



# KEYWAYS HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

3 April 2018



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## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Allocation Policy explains how Corby Borough Council, working in partnership with a number of Registered Providers (RPs), allocates social housing and accredited private rental properties within the borough through a jointly operated choice-based lettings scheme. Choice-based lettings involve the advertising of vacant properties and the registering of 'bids' by applicants who would like to live in the property.

Corby Borough Council's choice-based lettings scheme is run in partnership with the Borough Council of Wellingborough and Kettering Borough Council and is called Keyways. Keyways is intended to be the single register for access to affordable rented, social housing and shared ownership within the three boroughs. In addition to social housing, Keyways applicants will also be able to access vacancies in the private rented sector that are advertised via the scheme.

Private landlords that advertise properties within the Keyways scheme will be accredited by Corby Borough Council. This is to ensure that all private rented properties advertised through the scheme conform to the current national lettings standards. Private landlords are not legally bound to offer their properties in accordance with this allocation policy, but are encouraged to do so.

With the current level of demand for social housing exceeding supply, the register exists to enable all households who are in need of housing to be included on one list, to maximise their opportunities for housing. The scheme seeks to offer choice, while giving reasonable preference to those in the greatest housing need and a local connection to Corby borough. The register also acts as an index of the level and nature of housing need locally.

By joining the register, households can be considered for vacancies owned or managed by any of the Keyways Landlords (Corby Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council, the Borough Council of Wellingborough, Registered Providers) and Accredited Private Landlords. The aim is to make the task of applying for social housing as simple as possible, requiring only one form to be completed for social housing opportunities in all three boroughs. You must note however, that all 3 local authorities have individual allocation policies.

Corby Borough Council's Allocation Policy applies to:

- new applicants, and;
- existing Corby Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council, Wellingborough Homes and Registered Provider (RP) tenants who want to transfer from one tenancy to another with their current landlord, and;
- existing social rented housing tenants who want to transfer from one tenancy to another with a different social landlord. This includes changes from secure council tenancies to assured and affordable tenancies with an RP and vice versa.

Corby Borough Council and the Keyways Landlords are committed to equal opportunities and to making sure that everyone is treated fairly.

### **3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY**

The aims of this Allocation Policy and having choice-based lettings is to help households choose where they would like to live and to prevent people from becoming homeless.

The objectives of the Policy are:

- to enable applicants to make an informed choice about where they would like to live
- to allow applicants to look for a vacant property in the area of their choice
- to give reasonable preference for housing to those in the greatest housing need and those with a local connection to Corby borough
- to encourage common practices of working between the three Borough Councils and all of the Registered Provider (RP) partners of Keyways
- to make best use of social housing including optimising the use of adapted properties and reducing under-occupation
- to reduce the number of properties refused by applicants
- to ensure properties are let as quickly as possible
- to reduce the number of difficult-to-let properties

#### **4.0 STATEMENT OF CHOICE**

Corby Borough Council and all Keyways Landlords involved in the Keyways allocation scheme are committed to offering the greatest choice possible in the allocation of housing within the borough. However, the ability to offer applicants choice has to be balanced against a legal requirement for an allocation scheme to ensure that those in greatest housing need are given priority for social housing.

This is achieved by advertising social housing vacancies within the borough (see section 10 of this document for how properties are advertised) and inviting applicants to state which property they would prefer to live in, by registering a 'bid of interest' for the property. Applicants can only bid for a property that is suitable for their household need. Housing will only be allocated to applicants who bid for a specific property. Therefore if an applicant does not bid for a property, they will not be considered for its allocation. The successful applicant will normally be the applicant with the greatest housing need (as defined in section 11 of this document) that has waited the longest.

Prior to submitting a bid for a property, applicants are informed how many other applicants have already bid for the property. They are also informed as to what position they are currently ranked amongst the other bidding applicants, in terms of their housing need and waiting time. This enables them to identify the level of priority that they have within the allocation scheme and to develop an awareness of the availability of accommodation suitable to their needs within the borough. Applicants can therefore make an informed decision on their housing options by balancing their need for accommodation with the availability of properties.

Within this it must be recognised that there is very high demand for affordable housing in Corby borough, and that this demand cannot be fully met from the current social housing stock. Consequently our expectation is that only those applicants in greatest housing need will obtain social rented accommodation.

The Localism Act 2011 allows Local Housing Authorities to secure suitable privately rented accommodation for those households who are accepted as homeless under the statutory duties contained within Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. In some circumstances, 'Statutory homeless' households may also be able to bid for social housing through Keyways. (For more information about 'Statutory homeless' households please see section 8.2.1)

## **5.0 HOW KEYWAYS WORKS AND HOW TO JOIN**

Applicants need to fill in a housing application form, which can be completed online at:

- [www.keyways.org.uk](http://www.keyways.org.uk)

Or contact/visit:

- Corby Borough Council's One Stop Shop. (See Appendix D for contact details)

### **5.1 Help in applying**

Corby Borough Council, Keyways Landlords, statutory organisations and voluntary bodies' staff are able to provide help to applicants when joining and taking part in Keyways.

In particular, help will be provided to anyone who may have difficulty participating in Keyways, for example, due to physical disability, learning disability, illness, age, those for who English is not a first language, or any other reason that might make it harder for someone to participate within the scheme.

Statutory and voluntary bodies that may be able to help applicants take part in the scheme include:

Accommodation Concern  
Adults and Transitions Team, NCC  
Catch 22  
Change Grow Live: Substance to Solution  
Corby Community Mental Health Team  
Corby Youth Information  
Corby MIND  
HMP Resettlement Teams (including Nacro & St Giles Trust)  
Mental Health Short Term Team (STEPS)  
National Probation Service  
Northampton and Wellingborough/East Northamptonshire Women's Aid  
Northamptonshire County Council Leaving Care Team  
Northamptonshire County Council Teenage Parent Support Team  
Northamptonshire Drug and Alcohol Service (NDAS)  
Northamptonshire Young People's Drug Service  
Papworth Trust  
Resources Team (Community Support) Social Care & Health  
Sure Start (Corby)  
Welfare Rights & Citizens Advice Bureau  
Women's Aid  
Youth Offending Team

### **5.2 How Keyways works**

Keyways advertise a variety of properties, including:

- social housing for rent
- private landlord housing for rent
- low-cost home ownership properties, such as shared ownership

- private sale

All available social rented properties are advertised on Keyways from 00:01hrs (one minute past midnight) on a Thursday through to 11:59 hrs. on a Tuesday.

During the weekly advertising cycle, applicants can express their interest in up to two properties that are the right size and type for their household requirements. Expressing an interest in a property means that the applicant will be shortlisted for that property.

Applicants should only bid on properties after reading all the attribute details in the advert. Bids on suitable properties which are later refused may incur a penalty (See section 11.1 for further details on refusals)

Keyways applications may be set to Autobid for those who may be vulnerable and unable to access Keyways online or have no choice on Keyways (all applicants owed a homeless duty). This means that the software will place their bids at 00.01hrs (one minute past midnight).

If applicants do not express an interest in a property, they will not be considered for the allocation of that property.

Each Keyways Partner (Corby Borough Council, Borough Council of Wellingborough and Kettering Borough Council) provide a nomination to the Keyways landlords for the properties situated in their own respective boroughs. If applicants have any questions regarding a particular property or its allocation they can contact the Keyways Landlord responsible for the property (see Appendix D for contact details).

Each week Keyways will publish information on accepted offers of accommodation from the previous cycles. The following information will be published on advertised properties:

- Property Address
- Property Type
- Closing date for bids
- The band of the successful bidder
- The date they were placed in that band
- The number of bids received.

Please note, under no circumstances will any personal details of the successful bidder be published.

Applicants can express an interest in a property by:

- internet – [www.keyways.org.uk](http://www.keyways.org.uk)
- telephoning Corby Borough Council Housing Options Team – 01536 464629/31
- visiting Corby Borough Council, One Stop Shop in The Corby Cube (see Appendix D for address details)

Applicants can get further information on how to express an interest in a property by contacting Corby Borough Council's Housing Options team on 01536 464629/31 or by visiting our website [www.corby.gov.uk](http://www.corby.gov.uk)

Keyways has the facility to allow applicants to view their position on a shortlist before they express an interest in the property.

For more information on Keyways visit [www.keyways.org.uk](http://www.keyways.org.uk) or telephone 01536 464000, or e-mail [housing.options@corby.gov.uk](mailto:housing.options@corby.gov.uk)

### **5.3 Types of tenancies**

There are a variety of different types of tenancies that are advertised on Keyways. These include introductory/starter, non-secure/secure tenancies, affordable rent tenancies and fixed-term tenancies. Applicants are responsible for deciding which properties and which types of tenancy they wish to express an interest in. However, in addition to the tenancy types advertised, the type of tenancy offered to applicants will often depend on a number of factors including:

- Your current tenure and landlord
- Your current circumstances
- The landlord of the property
- The type of property
- The location of the property

### **5.4 Low cost home ownership properties**

In order to provide a variety of low cost home options we will also advertise low cost home ownership products. It is important that applicants understand the financial requirement that is expected of them (for example the requirement to raise a sufficient mortgage). Applicants should contact the Keyways Landlord if they require further information on the financial requirement that comes with a property.

### **5.5 Housing providers working together**

Corby Borough Council and Registered Providers (RPs) who have homes to rent or buy in Corby borough, work together as Keyways Landlords. They have all agreed to use this policy when allocating properties through Keyways.

The Keyways Landlords with properties in the borough are:

- Corby Borough Council
- PA Housing Group
- BPHA
- Metropolitan
- Orbit Heart of England
- Places for People
- Riverside
- Grand Union Housing Group
- Spire Homes

Accredited private landlords may also advertise properties through Keyways but are under no obligation to use this policy.

Details of Keyways Landlords with stock in the boroughs of Kettering and Wellingborough can be obtained by contacting either Council.  
(See Appendix D for full address and contact details)

## **6.0 WHO CAN AND WHO CANNOT JOIN THE KEYWAYS REGISTER?**

We will consider a fully completed housing application form from people who are aged 16 or over. We do, however, have some rules that could affect whether we accept an application as eligible to join the Keyways register. (See sections 6.1 to 6.7 for further information). If we receive an application but decide that you are not permitted to join the Keyways register we will notify you in writing of our decision.

### **6.1 Under 18s**

Applications to apply to the Keyways register can be made as long as the main applicant(s) are 16 years of age or older. 16 and 17 year olds will not normally be allocated accommodation until they have reached the age of 18 years.

Applicants aged 16 or 17 years that want to be considered for housing through Keyways will be required to provide details of a suitable guarantor. In the absence of a guarantor we may consider those aged 16 or 17 years for accommodation if one or more of the following apply:

- Accepted as statutorily homeless and in priority need under the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- Over the age of 16 where Social Services authorities under section 27 of the Children's Act 1989 have made a referral for assistance
- Have been assessed as able to meet the responsibilities of a tenancy.

In all of the above cases, the Council will seek to undertake a joint assessment with Social Services of the applicant's housing, care and support needs to ensure that adequate support is available.

