



Housing Allocations Scheme Summary Document



North
Northamptonshire
Council



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www.northnorthants.gov.uk

Purpose of the Scheme

Keyways is North Northamptonshire Council's system for allocating social and affordable housing. The scheme explains how homes are allocated in line with Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 and sets out the Council's approach to meeting housing needs fairly and lawfully.

The aims of the scheme are to:

- Fulfil the Council's statutory duties by providing high-quality, affordable housing to those most in need, while promoting sustainable tenancies and thriving communities
- Provide people seeking housing with clear, transparent, and accessible information about the availability of social housing in North Northamptonshire, enabling them to make realistic, informed, and affordable housing choices
- Work with Keyways landlords to ensure the most effective use of housing stock across North Northamptonshire, prioritising the allocation of larger homes, specialist accommodation, and adapted properties to households with the greatest need
- Support Keyways landlords to manage their properties efficiently by minimising void periods and helping tenants sustain their tenancies over the long term
- Prevent homelessness wherever possible, meet the Council's statutory homelessness responsibilities, and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation
- Promote equality of opportunity in access to safe, secure, and affordable housing, supporting both local residents in housing need and those without a local connection to North Northamptonshire, including armed forces personnel, care leavers, people fleeing domestic abuse, and individuals seeking employment opportunities

Who Can Apply

Eligibility

Your eligibility depends on your immigration status. You may not be eligible if:

- You are subject to immigration control and do not fall into an eligible class.
- You are not subject to immigration control but:
 - Your only right to reside is one that is classed as ineligible, or
 - You are not habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, Channel Islands or Isle of Man.

Qualification

Even if you are eligible, you must also qualify to join the register. You may not qualify if:

- You are a homeowner.
- You do not have a local connection to North Northamptonshire e.g. residence in North Northamptonshire, employment in the area, family association or are otherwise exempt such as those in the armed forces, people fleeing domestic abuse and care leavers.
- You have been involved unacceptable behaviour e.g. serious tenancy breaches, antisocial behaviour, relevant criminal convictions or housing related debt over two months.
- You have no identifiable housing need under the banding criteria.
- You have refused two suitable offers in the last 12 months (one offer only if owed a homeless duty).

Applicants are normally required to be 18 or over, with limited exceptions.

How Applications Are Prioritised

All applicants accepted onto the register are placed into one of four priority bands. Within each band, applicants are ordered by their effective date (the date their priority band was awarded).

Band and Priority Level	Criteria (Autobid)	Criteria (Manual Bid)
Band A – Emergency Need	• Homeless Main Duty • Hospital Discharge • Severe Medical Need • Severe Overcrowding • Armed Forces • Risk of Harm • Category 1 Hazard • Major Repairs • Demolition • Natural Disaster • Under Occupying Tenants with Medical Need • Priority Sheltered Move • Supported Move On	• Releasing Adapted Property • Releasing Large Family Property
Band B – High Need	• Homeless Relief Duty • Homeless Prevention Duty • Supported Move On	• Urgent Overcrowding • Urgent Medical Need • Essential Care and Support • Under Occupying Successor • Employment Hardship / Right to Move
Band C – Medium Need	• Homeless Relief Duty • Homeless Prevention Duty	• Non-Statutorily Homeless • Overcrowding • Sharing with Others with Dependents • Medical Need • Ongoing Care and Support
Band D – Low Need	• Homeless Relief Duty • Homeless Prevention Duty • Supported Move On	• Intentionally Homeless

Band Demotion

Applicants who deliberately worsen their housing circumstances may be moved to a lower band for 12 months.

Statutory Reasonable Preference

The law requires the Council to give reasonable preference to applicants in the following groups:

- People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7).
- People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3).
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability); and
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

Additional preference may be given where there is exceptional or urgent need.

Property Eligibility

The size and type of home you can bid for depends on your household. For example:

- Single person: bedsit or 1 bed.
- Couple: 1 bed.
- First Pregnancy: eligible for up to 2 bed (minimum of 2 bed from 27 weeks).
- Families: based on number, age and gender of children.

Some properties (e.g. adapted homes, sheltered housing and bungalows) have additional criteria.

Applicant Choice and Bidding

Keyways is a choice-based lettings system:

- Properties are advertised weekly (Thursday to Tuesday).
- You may bid for up to 5 properties each week.
- You choose which homes to bid for unless you are on autobid (used mainly for emergency and homeless households).

The level of choice depends on your band, property eligibility and the availability of suitable homes.

Autobid means that the software will place bids on an applicant's behalf, targeting properties that provide the best possible chance of a nomination (e.g. the best queue position at the end of the bidding cycle).

Autobids are placed at one minute past midnight at the end of the bidding cycle.

How Properties Are Allocated

Advertising

Properties are advertised with key information, including but not limited to, landlord, size, type, rent, service charges, council tax band, tenancy type, adaptations, floor level etc.

Bidding

You can place bids yourself, or if you are set to autobid, the system will place bids for you automatically.

Shortlisting

Shortlists are ordered using the following criteria:

1. Band
2. Effective date (how long you have been in that band)
3. Property specific requirements, such as:
 - Adaptations
 - Ground-floor need
 - Minimum bedroom need

The Council may skip the highest ranked bidder if, for example:

- The property is unsuitable for their assessed needs.
- There are safety concerns.
- Their circumstances have changed.
- A local lettings plan applies.
- Relevant information has been withheld on the application.
- Negative tenancy references.

Offers

If you are the top eligible bidder:

1. The Council will contact you.
2. Your details will be checked and verified.
3. The landlord will carry out their own verification.
4. You will be invited to a viewing.
5. You decide whether to accept the offer.

The landlord may also inspect your current home as part of their checks and conduct an affordability assessment.

Refusals

- Most applicants may refuse one suitable offer without penalty.
- Refusing two suitable offers within 12 months will result in disqualification.
- Homeless applicants are given one suitable offer only.
- Failing to respond or engage with the offer process is treated as an implied refusal.

Rights of Review

Review Request

You can request a review within 21 days if:

- You are denied admission to the scheme, or
- For any other decision impacting your housing application.

Review Process

1. Initial review by a Housing Allocations Officer.
2. If still dissatisfied, a formal review by a Senior Officer.
3. A decision is issued within 8 weeks (unless extended by agreement).
4. Further challenge is only via judicial review.

Landlord Reviews

If a landlord refuses your nomination, you may request a review directly with the landlord within 21 days.

Need More Help?

We are here to support you throughout your housing application journey.

Online Help

You can manage your application and access a range of services online at www.keyways.org.uk, including:

- Applying to join the housing register
- Logging in and placing bids
- Viewing available properties
- Checking average waiting times
- Updating your details and uploading documents
- Alternative housing options including low cost homeownership

Frequently Asked Questions

You can find answers on our Frequently Asked Questions page: www.keyways.org.uk/content/FAQs.

Contact Us

If you need further assistance, you can get in touch:

- **Website:** www.keyways.org.uk
- **General Enquiries:** 0300 126 3000
- **Email:** keyways@northnorthants.gov.uk