DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW

COMMENTS

Right to Move

To continue and assist households to take up employment in Corby, the current policy applies priority band (B) for those who experience financial hardship only. However, it is considered good practice to consider other hardships such as time spent commuting.

The new Right to Move statutory guidance dated March 2015 recommends that any reasonable preference category for hardship takes into consideration the need to move for employment, education or training opportunity. It is also recommended that a quota of properties (1%) is set aside for cross-boundary moves between Local Authorities for work/hardship reasons.

1% of allocations equates to 5 properties per year (taken from average number of lets 2012-2014)

Therefore the proposed revision is;	<p>Change Band B to;</p> <p>Employment Hardship/Right To Move</p> <p><i>You or a member of your household <u>need</u> to move in order to take up employment in the Corby Borough for 16 hours or more per week and avoid hardship. Hardship includes financial and lengthy commuting distance. (Less than 2 hours travelling per working day/60 minutes each way is considered reasonable) Work which is short-term, marginal in nature, ancillary and voluntary is not included. Up to 1% of allocations per year will be identified and nominated to applicants meeting this criterion via a direct let.</i></p>
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AGREE

DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW

COMMENTS

Unacceptable Behaviour

Non-qualifying criteria includes all debt to Corby Borough Council, some of which are not housing related. Housing providers have expressed their concern that they would not receive a nomination from a household who they would normally consider as suitable to be a tenant. i.e. household with a debt which is non-housing related e.g. unpaid litter/dog fouling fine, pitch fees, burial plot, etc.

Clarification is also required on debts that have been written off or statute barred.

Therefore the proposed revision is;

All housing related debts only are considered i.e. rent arrears, court costs, recharges, housing benefit overpayments, council tax, deposit bond scheme and loans from the homelessness prevention grant when assessing an applicant's qualification for housing.

Any of the debts mentioned above that are statute barred and/or written off are still considered a debt to the council and will therefore remain a reason to exclude an application.

AGREE

DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW

COMMENTS

CONSULTEE INFORMATION

Name of person completing the consultation;

Name of department/housing provider/agency;

Contact telephone number;

Email address;

Thank you in advance of your participation.