Applicants under 18 years of age who do not meet one or more of the above will be prohibited from bidding until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **6.2 People from outside the United Kingdom**

The Council cannot accept applications to go on the Keyways Register from:

- people who are subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 unless of a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State
- people who are excluded from entitlement to housing benefit by section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- people from outside the United Kingdom who fail the habitual residence test
- people from outside the United Kingdom who are in breach of, or whose residence does not comply with, the European Union Rights of Residence Directive and statutory instruments
- Any other persons from abroad who as prescribed by the Secretary of State as ineligible to be allocated housing accommodation by local authorities in England

If you are subject to section 6.2 above, the Council has no duty to offer you a home. We will, however, offer you advice on your other housing options.

### 6.3 Non-Qualifying Persons

A local housing authority can decide that certain classes of persons are not qualifying persons to be allocated social housing accommodation by them (S160ZA (7) Housing Act 1996 amended Localism Act 2011). The Secretary of State may make amendments and prescribe classes of persons that we can, or cannot, class as qualifying.

A local housing authority can decide what classes of persons are, or are not, qualifying persons for the purposes of allocating housing accommodation. (See sections 6.4 to 6.6 for further details), and therefore will not be accepted to join the Keyways register (see Appendix B for the legislative framework). If we decide that the applicant is not a qualifying person we will notify the applicant in writing of our decision and the grounds for our decision. If the applicant considers that he/she should be treated as a qualifying person he/she can ask for a review of this decision. (See section 12 on The Applicant's Right to a Review for more information)

Applicants to whom another Local Authority has accepted a rehousing duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 or any other duty to suitably accommodate will not qualify for Keyways with Corby Borough Council by virtue of having a housing need.

### 6.4 People with no local connection to the Keyways Partnership area

Due to the high demand for social housing locally, applicants that do not have a local connection to the Keyways Partnership area will not qualify to join the Keyways register. The Keyways Partnership area consists of the boroughs of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough.

A local connection to the Corby borough will be established by virtue of any permanent member of the household meeting any of the criteria set out in the table below:

Criteria	Additional Detail
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residency in Corby borough for at least three out of the last 5 years prior to acceptance onto the Keyways register.</li> </ul> <p>(*applicants housed as homeless from outside the sub region have an additional requirement)</p>	<p>Residency may be verified by way of tenancy references, electoral roll or information held on any local authority database.</p> <p>* Any households placed into accommodation as a discharge of any homeless duties under Part VII of the Housing Act by any local authority outside of the sub-regional partnership will not qualify to join Keyways until any and/or all homeless duties have expired (i.e. 2 years if full homeless duty was discharged through private sector) and they have established an additional 3 years residency.</p> <p>The applicant(s) local connection for 3 years residency will start once the 2 year homeless duty has ended. This therefore means that such households will require 5 years residency before</p>

	being accepted to join the Keyways register.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent employment in Corby borough for a minimum of 16 hours per week;</li> </ul>	At least 1 adult member of the household must be employed at the point of application and at the point of any nomination. Your actual working location of employment must be within Corby borough. Any fixed term contract for 6 months or more will be accepted as permanent employment. Applicants must have passed any probationary period or similar if applicable to the employment by the point of nomination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right to move</li> </ul>	You are a current social tenant in England who needs to move to avoid hardship (see Band B Employment Hardship) AND works or has been offered work in the borough. The employment needs to meet the criteria above.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed Forces personnel</li> </ul>	<p>This only includes:</p> <p>Member of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within 5 years of discharge.</p> <p>Bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces where Ministry of Defence accommodation will cease to be entitled following the death of their service spouse or civil partner and the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service.</p> <p>Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.</p> <p>Verification will be required from the Armed Forces.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate family members currently resident in the Corby borough i.e. parent, sibling or child, who have lived in the borough for a minimum of 5 years.</li> </ul>	Residency may be verified by way of tenancy references, electoral roll or information held on any local authority database.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants owed a homeless duty by Corby Borough Council</li> </ul>	<p>Applicants owed a homeless duty as specified in the reasonable preference categories outlined in S166A(3)(a) and (b) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S190(2) – Priority Need but Intentionally Homeless.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S193(2) – Main Duty.</li> <li>• S195(2) – Threatened with homelessness, in priority need and not intentionally homeless.</li> <li>• S192(3) – Power to secure for non-priority and not intentionally homeless.</li> <li>• S189B – Relief Duty</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other special circumstances, including a need to receive essential care and support in the area, applicants who were normally resident in Corby for 3 years before moving to supported accommodation out of the area to prevent homelessness.</li> </ul>	Any special circumstances will be approved by the Housing Options Manager. Evidence must be shown that housing in Corby will be substantially beneficial to a permanent member of the household.

The above criteria must apply at the point of application, nomination and allocation of any tenancy. It is the applicant’s responsibility to notify Corby Borough Council of any changes to their circumstances which may affect their local connection.

Current social tenants of Corby Borough Council and any Keyways Landlords may be exempt from the local connection criteria if they establish a housing need and are recommended/supported by their landlord to be re-housed.

### 6.5 People who behave in an unacceptable way

People who we consider to have behaved in an unacceptable way will not qualify to access the Keyways register.

Contained in the table below is the criterion that Corby Borough Council will use when deciding if an applicant is a qualifying or non-qualifying person. If the applicant, joint applicant or members of the household meet any of the criteria contained within the table, the Council may choose not to accept the application onto the Keyways register:

Criteria	Further Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outstanding debt by the applicant(s) or members of the household who are expected to reside with the applicant.</li> </ul>	Debts to all social/private landlords include monies owed for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rent</li> <li>• recharges or damage to property (clearance, redecoration, neglect etc.)</li> <li>• services charges</li> <li>• courts costs</li> <li>• housing benefit overpayments</li> <li>• deposit bond scheme</li> <li>• loans from the housing prevention fund or other similar schemes</li> <li>• council tax to Corby Borough Council</li> </ul>

	<p>Any of the debts mentioned above that are statute barred and/or written off are considered a debt to a landlord and will therefore remain a reason to exclude an application until paid in full.</p> <p><u>Main, Relief or Prevention Homeless Duty by Corby Borough Council – Band A or B</u></p> <p>Applications that receive this priority homeless band will be exempt from this non qualifying criterion; however, repayment plans must be put in place and strictly adhered to.</p> <p><u>Bands A &amp; B Only</u></p> <p><i>Consideration may be given to a household with an urgent housing need who have debt; however, all cumulative debt outstanding must be less than £500.</i></p> <p><i>Households accepted with debt(s) below £500 will be required to have an affordable repayment plan(s) in place and be strictly adhered to for a minimum of 6 months before being accepted on the Keyways register.</i></p> <p><i>If any debt is still outstanding at the point of nomination/allocation, any landlord will expect the repayment plan to continue until all debt is cleared in full.</i></p> <p><u>Debt Relief Orders (DRO)</u></p> <p>These will only be considered after 12 months from the date of issue and when all debts are formally written off by the creditor. This must include all debts which would make an applicant exempt from the scheme.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity, including any breaches of current or previous tenancy agreement by any applicant or members of the household where legal action has been taken to end that tenancy.</li> </ul>	<p>Anti-social behaviour and criminal activity will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ perpetrator of domestic violence</li> <li>○ harassment/intimidation/threats</li> <li>○ racist behaviour</li> <li>○ any violence or threats of violence</li> <li>○ damaging another person’s home or possessions</li> <li>○ storing, selling, dealing, the growing of or manufacturing of any illegal or controlled drugs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ interference with security and safety equipment or landlords electricity supply to communal blocks</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deliberately caused the loss of their last settled accommodation and/or worsened their situation.</li> </ul>	The last settled accommodation must be considered to have been available, suitable and reasonable to continue to occupy. Applicants may be permitted to join the register however will incur a reduction in their band for a period of 12 months (See section 7.3 for more details)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards any officer, official agent or property of Corby Borough Council or Keyways partner/landlord.</li> </ul>	<p>This will include having received any warning letters, being placed on the Customer Behaviour Register of any Keyways partner, criminal or civil action.</p> <p>Unacceptable behaviour includes verbal and physical abuse, intimidation, violence and/or threats of violence by any form and harassment. Damage, defacing or graffiti upon any property is also included.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• been evicted from any social tenancy for subletting or abandoning a property within the last 7 years.</li> </ul>	Applicants may be accepted if it can be demonstrated that there has been a satisfactory tenancy history since the offence and there are no outstanding debts owed to any social/private landlord.

Corby Borough Council does not operate any blanket policy in relation to the above considerations and will consider each case on its own merit. The above list outlines examples of unacceptable behaviour which may lead to the Council classing the applicant as a non-qualifying person and is therefore not exhaustive.

When deciding whether to class an applicant as a non-qualifying person on the grounds of outstanding debt owed to any social housing provider, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The amount outstanding
- Whether a repayment agreement has been established
- Whether a repayment agreement has been adhered to
- For how long a repayment agreement has been adhered to
- The regularity of payments made towards clearing the debt
- The total amount cleared off the initial debt
- The reason the debt accrued
- The person responsible for incurring the debt
- Whether the debt is still legally recoverable
- Whether the debt was accumulated due to affordability reasons
- Whether any of the Community Contribution criteria apply (see Section 11.4.1 for further information)

When deciding whether to class an applicant as a non-qualifying person on the grounds of anti-social behaviour (ASB) or criminal activity, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The nature of the ASB / crime
- When the ASB / offence occurred

- Where the ASB / offence occurred
- Links between ASB / criminal behaviour and other support needs
- Whether the ASB / offending behaviour (or causal factors) have been addressed
- Whether the applicant is engaged with, or managed by, support agencies to address negative behaviours
- The impact of exclusion on wider community objectives (e.g. reducing offending)
- Who perpetrated the anti-social behaviour / offence and whether they are still a member of the household
- Whether any of the Community Contribution applies (see Section 11.4.1 for further information)

If an applicant is classed as a non-qualifying person for any reason above, the applicant may ask for a review of the decision at any time if the applicant can demonstrate that they can sustain a tenancy, their offending behaviour has changed, there is no further evidence of unacceptable behaviour or any previous non – compliance with their tenancy agreement is unlikely to reoccur.

Corby Borough Council may require that the applicant engages with a support agency and/or the applicant takes part in a pre-tenancy qualification scheme.

## **6.6 Homeowners**

Applicants and any member of the household must declare if they own a home in the UK or abroad so that it can be assessed whether this home is suitable for their needs and considered reasonable to occupy.

The definition of “home” is a freehold or leasehold property, a static caravan situated on a site open all year round or a boat which has a mooring.

Homeowners will be exempt from the scheme unless they have an urgent housing need to move (Bands A & B) and have insufficient equity, capital and/or assets to resolve their housing difficulties. This will include exploring the possibility of adapting your current home.

Elderly homeowner(s) where one applicant is over 55 years old may qualify to join the Keyways register for one of the 10 Sheltered Complexes only (properties are prioritised in band/age order to applicants over 65 first, then 60 years, then 55 years). Any Keyways landlord may expect that the owned property be sold within a reasonable timescale.

Owner(s) who sell or transfer their property within the last 5 years and receive (or would have received) equity of £16,000 or above will be excluded for 5 years from date of sale, unless they wish to be considered for one of the 10 sheltered complexes for the elderly and meet the criteria above.

Applicants who have a beneficial interest/home rights in a property will be classed as a homeowner and therefore will be exempt from the scheme.

## **6.7 Community Safety**

The Council works in partnership with the Police, Probation Service, Community Safety Partnership and housing providers to manage risk to the community. If there are any

details which lead us to believe there are implications for community safety, we may refuse the applicant housing in certain areas.

## **7.0 HOW APPLICATIONS ARE ASSESSED AND PROCESSED**

We assess Keyways housing applications based on the information provided on the application form and any other supporting evidence or details provided.

We assess this information against the:

- Qualifying person rules – see section 6
- Keyways Bands – see section 8
- Property eligibility table – see Appendix A

### **7.1 Home visits and office interviews**

If, when we receive a Keyways application, we need to get further information from the applicant, we may need to arrange a home visit or office interview. We will contact the applicant to arrange a convenient appointment.

All of the Keyways Landlords will conduct a home visit or other appropriate verification check in order to verify the applicant's circumstances before any formal offer of accommodation is made.

### **7.2 Disability, mobility and medical needs**

If an applicant or joint applicant, or other member of the household identified on the Keyways application have:

- a permanent physical disability
- a mobility problem,
- a medical condition, or
- a mental health condition.

we may need to contact the applicant for further information regarding the condition to help us assess what band to place the application in and what type of property is suitable. In some circumstances we may need to seek independent medical advice to help us and/or circumstances may be verified with a visit from housing staff.

This will help us to decide:

- whether the applicant's current home is having a detrimental impact on the health or mobility of anyone in the household, and the extent of the detrimental impact
- what type of accommodation would best suit the needs of the household, or if a move is necessary
- what adaptations the household may require.

If, after our enquiries, it is established that the applicant requires specific adaptations to a property, the application will be amended to reflect this. This will enable us to consider direct lets of suitably adapted properties that would meet the needs of the applicant. See section 11.5 for more information on Direct Lettings.

Households that require specific adaptations will only be nominated to accommodation that is suitable for their needs from the outset.

### **7.3 Deliberately making housing circumstances worse**

Once we have assessed a Keyways application and established the priority band of the application, we are able to reduce the priority band if the applicant or any household member on the application has deliberately made the household's circumstances worse.

The band of an application will be reduced if the applicant(s) or any household member has, for example:

- abandoned/terminated previous accommodation.
- moved to new accommodation that is worse than the previous accommodation without good reason.
- sold a property or given notice on a tenancy without securing alternative accommodation first.
- accepted accommodation which is now being claimed as unsuitable.
- refused multiple suitable housing solutions that have been offered by the Housing Options team.
- moved into accommodation which is unaffordable when being aware of the financial implications.
- ending of any homeless duty due to a deliberate and unreasonable refusal to cooperate

This list is not exhaustive and other housing situations considered to be coerced may also be rebanded by the Housing Options Manager.

If the applicant or any household member has deliberately made the household's own housing circumstances worse, we will reduce the priority band of the application to the band that they would have received in their previous accommodation for 12 months from the date that their circumstances worsened. (See Section 12 for further information on Right to a Review)

### **7.4 Applications from split and non-traditional households**

When we receive an application from a household where the main and joint applicants do not currently reside at the same address or applications from non-traditional households (e.g. friends sharing), we will consider both applicants' current accommodation and whether it is reasonable to expect one applicant to reside with the other, and vice versa.

We will also consider the relationship between the applicants in reaching a decision on whether to accept the application. We will not allow an applicant to extend their household (e.g. three friends applying to reside together) in order to achieve a larger property via Keyways. In the absence of any supporting information evidencing a need to reside together, we will treat applicants individually and request that separate applications are made.

If each applicant has different housing circumstances so that the band of the joint applicants would be different if they had submitted separate applications, the joint application will usually be placed in the higher priority band.

We will not allow households without children to bid on family accommodation (e.g. two friends sharing can only bid on 2 bed flats without a garden). Only households with dependent child/children can bid for and be allocated a house or a flat/maisonette with its own garden.

### **7.5 Definition of a child/children and other dependants**

For the purposes of the Property Eligibility Table only households with dependent child/children can bid for and be allocated a house or a flat with its own garden. A dependent child is defined as being under 16 years of age, or under 18 and in, or about to begin, full-time education or training. Households containing child/children that do not fit within this definition will need to be assessed to establish if they are dependent. In addition households containing other family members outside of the parent/child relationship will need to be assessed to establish if they are dependent.

### **7.6 Access to child/children**

Households with access to children, but no children permanently residing with them, can be considered for properties with up to two bedrooms, (excluding houses, flats and maisonettes with their own garden), however, they will only be offered a two bedroom property if there is no demand from eligible households who require that size of property. Household income may be assessed by the landlord of the property against their affordability criteria to ensure that rental payments will be affordable before an offer of a tenancy is made.

A household with a permanently resident child/children and access to additional child/children will only be considered for properties that are suitable for the permanent household members.

Where joint custody arrangements or shared residency orders apply, we will consider the housing circumstances of both parents/guardians in determining whether the child has suitable accommodation with one party.

If a child has no suitable accommodation with either parent then both parents can include the child on their application until such time as suitable housing for the child has been secured. At this time, the other parent's application will be reassessed accordingly.

The parent/grandparent/guardian must be in receipt of child benefit, be the main contact for nursery/education and medical professionals. The Council will also consider the test of normal residence as opposed to "staying" or "staying access".

Due to the high demand for social housing, only one family property with a garden will be allocated to an applicant for the same children.

### **7.7 Effective date**

Initially this is set as the date that the applicant is accepted onto the Keyways register. However, if the application is moved into a higher Keyways band (for example, from Band C to Band B) then the Effective Date will change to the date the application reflects the change in circumstances to the higher band. If the application is placed into a lower Keyways band then the Effective Date will change to the date that the

application was accepted onto the Keyways register unless in exceptional circumstances the Housing Options Manager decides that this is inappropriate.

## **7.8 Application processing standards**

When we receive a Keyways application:

- we will contact the applicant within 10 working days of receiving the application to confirm if we need any supporting information.
- we will contact the applicant to confirm that the application is active within 14 days of receiving the fully completed and signed application form and any relevant supporting information we require.
- we will let the applicant know if we cannot register the application within 14 days of receiving the fully completed and signed declaration form. Any delay may be due to us requiring additional information from the applicant or another relevant agency.
- verification checks may be completed at any point in the application.

## **7.9 Confirming your details**

Applicants are required to provide all of the information we request so that we can confirm the applicant's details. If applicants fail to provide this information or applicants do not submit a signed and fully completed application form (including applications completed online) there will be a delay in processing the application.

Applicants must declare at the point of application or at the point of a change of circumstances all members of the household that will be living with you in the property that you are nominated for through Keyways. This includes members that do not currently live with you at present, however will be moving with you to the allocated property.

We will check all Keyways applications when they are received. We may make any enquiries we consider necessary with current and former landlords and other relevant agencies to confirm the applicant's details. If this information is not provided quickly there may be a delay in processing the application. (See Appendix B for information on data protection).

Corby Borough Council may use a credit reference agency to verify applications at point of application and both Corby Borough Council and Keyways landlords may also carry out periodic checks after a tenancy has commenced.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide us with the supporting information we require in order to confirm the applicant's details. We will not process Keyways applications until we are provided with this information.

If, after a 28-day period, applicants have not provided the information we have requested, we will cancel the Keyways application.

## **7.10 Contacting applicants**

Once we have made all necessary enquires and we have processed the Keyways application, we will write to the applicant to inform them:

- if the applicant does not qualify to join the housing register, the reasons for this and their right to a review of the decision or;
- that we have accepted the application and the applicant can start to place bids for properties advertised on Keyways
- the applicant's unique housing application number and log in details
- the Keyways band we have placed the application in
- the date we placed the application in that band
- how to use Keyways to look for properties
- the terms of the Keyways scheme and details of the applicant's rights and responsibilities under the scheme.

### **7.11 Reviewing banding**

Applicants in any band have the right to ask us to review their banding by contacting Corby Borough Council's Housing Options team. Evidence may be required to support any change in band.

Keyways applications can be reviewed at any point and if considered to be incorrectly banded, the application will be updated and we will write to advise the applicant(s) with the reasons.

### **7.12 Change of circumstances**

Applicants must inform us if the circumstances of any person included in the Keyways application changes as this may affect the band in which we have placed the application.

Changes in circumstances can include but are not limited to:

- a change of address
- a change of contact telephone details
- people leaving the household or more coming into the household
- a change in a household member's health or wellbeing
- change of circumstances including, local connection, employment status and any home ownership

If we later discover a change in circumstances that has not been disclosed this could affect the Keyways application and/or the applicant could be in breach of their tenancy.

It remains the responsibility of the applicant to inform us of a change of circumstances that may affect the banding of the application or property eligibility. We may request that a new Keyways application form is completed so that we can re-assess an application if the applicant's circumstances have changed significantly.

If there is a change in circumstances we may have to change the band of the application and the date the application was placed into that band. We will always write to inform the applicant of any changes we make to the banding of the application.

All Keyways applicants should contact their relevant Housing Options Team to advise of any change in circumstances. We aim to process changes of circumstances within 5 days of receiving all the information we require from the applicant and other relevant agencies.

### **7.13 Reviews of the Keyways housing register**

We will carry out an online review of those applicants in Bands B, C, D and E every year.

We will carry out this review to ensure that:

- the number of applicants on the register reflects the immediate needs for social housing
- applicants still want to stay on the register, and
- applicants details are accurate and up-to-date.

If an applicant fails to respond to a review request within 28 days, the application will be cancelled.

Those applicants in Band A will have their application reviewed regularly.

If an applicant(s) has not bid for suitable vacancies that are available, we may place bids on the applicant's behalf and/or place the application in a lower band. (See section 7.15 for further information).

### **7.14 Cancelling a Keyways application**

Keyways applications will be cancelled if, for example:

- the applicant(s) becomes ineligible (see section 6.2)
- the applicant(s) requests that it be cancelled
- the applicant(s) has not replied to a review
- the applicant(s) has been re-housed by a Keyways Landlord
- the applicant(s) moved and did not inform us of their new address
- we contacted the applicant(s) and they have not responded within 28 days
- the applicant(s) gave false or misleading information
- 2 offers of suitable accommodation have been refused (see Section 11.1)
- the applicant(s) do not qualify to register on Keyways (see Section 6.3 to 6.6)
- the applicant(s) has failed to place bids on suitable properties within a 12 month period (see Section 7.15)
- the applicant(s) has not given us all of the information we have asked for to support the application within 28 days unless a longer time is agreed by a member of the Housing Options Team.

If we cancel an application, the applicant has the right to a review. (See section 12 on Your Right to a Review for more information).

### **7.15 Inactive applications**

Applicants that fail to place any bids within any consecutive 12 month period will have their application cancelled for 12 months unless it is demonstrated that no suitable accommodation has become available or there was another exceptional circumstance that made placing bids impossible. A fresh application may be accepted within the 12 month non qualifying period in exceptional circumstances if it is demonstrated that there has been a material change in circumstances which would result in the applicant's housing need and Keyways band increasing through no fault of the applicant. Applicants will be given notice in writing if their application has been cancelled for this reason.

### **7.16 False statements and withholding information**

Where false information is found to have been given, the applicant may be disqualified from the register for a period of 12 months. Where false information has resulted in the applicant obtaining accommodation, Corby Borough Council or the relevant Registered Provider (RP) may bring possession proceedings for recovery of the property.

A fresh application may be accepted within the 12 month non qualifying period in exceptional circumstances if it is demonstrated that there has been a material change in circumstances which would result in the applicant's housing need and Keyways band increasing through no fault of the applicant. (See Appendix B for legislation)

### **7.17 Councillors, board members, employees & their close relatives rule**

Councillors, board members and employees of Corby Borough Council, partner Keyways Landlords and their close relatives, can apply to the Keyways Register. However, applicants must make their position or relationship with the Council or with the Keyways Landlord known at the point of application. If the applicant does not do this and it is discovered later that such a relationship exists, the application / tenancy may be affected.

Keyways landlords will neither give an advantage to nor disadvantage applicants who disclose such a relationship when applying.

## 8.0 THE KEYWAYS BANDS

We will categorise Keyways applications into one of five bands which reflects the level of priority for housing. These bands are A, B, C, D and E. Applications in Band A have the highest level of priority.

Any applicants who believe they meet an alternative band must submit a banding enquiry in writing explaining the reasons they believe they meet an alternative band. This will be initially reassessed by a Housing Options Advisor. If the applicant remains unsatisfied with the decision they will have a Right to a Review (See Section 12.0).

### 8.1 Band A – Emergency

We will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following criteria: -

Criteria	Additional Detail
<p><b>Hospital Discharge</b> You or a member of your household cannot be discharged from hospital or rehabilitation centre because you have no accommodation, or your current accommodation has been deemed hazardous to your health and the situation cannot be rectified for you or them to continue to live there and you are accepted by Corby Borough Council as being able to sustain your own independent accommodation (with or without tenancy support).</p>	<p>Those patients in any hospital who were homeless prior to admission and who are assessed by Corby Borough Council as unable to sustain a general needs tenancy will not be awarded Band A status for this criteria. Instead the Housing Options team will consider its duties under Part 7 Housing Act 1996, and work in conjunction with other agencies to offer advice and assistance in securing suitable accommodation.</p>
<p><b>Severe medical condition</b> You or a member of your household's health is so severely affected by your current accommodation that it is <u>life threatening</u> or <u>likely to become life threatening</u>, to continue to reside there and the condition of the property cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time (3 months).</p>	<p>The existing accommodation must be a major and direct contributory factor to pose a severe and life threatening risk to the applicant. It is expected that this criteria applies to those few exceptional cases only. It might apply for example when an applicant's condition is expected to be terminal within 12 months and rehousing is required to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care, or when the property attributes are more likely than not to cause severe deterioration in underlying health issues.</p>
<p><b>Armed Forces</b> Member of the Armed forces with a reasonable preference and an urgent housing need.  Reasonable preference is outlined in Section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996 (See Appendix B)</p>	<p>Former or serving members of the Armed or Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.  Bereaved spouse or civil partner of members of the Armed Forces leaving Ministry of Defence accommodation</p>

	following the death of their spouse or partner.
<p><b>Risk of Harm</b> You or a member of your household is at serious risk of harm or severe emotional or physical trauma resulting from violence or threats of violence or physical, emotional or sexual abuse or other serious trauma in the current accommodation and you need to relocate to ensure your safety.</p>	This will be verified by the Police and/or other agencies as necessary. This may include where a move is necessary to protect a witness to criminal acts. Any offer of accommodation from this criteria will have restrictions attached in terms of eligible areas to minimise any risk as far as is reasonably practical.
<p><b>Category 1 Hazard</b> You are a private sector tenant or owner occupier in the Corby Borough, and Corby Borough Council has determined that your current accommodation poses a Category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme, the problem cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time (i.e. 6 months), and by continuing to live there poses a significant risk to health e.g. as a result of severe damp with mould growth, structural defects or you are lacking other basic facilities e.g. bathroom, kitchen, inside toilet, hot and cold water supply.</p>	This includes a property that has severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of roof, or have living conditions which are a statutory nuisance, and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a 6 month time period. It also includes any private sector property where statutory notice has been issued by any local authority department that an unfit property is to be demolished under the Housing Act 2004. Applicants who only have access to shared facilities in shared accommodation will not qualify under these criteria.
<p><b>Demolition (social rented in the Corby Borough only)</b> You need to move because your home is about to be demolished or redeveloped.</p>	This applies when a social tenant's home is due to be demolished, for redevelopment or other reasons.
<p><b>Extensive Repairs</b> You are a social rented tenant living in Corby Borough who needs to move because your accommodation needs major renovation or extensive repairs.</p>	This applies when a council or housing association tenant has to move either temporarily or permanently whilst major works are undertaken.
<p><b>Extensive Adaptations</b> Corby Borough Council has assessed that you require extensive adaptations to your home, and your circumstances will be resolved by moving to adapted accommodation.</p>	<p>This applies to any tenure (except homeowners who have sufficient equity/capital) of accommodation where there is a medical need for a major adaptation (see list below) and where the applicant would consider a move to other suitably adapted accommodation. A person meeting this criterion will not be considered for any accommodation without adaptations – adaptations would need to be present already although additional minor changes could be made subsequently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stairlift</li> <li>• Wetroom</li> <li>• Level Access Shower</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension to property</li> <li>• Lift</li> </ul>
<p><b>S 193(2) Main Homeless Duty</b> Corby Borough Council has accepted a full main homeless duty to you as we have been unable to prevent or relieve your homelessness and you have a Local Connection to Corby as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>	<p>Applicants who are homeless and are owed a S193 (2) Main Homeless Duty when the S189B Relief Duty comes to an end because they have been assessed as being in priority need and unintentionally homeless.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This band will be effective from the date the Main Duty decision has been made and the Relief Duty has ended which can only be on or after the application registration date.</li> <li>• Applicants will have their applications set to Autobid and will no longer receive choice on Keyways.</li> <li>• Applicants will be offered one final offer only of a suitable property. This may be within the social or private sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural Disaster</b> You have lost your home due to flood, fire or other natural disaster</p>	<p>This applies where any resident's home is considered uninhabitable due to flood, fire or natural disaster through no fault of the resident.</p>
<p><b>Medical and under-occupying</b> You are under occupying social rented family accommodation (comprising 2 bedrooms or more with own garden) within the Keyways partnership area by one or more bedrooms, and you have a permanent medical condition which is seriously adversely affected by your current accommodation.</p>	<p>The term 'family accommodation' refers to accommodation with at least 2 bedrooms and a garden. This is a cumulative preference criterion for those under-occupying council and housing association tenants who also have an urgent medical need to move. See additional detail in the respective Band B criteria for more information.</p>
<p><b>Priority Adapted Property</b> You are a social rented tenant in the Corby Borough willing to transfer to suitable non-adapted accommodation and are releasing a house, flat, or bungalow which has a major adaptation.</p>	<p>This applies to council and housing association tenants whose property has a major adaptation (see list below). Exemptions will apply if the adaptation offers no solution to any disabled person, for example, if a level access shower is fitted in a first floor flat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stairlift</li> <li>• Wetroom</li> <li>• Level Access Shower</li> <li>• Extension to property</li> <li>• Lift</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority Sheltered Move</b> You are a social rented tenant living in sheltered, supported or assisted living accommodation and you have a medical condition which is seriously</p>	<p>This criterion only applies to schemes that allocate their vacancies through Keyways. It doesn't apply to other RP's with supported housing schemes who operate their own waiting lists and</p>

<p>adversely affected by your current accommodation, which would be resolved by a move to alternative accommodation within your current sheltered housing scheme.</p>	<p>allocation policies. This criterion gives preference to those residents already in sheltered / supported accommodation with a medical need to move to a different property within the same scheme. The Band A status will not apply to any other properties advertised on Keyways.</p>
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In addition to those criteria above, in exceptional circumstances we may also award Band A status to other emergency circumstances not covered in the criteria above. In such rare circumstances therefore, Band A status will be awarded when “*You have an emergency housing need to move determined by Corby Borough Council and authorised by a Senior Officer*”

All Band A applicants are subject to additional investigation / evidence gathering, and approved by the Housing Options Manager or Senior Officer in their absence.

### **8.2 Band A applicants – additional restrictions**

All applicants in Band A (except for Statutory Homeless Duties, See Section 8.2.1) are subject to a 4 week time limit due to receiving the highest priority band on their application.

We will regularly review all Band A applicants to ensure that a solution to the applicant’s housing need is achieved as quickly as possible.

Band A applicants who have the highest priority are expected to consider all suitable properties advertised on Keyways in order to resolve their situation quickly. If multiple properties have been identified for bidding, but refused by the applicant, then the Council will place a bid on your behalf which will constitute our final offer to you as a Band A applicant. If this final offer is refused, your band will be reviewed and may result in your application being placed in a lower band or being cancelled from the register altogether.

Corby Borough Council also reserves the right to review an applicant’s Band A status at other times, for example, where there has been a change in circumstances.

The 4 week time limit can be extended by the Housing Options Manager in exceptional circumstances where the Band reason is awarded to make best use of stock (i.e. releasing an adapted property) or a suitable property to bid on has not become available in the 4 week period.

Households with 2 dependent children who at present can share a bedroom and in a Band A (highest priority) will be considered for 3 bedroom properties. Their main entitlement will remain a 2 bedroom property; however, a 3 bedroom property may be allocated to the household if there is no demand from a household who requires a 3 bedroom property and is in a Band A, B, C or D (before a household with no housing need – Band E). A financial assessment will be conducted to ensure that the rent for a 3 bedroom property is affordable.

### **8.2.1 Statutory Homeless Duties**

The Localism Act 2011 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 permit Corby Borough Council to end any homeless duty by providing one offer of a suitable property of any tenure to the accepted statutory homeless household. This will include a private rented sector offer which will comply with the Suitability of Accommodation Order 2012 (s193 (7F)).

Once an applicant(s) is awarded a priority band for having a homeless duty owed to them (Bands A-D), the Keyways applicants(s) will no longer be entitled to choice. This is to ensure the Council prevents and relieves homelessness where possible at the earliest opportunity. This will include all applications owed a homeless duty by a Keyways Partner.

Applications in a priority band B-D will be set to AUTOBID which means that the Keyways software system will place up to 2 bids per cycle on up to two suitable properties which provides the best possible chance of a nomination. I.e. best queue position as at the end of the cycle. This takes place at the end of the weekly cycle at one minute past midnight on a Tuesday evening/Wednesday morning.

Applications in a priority Band A will also be set to AUTOBID, however the Keyways software system will place up to 5 bids per cycle.

If the applicant(s) refuse a final offer, the council is no longer required to provide temporary or settled accommodation for the household, however, will continue to provide housing advice.

If an applicant believes any final offer to be unsuitable they are entitled to ask for a review. The applicant may ask for a review whether or not they accept the final offer of accommodation, but the Council may require the household to vacate any temporary accommodation provided whilst the review is conducted. Any applicant considering refusing a final offer should first discuss this with a Housing Options Advisor.

When reviewing a final offer, the Council will check that:

- The property is the right size and type for your household
- The property is safe for your household to live in
- The property is affordable
- Consideration has been given to the location of the property
- Consideration has been given to any special needs your household may have
- Consideration is given to any other relevant circumstances you have told us about before we made a decision

Statutory Homeless applicants who do not qualify to be placed on the housing register will be made an offer of private rented sector accommodation only.

In some circumstances, applicants who are accepted as Statutory Homeless and are qualifying persons may be made a direct offer of accommodation instead of participating in Choice Based Lettings. (See Section 11.5)

### 8.3 Band B - Urgent

We will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following criteria: -

Criteria	Additional Detail
<p><b>Need another bedroom</b> You need one more bedroom than your current accommodation provides because you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children of different genders (one child must be at least 10 years old) sharing a bedroom, or</li> <li>• Children of the same gender with an age difference of 10 years (one child must be at least 16 years old) or more sharing a bedroom, or</li> <li>• Three or more children sharing a bedroom, or</li> <li>• You are sharing a bedroom with your child and there is no other bedroom available for you to use</li> </ul>	<p>When making assessments on requiring additional bedrooms we will look at the number of bedrooms and the ages and genders of household members – we will not take into account reasons that bedrooms are out of use, for example if a household has too much furniture.</p> <p>Step siblings are considered as children of the household and are expected to share.</p>
<p><b>Sole Parental Responsibility</b> You have sole parental responsibility of a child/children living in the UK or Republic of Ireland who is/are unable to live with you currently because of your accommodation.</p>	<p>Evidence will be requested, for example, this will usually involve close liaison with the County Council's Children's Services department.</p>
<p><b>S189B Relief Duty</b> Corby Borough Council has accepted a homeless Relief Duty to you and has not been able to prevent your homelessness and you have a Local Connection to Corby as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>	<p>Applicants who are owed a S189B Relief Duty and would be owed or likely to be owed a S193(2) Main Homeless Duty when the S189B Relief duty comes to an end because they are believed to be in priority need and deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This band will be effective from the date the Relief Duty begins and the Prevention Duty has ended which can only be on or after the application registration date.</li> <li>• Applicants will have their applications set to Autobid and will no longer receive choice on Keyways.</li> <li>• Applicants will be offered one final offer only of a suitable property. This may be within the social or private sector.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Homeless Prevention Duty S195</b> Corby Borough Council has accepted a homeless Prevention Duty to you and you have a Local Connection to Corby as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>	<p>Applicants who are threatened with homelessness and owed a S195 Prevention Duty and would be owed or likely to be owed the S193(2) Homeless Main Duty when the S189B Relief Duty comes to an end because they are believed to be in priority need and deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This band will be effective from the date the Prevention Duty begins which can only be on or after the application registration date.</li> <li>• Applicants will have their applications set to Autobid and will no longer receive choice on Keyways.</li> <li>• Applicants will be offered one final offer only of a suitable property. This may be within the social or private sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Serious Permanent Medical</b> You or a member of your household has a permanent medical condition which is seriously adversely affected by your current accommodation, but you/they are not housebound or your/their life is not at risk due to your current housing, but your housing conditions directly contribute to causing serious ill health.</p>	<p>Examples where this will apply are when a person is unable to manage stairs to access their bedroom / bathroom facilities. The medical condition must be permanent, and the property must have a serious adverse effect on the medical condition(s).</p>
<p><b>Essential Substantial Care</b> You or a member of your household need to give or receive essential care and support that is substantial and ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in, your current accommodation</p>	<p>It must be demonstrated that this essential care and/or support cannot be practically provided/received from the current accommodation on an ongoing basis. Substantial ongoing care and support represents a regular provision of a minimum 3 times per week. Applicants must be either in receipt of carers allowance or have a carer who is in receipt of carer's allowance. Or applicants must have had an assessment by social services or another similar support service so it can be established if that care or support is substantial.</p>
<p><b>Employment Hardship/Right to Move</b> You or a member of your household need to move in order to take up or continue permanent employment in the Corby Borough for 16 hours or more per week and avoid hardship.</p>	<p>Hardship includes financial and 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.</p>

	Applicants must provide evidence of their income, salary and associated travel costs in order to be considered for this criterion. We will explore the relationship between these factors when deciding whether there is a need to relocate due to employment related travel costs.
<p><b>Supported Move On</b> You are ready to move on from supported accommodation in the Keyways Partnership area and have been accepted as ready for independent living by the relevant support provider.</p>	<p>Applicants must be assessed as ready for independent living on the recommendation of the support worker or equivalent and transitional support needs have been assessed and a package is in place This criteria also encompasses care leavers who are ready to move to independent settled housing and who the local authority are satisfied are genuinely prepared for and able to manage a move to independent living. It will also include vulnerable applicants who live in a supportive home environment which is not sustainable in the medium to long term (e.g. elderly parents who are carers).</p>
<p><b>Under-Occupier</b> You are under occupying socially rented accommodation (comprising 2 bedrooms or more) within the Keyways partnership area, by one or more bedrooms and you wish to downsize.</p>	Applicants must be willing to downsize to accommodation that has less bedrooms than their current accommodation. As outlined in the Property Eligibility table, applicants may only move to accommodation that is suitable for their needs and no smaller.
<p><b>Successor</b> You are a successor or non-statutory successor of social rented accommodation, approved for an offer of alternative suitable accommodation</p>	Confirmation of your succession rights must be received in writing. Choice on Keyways will be for a 12 month limit only. Your landlord will start possession proceedings at 6 months and may offer a direct let (See section 11.5 for information on direct lets).

#### 8.4 Band C

We will place an application in this band if the household's circumstances fall into one of the following criteria: -

Criteria	Additional Detail
<p><b>Homeless Prevention or Relief Duty (S195 or S189B)</b> Corby Borough Council has accepted a homeless Prevention or Relief Duty to you and you have a Local Connection to</p>	Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and owed Prevention or Relief Duty and they are believed to have NO priority need and deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances.

<p>Corby as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This band will be effective from the date the Prevention or Relief Duty begins which can only be on or after the application registration date.</li> <li>• Applicants will have their applications set to Autobid and will no longer receive choice on Keyways.</li> <li>• Applicants will be offered one final offer only of a suitable property. This may be within the social or private sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Family Sharing</b> You are a household with at least one dependent or a pregnant woman with a confirmed due date, sharing accommodation with your family or another household.</p>	<p>Confirmation of pregnancy will be required.</p>
<p><b>Need More Bed Spaces</b> You need more bed spaces than your current accommodation can reasonably provide.</p>	<p>The landlord of the property will be required to confirm bedroom measurements and this will be compared with the Housing Act 1985 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7sqm+ is a single bedroom</li> <li>• 10sqm+ is a double bedroom</li> </ul> <p>This band will be awarded when the household size exceeds the number of people that the bedrooms are calculated to accommodate.</p> <p>Single main applicants will be considered as having a double bedspace need which is in line with entitlement.</p> <p>Households awarded this band will only be considered for properties on Keyways that offer more bedrooms and/or bedspaces than their current accommodation.</p> <p>An affordability assessment will be conducted by the landlord.</p>
<p><b>Non-Urgent Medical</b> You or a member of your household has a non-urgent medical condition which is made worse by your current accommodation.</p>	<p>The current accommodation must contribute to deterioration in the medical condition, and it must be resolvable by moving to different accommodation. It is not so urgent that it causes a serious adverse effect on the applicant's health and wellbeing but rather it is an issue</p>

	which would negatively affect the applicant's quality of life if they were to remain.
<p><b>Ongoing Care</b>  You or a member of your household need to give or receive essential care and support that is ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in, your current accommodation</p>	<p>It must be demonstrated that this essential care and/or support cannot be practically provided/received from the current accommodation on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Essential care and support does not have to be substantial in that applicants may not have a carer/be in receipt of carers allowance or have Social Services involvement. Essential care may include practical and/or emotional support that is essential to the physical or mental wellbeing of the person receiving the care/support. Evidence must be submitted to support this.</p>

### 8.5 Band D

We will place an application in this band if the household's circumstances fall into one of the following criteria: -

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Additional Detail</b>
<p><b>Homeless Prevention or Relief Duty (S195 or S198B)</b>  Corby Borough Council has accepted a homeless duty to you and you have been deemed to have worsened your housing circumstances and/or you have no Local Connection to Corby as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.</p>	<p>Applicants who are owed the Prevention or Relief Duty however have been deemed to have worsened their housing circumstances and/or have no Local Connection to Corby.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This band will be effective from the date the Prevention Duty or Relief Duty begins which can only be on or after the application registration date.</li> <li>• Applicants will have their applications set to Autobid and will no longer receive choice on Keyways.</li> <li>• Applicants will be offered one final offer only of a suitable property. This may be within the social or private sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Seeking Sheltered</b>  You are eligible to be considered for a sheltered complex.</p>	<p>This includes applicant(s) aged from 55 years and over with a support need who have expressed an interest in a sheltered complex. Applicants meeting this criterion will not be considered for any other properties within this band. See section 9.2 for the priority shortlisting order.</p>
<p><b>Sharing Household</b></p>	<p>This encompasses single people and couples who reside with their family /</p>

You are a household without dependents adequately housed with family or friends.	friends but who would like their own independent accommodation. This also includes former partners who remain in the same accommodation, where a move would allow the ex-partner and their family to remain in the current accommodation.
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## 8.6 Band E

<b>You are adequately housed</b>	Applicants with a local connection to the Corby Borough who do not establish a housing need as identified in Bands A-D will be placed in Band E.
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Applicants with no housing need who establish a local connection to the Borough Council of Wellingborough and Kettering Borough Council may only be considered for Band E with Corby Borough Council's Keyways register if a local connection is established with this borough. Applicants with a sole local connection to the other boroughs within the partnership must contact their relevant council to discuss their housing options. (See Section 6.4 for local connection)

Where an applicant's circumstances do not fit the criteria outlined in any of the five bands the Housing Options Manager will decide on the most appropriate band to place an application based on the household's circumstances.

## 9.0 PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY

The size and type of property we normally offer applicants will depend on the size of the household. Only permanently resident household members will be considered for this purpose. (The table in Appendix A gives a general guide).

Flats/maisonettes and houses with 2 or more bedrooms will be offered to a household that need all bedrooms in the first instance before being allocated to a smaller household. (This does not apply to adapted properties, sheltered properties, bungalows or Gregory flats. See Section 9.1 and 9.2 for further details on how these are allocated)

In some instances the size of the bedrooms in a property may dictate that the property is not the right size for the type of household outlined in this matrix. As a result the households outlined in this matrix may not be considered for the property specified. Wherever possible the property advert will advise applicants when this is the case.

Due to the high demand for social housing, only one family property with a garden will be allocated to an applicant for the same children. Any parent who leaves a social tenancy will be entitled to a bedsit, flat or maisonette only (Inc. bungalow if the additional criterion is met).

We will normally be able to offer a household accommodation with an extra bedroom if a member of the household requires a permanent overnight carer or a medical condition that means they require an extra room. This offer may be subject to a financial assessment to ensure that the household will be able to afford the rental payments of a larger property and applicants must have had an assessment by social services or another similar support service so it can be established if that care or support is essential.

Households expecting a child will be considered for a bedspace for the child, however, bedrooms and the type of property may still be limited until the child is born. Households expecting their first child will only be considered for houses once the pregnancy has reached its 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester (27 weeks). Households who require an extra bedroom due to pregnancy will also only be considered once the pregnancy has reached its 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester (27 weeks).

Households who wish to downsize from a 3, 4 or 5 bedroom house within social housing stock in the borough of Corby are entitled to a flat/maisonette/bungalow or a 2 bedroom house. Please note there are age/adaptation restrictions on bungalows. The larger property vacated must be advertised on Keyways.

Households with 2 dependent children who at present can share a bedroom and in a Band A (highest priority) will be considered for 3 bedroom properties. Their main entitlement will remain a 2 bedroom property; however, a 3 bedroom property may be allocated to the household if there is no demand from a household who requires a 3 bedroom property and is in a Band A, B, C or D (before a household with no housing need – Band E). A financial assessment will be conducted to ensure that the rent for a 3 bedroom property is affordable.

## 9.1 Adapted Properties

Properties may have the following adaptations:

	Full Mobility Adaptations
	Wetroom
	Level Access Shower
	Stairlift
	External Ramp
	Shower Over Bath
	Minor Adaptations
	Lift

Where a property has been adapted we may firstly seek to direct let this to a household requiring such accommodation without advertising the property. This is in order to make best use of the social housing stock suitable for applicants with disabilities.

Every effort will be made to ensure that it is direct let to a household that fully requires such a property. If no applicant is identified via this process, then the property will be advertised on Keyways to generate further interest. If a property becomes available for advert that is suitable for households with a disability or a mobility need we will highlight this. Households with an identified disability or mobility need will still be given preference and adapted properties will be allocated as follows:

### **ADAPTED HOUSE/FLAT/MAISONETTE GENERAL NEEDS (NOT SHELTERED/SUPPORTED OR GREGORY)**

1. Household with Local Connection to Corby that can utilise adaptations in full
2. Household with Local Connection to Corby that can utilise adaptations in part
3. Household within the Keyways partnership that can utilise adaptations in full
4. Household within the Keyways partnership that can utilise adaptations in part
5. Re-advertise

### **ADAPTED BUNGALOW GENERAL NEEDS (NOT SHELTERED/SUPPORTED)**

1. Any household with Local Connection to Corby that can utilise adaptations in full

2. Household with Local Connection to Corby with ground floor need over 60 years of age
3. Household with Local Connection to Corby over 60 years of age
4. Household within the Keyways Partnership that can utilise adaptations in full
5. Household within the Keyways Partnership with ground floor need over 60 years of age
6. Household over 60 years of age within the Keyways partnership
7. Re-advertise

### **ADAPTED GREGORY FLAT (ground floor only)**

1. Any household with Local Connection to Corby that can utilise adaptations in full
2. Household with Local Connection to Corby with ground floor need over 50 years of age
3. Household with Local Connection to Corby over 50 years of age
4. Household within the Keyways Partnership that can utilise adaptations in full
5. Household within the Keyways Partnership with ground floor need over 50 years of age
6. Household within the Keyways partnership over 50 years of age
7. Re-advertise

If, after two adverts on two different cycles, no suitable applicant has been found, the property will be nominated to an eligible household from the shortlist created on the second advert.

### **9.2 Bungalows, Sheltered Complexes and Supported Bungalows**

Certain properties with or without adaptations or very minor adaptations (levels D and E) which have an age restriction will be advertised on Keyways and preference for an allocation will be as follows:

#### **ALL SHELTERED (INCLUDES BUNGALOWS/COMPLEX)**

1. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band A over 65 years of age
2. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band A over 60 years of age
3. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band A over 55 years of age
4. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band B over 65 years of age
5. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band B over 60 years of age
6. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band B over 55 years of age
7. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band C over 65 years of age
8. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band C over 60 years of age
9. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band C over 55 years of age
10. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band D over 65 years of age
11. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band D over 60 years of age
12. Household with Local Connection to Corby in Band D over 55 years of age
13. Household within the Keyways Partnership with the above priority order
14. Re-advertise

## **BUNGALOW (GENERAL NEEDS)**

1. Household with Local Connection to Corby over 60 years of age
2. Household within the Keyways Partnership over 60 years of age
3. Re-advertise

## **GREGORY FLAT (not adapted)**

1. Household with Local Connection to Corby over 50 years of age
2. Household within the Keyways partnership over 50 years of age
3. Re-advertise

Sheltered complexes and supported bungalows have a preference minimum age requirement of 65 years, then 60 and then 55 within each Band. Applicants must also have some need for a level of support although this need cannot be too high that they cannot live safely in this type of housing.

Households with one main applicant over 55 may be eligible to bid for sheltered housing and will have a support plan completed by the Landlord.

### **9.3 Family Accommodation**

The property eligibility matrix in Appendix A states that the number of bedrooms that a household with children can be considered for is also dependent on the age and gender of the children, not just the number. Step siblings are considered as children of the household and are expected to share.

Family accommodation will be allocated in the following preference order:

- 1) Applicants with a need for all of the bedrooms
- 2) Applicants that are eligible for all bedrooms but do not need them (i.e. children are of the age and gender that they can share)

The following are considered able to share a bedroom under this policy:

- Two children of the same gender with less than a 10 years age difference.
- Two children of different genders where both children are under 10 years old

Households with 2 dependent children who at present can share a bedroom and in a Band A (highest priority) will be considered for 3 bedroom properties. Their main entitlement will remain a 2 bedroom property; however, a 3 bedroom property may be allocated to the household if there is no demand from a household who requires a 3 bedroom property and is in a Band A, B, C or D (before a household with no housing need – Band E). A financial assessment will be conducted to ensure that the rent for a 3 bedroom property is affordable.

## **10.0 ADVERTISING PROPERTIES ON KEYWAYS**

Each Keyways Landlord is responsible for describing and labelling their properties on Keyways.

Each property will be advertised with:

- the criteria for eligibility
- details of the property (see section 10.1 below)

We will normally advertise each property to applicants from all bands. When a new build scheme is ready for first letting, a local lettings policy will apply (see Section 6.4), further details of which will be available at the time of advertising.

If an applicant does not meet the criteria for a property, they will not normally be able to place a bid on that property.

### **10.1 Property details**

To help applicants choose the properties that would best suit their needs, we will advertise all properties with information on size, location and features. The adverts will also include:

- which Keyways Landlord owns the property
- weekly rent and any other charges
- if known, an estimated date that the property will be available to move in to
- the closing date for applicants to express an interest
- other available information such as type of heating supply, adaptations, number of steps leading to the property, priority for floor level and policy on pets
- local lettings policy

### **10.2 Grouped property advertisements**

At times, we will group some properties together and advertise them with one reference number on Keyways. In these cases, applicants only have to express an interest once to cover all the properties within the group.

Examples of when we may do this include when we have:

- a new development which include a number of the same size and type of properties.
- an existing scheme where there are a number of empty properties of the same size and type.

## 11.0 ALLOCATING PROPERTIES

A shortlist of applicants who have bid for a property is automatically created once the advertising period has ended.

We sort the shortlist by:

1. Local Connection
2. Bedroom Need
3. The Keyways Band
4. The date applications were placed in the Band
5. Whether the property type is suitable for the household\*

\* When allocating, preference is given where possible, to applicants who specifically need the services or facilities that are part of the property. We will also take into account when advertising the property other attributes such as whether the property has stairs, and shortlists will be generated to give preference to those that can or cannot manage stairs.

This means that we will normally offer a property to the applicant from the highest band that has been waiting the longest that has a local connection to Corby borough. When two or more applicants have the same effective date, the applicant that has been on the housing list the longest will be offered the property first. When this is also the same between two applicants the Housing Options Manager will decide who should be offered the property.

In addition, for all properties in Corby borough advertised on Keyways, a preference is given to those applicants that have a local connection to Corby borough. All properties will be advertised in order to give preference as follows:

- 1 Bands A, B, C, D and E (local connection with Corby borough only)
- 2 Band A, B, C and D (local connection with Wellingborough and Kettering equally)

After the closing of a bidding cycle we will start the verification process. If at any time during the shortlisting process we are unable to contact the applicant (whose bid has been successful) we will bypass them and move to the next eligible applicant on the shortlist. It is therefore important that contact details are kept up to date at all times. If we are able to leave a message by telephone, email or online through Keyways, we will allow the applicant 24 hours to respond before they are bypassed.

If an applicant(s) is made an offer of accommodation by a Keyways Landlord (further to successfully providing suitable ID for all members of the household, passing verification checks and affordability checks) they will be given the opportunity to view the property.

Whilst applicants are under consideration for a nomination to a Keyways landlord for a property they will be unable to place any further bids and will be bypassed (skipped) for all other properties on which they previously placed a bid.

### 11.1 Refusals

Where an offer of accommodation is refused by an applicant the offer will pass to the next suitable applicant from the property shortlist.

Applicants in housing need that refuse an offer of accommodation through Keyways may be required to attend a Housing Options appointment to discuss their requirements and expectations. Applicants may not be considered for any further properties on Keyways until we have the opportunity to conduct a Housing Options assessment with the applicant.

If applicants refuse two offers of accommodation that are reasonable and suitable in any 12 month period, the application will be closed. Applicants may re-apply after 12 months from the date of the second refusal.

Applicants can request a review of this decision if there has been a significant change in their circumstances during the disqualifying period which adversely affects the household or would otherwise result in the Keyways Band increasing and this change was through no fault of the applicant. (See section 12 for details on Your Right to Request a Review)

### **11.2 Rejection of a Nomination**

All Keyways applicants are asked to declare at the application stage:

- local connection
- full address history including landlords details
- any outstanding housing related debt;
- any anti-social behaviour or criminal activity;
- any other unacceptable behaviour towards officers/representatives of any Keyways partner.

All Keyways applicants also have a responsibility to keep us updated of any changes in their circumstances, including in relation to the above.

If applicants do not declare such relevant information on their application, but it is discovered later during any verification stage, then the application will normally be rejected by all Keyways Landlords.

In these circumstances we will consider the facts of the household's situation to decide whether the applicant remains a qualifying person for Keyways, or whether we will cancel the application.

Any applicant rejected by a Keyways Landlord for any reason including on the grounds of affordability may request a review from the relevant Keyways landlord. (See section 12.3)

### **11.3 Offers**

If applicants are successful with a bid they will be contacted by the Keyways Landlord that owns the property with details of a potential offer. Each Keyways Landlord may have a different process that they follow.

All Keyways Landlords reserve the right to:

- request suitable ID for all household members.
- carry out checks on the information the applicants have provided as part of the Keyways application. Usual checks include whether the applicants have rent arrears or criminal convictions. If the applicants circumstances have changed

and they did not inform us of the change(s), they may not receive an offer until the changes have been fully assessed.

- withdraw an offer if checks reveal issues that are not included in the Keyways application.
- withdraw an offer if a notice to vacate a property is withdrawn or the property becomes unavailable for letting.
- withdraw an offer if verification checks confirm that the applicant(s) would be a non-qualifying person.
- carry out a financial assessment of the household to establish if the rental payments will be affordable.
- withdraw an offer if, following a financial assessment, it is established that the household cannot afford the required rental payments.
- carry out a property inspection of the household's current home.
- withdraw a property from advertisement if advertised incorrectly.
- request up to 4 weeks rent in advance.
- request rent payments are paid by direct debit only.

If an applicant is less than 18 years of age there will be additional requirements that must be met before an offer of a tenancy will be made. (Refer to Section 6.1 for more information).

Applicants must tell the Keyways landlords whether they wish to accept an offer of a tenancy. There will be time limit for responding to offers which may differ between Keyways landlords. If the applicant does not contact the Keyways Landlord or the Housing Options Team within the timescale given, we will assume that the applicant does not wish to accept the tenancy and the offer will be withdrawn.

#### **11.4 Local lettings policies**

The Council may from time to time agree a local lettings policy for specific areas or developments to reflect local circumstances. Any local lettings policy will have regard to housing management considerations such as the social mix of tenants, density, age range, vulnerability of tenants (e.g. because of insufficient facilities for vulnerable people) and community stability. Under a local lettings policy some properties may be allocated to applicants who do not fall within the reasonable preference categories.

Any local lettings policies in place will be advertised along with the property advert so that applicants can make an informed choice as to whether they wish to place a bid on that property or not.

##### **11.4.1 Local Connection**

Applicants in housing need with a local connection to Corby borough are given preference for all allocations of social housing in Corby (see Section 6.4 for further information). Some Local Lettings Policies may also be applied that give a preference to residents with a local connection to a specific village. This is because the link between residency and certain affordable housing units, in a number of villages in the borough, is covered in a legal agreement. Through Keyways, the advertisements for these properties will include a clause giving preference to applicants who fulfil the criteria set out in the legal agreement. Local connection will be verified at the point of nomination in order to qualify.

## **11.5 Direct/Selective Lettings**

All Keyways landlords have the ability to undertake a direct let of a vacant property. A direct let constitutes a property being allocated to an applicant without it being advertised. (Most direct lets will be made to households requiring adaptations as set out in section 9.1). Other circumstances in which a direct let may occur include, but are not limited to, decanting an existing tenant to enable essential repairs/maintenance to their property that cannot be completed with the tenant in occupation, housing a successor who is under-occupying and the police requesting that we re-house an applicant. Feedback will be available on any property that is let as a direct let.

Up to 1% of allocations per year will be identified and nominated to applicants meeting the Band Criteria Employment Hardship/Right to Move and who are current social tenants in England.

A Keyways landlord may request a property/building is advertised with a selective letting criterion in order to manage their properties and create sustainable communities. The selective lettings criteria will be approved by the Head of Service for Housing and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing.

## **11.6 Hard to Let Properties**

Housing Options will monitor all properties on Keyways that may be hard to let and on occasion advertise a property allowing smaller households to bid. This will only occur from the second advert onwards.

For example, a property that received no bids or has a shortlist where all bids have been unsuccessful will be advertised for a second cycle to eligible households together with smaller households of a reasonable size.

All properties will be allocated to an eligible household in the first instance of any cycle, however, from the second cycle onwards if there are no successful eligible applicants, smaller households will be considered.

All nominations are subject to affordability.

## **12.0 THE APPLICANT'S RIGHT TO A REVIEW**

The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, gives applicants the right to ask for a review if we decide not to allow the applicant to join the Keyways register or make any decision that affects their housing application.

Any applicants who believe they meet an alternative band must initially submit a banding enquiry in writing explaining the reasons they believe they meet an alternative band. This will be initially reassessed by a Housing Options Advisor. If the applicant remains unsatisfied with the decision they will have a Right to a Review.

### **12.1 To request a review of the outcome of a Keyways application**

The applicant, or the applicant's representative, must make a request to the Housing Options Manager at Corby Borough Council in writing within 21 days of receiving a written decision. The applicant, or the applicant's representative, may give the reasons for requesting a review in person, if it is difficult to tell us these reasons in writing.

### **12.2 The decision about a review**

The Housing Options Manager will review the decision and consider the reasons for the review being requested. A decision on the review will be based on the known facts at the time of the review. In some cases, the Housing Options Manager may need to request more information from the applicant in order to make a decision.

The Housing Options Manager will provide the applicant with written confirmation of the outcome of the review and reasons for the decision within eight weeks of the request for the review.

Should the applicant remain unsatisfied with the decision they may request an appeal to the Head of Housing at Corby Borough Council in writing within 21 days of receiving a written decision. Please refer to the Corby Borough Council Appeal Policy which can be found at [www.corby.gov.uk](http://www.corby.gov.uk)

### **12.3 To request a review of a Keyways landlord rejection of a nomination**

In some circumstances, Keyways landlords may refuse applicants the offer of a tenancy. Reasons for this may include if an applicant fails the verification checks or it is demonstrated that the applicant cannot afford the rental payments following a financial assessment conducted by the Keyways landlord. If an applicant wishes for this decision to be reviewed, the applicant or the applicant's representative must make the request in writing direct to the given Keyways landlord within 21 days of receiving their written decision.

### **12.4 Compliments, Comments and Complaints**

Applicants who wish to make a compliment or comment about Keyways or Corby Borough Council can do this by contacting Corby Borough Council's Customer Services. Applicants who wish to make a compliment or comment about any partner Keyways landlord should contact them directly (see Appendix D for contact details).

## **12.5 Complaints against Corby Borough Council, Keyways Partners (Kettering/Wellingborough Council) and Keyways Landlords**

Corby Borough Council is committed to giving applicants the best possible housing service. We will always try and get it right, but we need applicants to tell us if we are getting it wrong.

Applicants who are unhappy with the service Corby Borough Council provides can contact us and we will seek to resolve the problem immediately. Applicants who telephone or visit us are advised to take note of the names of the people they speak to.

Applicants who continue to be unsatisfied with our service should write to the Head of Housing, Corby Borough Council. Applicants will receive written acknowledgement that their complaint has been received within 5 working days and the outcome of the complaint within 10 working days. Complaints of a complex nature (exceptional cases) will be within 20 working days.

Keyways Partners and Landlords will have their own complaints procedure. Applicants who feel that they have been treated unfairly or have not been given a professional service by any Keyways partner or landlord should complain directly to them. All councils and registered providers have their own formal complaints policies and procedures. (See Appendix D for contact details)

Applicants who remain unhappy can make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or the Independent Housing Ombudsman. They are independent services run by central government to make sure that local authorities and housing providers provide a certain standard of service to their customers (see below for contact details).

- the Local Government Ombudsman for complaints about Councils

Local Government Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614  
Website: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

- the Independent Housing Ombudsman for complaints about Registered Providers (RPs)

Housing Ombudsman Service  
Exchange Tower  
Harbour Exchange Square  
London  
E14 9GE

Telephone: 0300 111 3000  
Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)  
Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## 13.0 APPENDIX A

Property Type	Size (Bedrooms)	Households Eligible to Bid <i>* A household that requires all bedrooms will be offered the property in the first instance before being offered to a smaller household.</i>
Bedsit	0	Single Person
Bungalow <i>(additional age and / or disability criteria)</i>	1	Single Person or Couple
Flat/Maisonette	1	Single Person or Couple
House	1	Single Person or Couple
Bungalow <i>(additional age and / or disability criteria)</i>	2	Single Person or Couple
		Single Person or Couple pregnant past the 3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester (27 weeks)
		Household with 1 child
		Household with 2 children who can share
Flat/Maisonette	2	Single Person or Couple* (without a garden)
		Single Person or Couple pregnant past the 3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester (27 weeks)
		Household with 1 child
		Household with 2 children who can share
House	2	Single Person or Couple pregnant past the 3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester (27 weeks)
		Household with 1 child
		Household with 2 children who can share
Bungalow <i>(additional age and / or disability criteria)</i>	3	Household with 2 children who can share*
		Household with 2 children who cannot share
		Household with 3 or 4 children
Flat/Maisonette	3	Household with 2 children who can share*
		Household with 2 children who cannot share
		Household with 3 or 4 children
House	3	Household with 2 children who can share*
		Household with 2 children who cannot share
		Household with 3 or 4 children
Flat/Maisonette/House	4	Household with 3, 4 or 5 children
House	5	Household with 4 or 5 children

- The term “Household” refers to a single adult or couple.
- The term “Couple” includes same sex couples.
- If a Household’s circumstances do not fit any of the criteria outlined in this matrix, the Housing Options Manager or a Senior Officer will decide what size and type of property the household is eligible for.
- Households that will be under-occupying any property may be refused on the grounds of affordability (See Section 11.3)
- Any unborn child/children will be taken into consideration for an extra bedspace immediately and an extra bedroom once the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester (27 weeks) has been reached.
- Due to the low availability of larger homes (4+), properties which have 3+ bedrooms and a separate dining room (parlour) will be advertised permitting larger households to bid should they wish to consider using the dining room as a bedroom. The property will allocated in accordance with the table above in the first instance and will only be offered to larger or smaller families if there is no demand.
- Due to the limited number of 5 bedroom properties, the applicant(s) may be invited to discuss their housing needs.
- Children of the same gender with less than 10 years age difference are expected to share.
- Children under 10 are expected to share regardless of gender.
- The Keyways Landlord will specify in the advert if pets are not permitted. This will usually occur if a property has no private garden.

## **14.0 APPENDIX B**

### **14.1 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

Corby Borough Council and the partner Registered Providers (RPs) are 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.

To view Corby Borough Council's Equality Information 2017-2021 please our website at [www.corby.gov.uk](http://www.corby.gov.uk) or contact Corby Borough Council on 01536 464000.

### **14.2 DATA PROTECTION, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND INFORMATION SHARING**

From 25 May 2018, Data Protection will be known as the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Corby Borough Council will, through appropriate management, ensure compliance with Data Protection. Below are eight data protection principles to be followed in the handling of personal data:

- be fairly and lawfully processed;
- be processed for limited purposes and not in any manner incompatible with those purposes;
- be adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- be accurate;
- not be kept longer than is necessary;
- be processed in accordance with individuals' rights;
- be secure; and
- not to be transferred to countries outside of the European Economic Area without adequate protection.

Applicants have the right to access the personal information we hold about them. We will use the information that is provided to enable us to band any application correctly. We may also use the information for issues of child protection, public protection and for preventing and detecting fraud and other criminal offences. This includes information we hold as paper and electronic records. If you would like to access your file, please contact the Freedom of Information Officer at Corby Borough Council on 01536 464000 for an application form.

### **14.3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

This Allocation Policy has been written to meet the duties of Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, and the Localism Act 2011. Consideration has also been given to the latest Code of Guidance "Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England" (Dept. for Communities and Local Government: June 2012).

The Housing Act 1996 requires local authorities to frame their Allocation Scheme so as to secure "reasonable preference" to the following:

- a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII 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 insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability; 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 others).

However, the Localism Act 2011 has introduced significant amendments to Part VI, the main policy objectives being to:

- enable housing authorities to better manage their housing waiting list by giving them the power to determine which applicants do or do not qualify for an allocation of social housing.
- make it easier for existing social housing tenants to move by removing the constraints of Part VI from those social housing tenants who apply for a transfer, unless they have a “reasonable preference”.
- maintain the protection provided by the statutory “reasonable preference” criteria to ensure that priority for social housing goes to those in greatest housing need.

This has enabled the Council to review the needs of the local area and make arrangements that best suit those needs. As a result, our revised Allocation Policy sets out who will no longer qualify for social housing in our borough.

The scheme has had regard to the Corby Borough Council Housing, Homeless and Tenancy Strategies.

In addition, this Allocation Scheme does not apply to the following changes of tenancy:

- mutual exchange between existing Council and Registered Provider tenants;
- succession of tenancy;
- assignment of tenancy;
- temporary decants in order to complete repairs;
- sole to joint tenancy changes and vice versa;
- renewal of a flexible tenancy in the same property;
- lets made by Registered Providers outside of Keyways nomination agreements;
- properties leased to a support agency.

In each of these instances, neither the Council nor any other Keyways landlords are required to identify a new tenant for the relevant property or properties from the Keyways register. A definition of each of these terms can be found in the ‘Glossary and Definition of Terms’ in Appendix C.

#### **14.4 Non-qualifying applicants due to unacceptable behaviour**

Housing authorities may decide to treat an applicant as a non-qualifying person (i.e. to exclude them from accessing the waiting list) because of serious unacceptable behaviour under s.160ZA(7) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. A right to review a decision on qualification in S160A2(9) and to be informed of the decision on the review and the grounds for it.

#### **14.5 Keyways allocation policy**

A local housing authority can decide that certain classes of persons are not qualifying persons to be allocated social housing accommodation by them (S160ZA (7) Housing Act 1996 amended Localism Act 2011). The Secretary of State may make amendments and prescribe classes of persons that we can, or cannot, class as qualifying, and can also prescribe criteria that we are not able to use. Currently people who we consider to have behaved in an unacceptable way will not be able to qualify to access Keyways.

#### **14.6 False statements and withholding information**

Applicants must supply full information about their circumstances and must provide supporting evidence where required to do so. It is an offence to provide false information, or to withhold information in order to fraudulently obtain a tenancy. Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 states:

- (1) A person commits an offence if, in connection with the exercise by a local housing authority of their functions under this Part –*
- a) he knowingly or recklessly makes a statement which is false in material particular, or*
  - b) he knowingly withholds information which the authority have reasonably required him to give in connection with the exercise of those functions.*

Keyways is the local housing authority's mechanism for discharging its functions under Part VI of the Act. Consequently where section 171 applies, Corby Borough Council may bring a prosecution.

## 15.0 APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

<b>Accredited landlord</b>	A private landlord that has been accredited by DASH Accreditation or Corby Borough Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme. Further information on both can be found at; <a href="http://www.dashservices.org.uk">www.dashservices.org.uk</a> <a href="#">CBC Landlord Accreditation Scheme</a>
<b>Adaptations</b>	Adjustments to a property to assist a disabled member of the household access the property or facilities such as a; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stairlift</li> <li>• Wetroom</li> <li>• Level Access Shower</li> <li>• Ramp</li> </ul>
<b>Affordable rent</b>	Rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local private rented market rent.
<b>Allocation scheme</b>	This explains the rules that determine how the Keyways Councils and the Keyways Landlords in Corby allocate social housing properties. The scheme also outlines other housing options.
<b>Applicant</b>	A person who applies to register onto the Keyways housing register.
<b>Band</b>	We will categorise Keyways applications into one of five bands which reflect the level of priority for housing. These bands are A, B, C, D and E. Applications in Band A have the highest level of priority.
<b>Bid</b>	The term used when an applicant expresses their interest in a property advertised on Keyways
<b>Choice-based lettings</b>	A scheme like Keyways that allows applicants to express a choice about where they want to live from within their eligible properties.
<b>Decant</b>	The process whereby a social housing tenant has to temporarily move out of their home into another property owned by their landlord to enable the landlord to complete essential repairs/maintenance to the property.
<b>Declaration form</b>	The main and joint applicant (if applicable) must sign this in order to show their understanding and acceptance to adhere to the Keyways Allocations Policy. It also provides the local authority permission to make further checks in order to fully assess the application.
<b>Direct match</b>	In exceptional circumstances, a Keyways landlord may allocate a property to an applicant without it being advertised. Reasons may include but not limited to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant requires multiple adaptations</li> <li>• Applicant requires an adaptation that is limited within our housing stock</li> <li>• Housing a successor who is under occupying a property</li> </ul>
<b>Effective date</b>	The date at which a Keyways application is registered or escalated into a higher band.

<b>Eligibility</b>	Eligibility determines who is eligible to, or is allowed to join the Keyways register under the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 and related legislation. A person who is not eligible will not be able to join the register or to bid for properties. Eligible applicants will then be advised what type of property (i.e. size) they are eligible to bid for.
<b>Feedback</b>	Your personal bid history will be available to you when you log into your account on the Keyways website.
<b>Fixed term tenancy</b>	Tenancies granted by Keyways partner landlords to new social housing tenants that are for a fixed length of time. Tenancies will not normally be granted for less than five years, except for those who have not held a tenancy before, where a one year starter or introductory tenancy may be used.
<b>Habitual residence test</b>	The test looks at whether the applicant's residence in the United Kingdom is of a settled nature. For example, it looks at the length and continuity of residence, work/work prospects or family ties.
<b>Intermediate affordable housing</b>	Housing at below market price. These can include shared equity products (e.g. HomeBuy / Shared Ownership), and other low cost homes for sale.
<b>Keyways landlord</b>	Corby Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council, the Borough Council of Wellingborough, registered providers and accredited private landlords.
<b>Keyways nomination agreement</b>	An agreement that the Keyways Councils have with some Registered Providers that stipulates the proportion of lettings to be made through the Keyways Allocation Scheme
<b>Letting/Bidding cycle</b>	New properties will be advertised each week from 00:01hrs on a Thursday to midnight on a Tuesday. There are no social/affordable properties advertised on a Wednesday.
<b>Local connection</b>	Applicants to Keyways will require a connection to Corby/Kettering/Wellingborough and/or some villages in order to qualify. They must demonstrate clear connection links to an area such as residency, employment or immediate family members.
<b>Mutual exchange</b>	A swap of accommodation between two social housing tenants that relies on each tenant moving permanently into the other persons/tenants property which has been approved by the landlord(s)
<b>Non-statutorily homeless</b>	A term that refers to homeless people or households to whom local housing authorities do not have a duty to make an offer of settled housing.
<b>Nomination</b>	The term used when a local housing authority provides, from its housing register, the name and details of an applicant to a landlord for an offer of housing.
<b>Open bid</b>	This term indicates that the property advertised is still within its current bidding cycle or has not yet been shortlisted and/or allocated to an applicant.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Each week Keyways will publish information on accepted offers of accommodation from previous advertising cycles.
<b>Private rented sector offer</b>	A final offer of a suitable property in the private rented sector in order to discharge full duty under the homeless legislation.
<b>Property leased to a support agency</b>	A property owned by a Keyways Landlord but is managed by a support agency. As a result the re-letting of this property is the responsibility of the support agency and not the Keyways Landlord.

<b>Qualifying person/criteria</b>	A local housing authority can decide what classes of persons are, or are not, qualifying persons for joining the Keyways Register. Non qualifying persons include people that have demonstrated previous unacceptable behaviour such as anti-social behaviour, debt to any Council and/or other housing related debt.
<b>Queue position</b>	When placing a bid, Keyways will calculate your position in the shortlist as at the time of the bid. This can alter (go up or down) throughout the letting cycle (Thursday-Tuesday). The higher up the shortlist for the property you are the more likelihood there is of being allocated it. On occasion, an advert will specify if there is a preference criterion therefore the queue position may be affected. I.e. adapted properties will be offered to those requiring the adaptations in the first instance.
<b>Rechargeable repairs</b>	Damage or negligence by a tenant (or the tenant's family/visitors) to a property during a tenancy.
<b>Registered provider (RP)</b>	A housing association or a not-for-profit company registered by the Homes and Communities Agency to provide social or affordable housing.
<b>Rights of residence directive</b>	This directive allows citizens from the European Economic Area who are not economically active to live in another member country. A condition of this is that the citizen should have enough resources to avoid relying on the benefits system of the member country.
<b>Sheltered housing</b>	Housing for older people with a support need disabled or those unable to work because of a medical condition but are able to lead independent lives with some assistance. Consists of units/complexes and clusters of bungalows.
<b>Shortlist</b>	A list of applicants that have expressed an interest in a particular property advertised on Keyways.
<b>Skipped</b>	Term used when an applicant has bid on a property and been bypassed. Reasons for being bypassed may include but not limited to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The property is unsuitable for the applicants needs</li> <li>• Enquiries reveal the applicant may no longer be eligible/qualify i.e. no local connection, debt to a Council or unsatisfactory tenancy reference</li> <li>• Local lettings policy or priority criteria i.e. sheltered accommodation/age restriction</li> <li>• Adaptations suitable for disabled clients</li> </ul>
<b>Social housing</b>	Rented housing restricted by national rent controls owned by a local authority or registered provider such as Housing Associations.
<b>Statutorily homeless</b>	A term that refers to people or families to whom a local housing authority has a duty to make a permanent offer of housing.
<b>Succession of tenancy</b>	When a tenant dies, the tenancy will automatically pass to any joint tenants, a partner or a close member of the tenant's family as long as they were living with the tenant at the time of death and for at least 12 months before, and as long as the tenancy hasn't been subject to a previous succession already. Anyone who takes over the tenancy in this way is called a <b>successor</b> . Any permission to succeed should be formally confirmed by the landlord.

## **16.0 APPENDIX D: CONTACT DETAILS**

### **CORBY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

#### **One Stop Shop**

The Corby Cube  
Parkland Gateway  
Corby  
Northamptonshire  
NN17 1QG

Tel: 01536 464000

Fax: 01536 464667

[www.corby.gov.uk](http://www.corby.gov.uk)

[housing.options@corby.gov.uk](mailto:housing.options@corby.gov.uk)

## **KEYWAYS PARTNER LANDLORD CONTACT DETAILS**

### **KETTERING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Municipal Offices  
Bowling Green Road  
Kettering  
Northamptonshire  
NN15 7QX

Tel: 01536 410333

Fax: 01536 410795

[www.kettering.gov.uk](http://www.kettering.gov.uk)

[customerservices@kettering.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@kettering.gov.uk)

### **BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH**

Swanspool House  
Doddington Road  
Wellingborough  
Northants  
NN8 1BP

Tel: 01933 229 777

Fax: 01933 231 543

[customerservices@wellingborough.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@wellingborough.gov.uk)

[www.wellingborough.gov.uk](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk)

## **OTHER REGISTERED PROVIDERS WITH STOCK IN THE BOROUGH**

### **BPHA**

Pilgrims House  
Horne Lane  
Bedford  
MK40 1NY

01234 791 000

[info@bpha.org.uk](mailto:info@bpha.org.uk)

[www.bpha.org.uk](http://www.bpha.org.uk)

**PA HOUSING GROUP**

3 Bede Island Road  
Leicester  
LE2 7EA

0116 257 6716

[www.pahousing.co.uk](http://www.pahousing.co.uk)  
[enquiries@pahousing.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pahousing.co.uk)

**GRAND UNION HOUSING GROUP**

Atlanta House  
John White Business Centre  
Midland Road  
Rushden  
NN10 8DN

0300 123 5544

[www.guhg.co.uk](http://www.guhg.co.uk)

**SPIRE HOMES**

1 Crown Court  
Crown Way, Rushden  
Northamptonshire  
NN10 6BS

0845 603 5399

[www.spirehomes.org.uk](http://www.spirehomes.org.uk)

**METROPOLITAN**

1 Horizon Park  
Barton Road  
Comberton  
Cambridge  
CB23 7AF

020 3535 3535

[www.grantahousing.org.uk](http://www.grantahousing.org.uk)  
[info@grantahousing.org.uk](mailto:info@grantahousing.org.uk)

**ORBIT HEART OF ENGLAND**

3 Brookfield  
Duncan Close  
Moulton Park, Northampton  
NN3 6WL

08458 500 500

[info@orbit.org.uk](mailto:info@orbit.org.uk)  
[www.orbitheartofengland.org.uk](http://www.orbitheartofengland.org.uk)

**PLACES FOR PEOPLE**

Matrix House  
North 4th Street  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 1NJ

01772 897200

[www.placesforpeople.co.uk](http://www.placesforpeople.co.uk)

**RIVERSIDE**

49 Western Boulevard

Leicester

LE2 7HN

0845 111 0000

[info@riverside.org.uk](mailto:info@riverside.org.uk)

[www.riverside.org.uk](http://www.riverside.org.uk)