

Local Authority Housing Options

Birmingham City Council's allocation policy

Birmingham City Council (BCC) introduced a revised allocation policy in January 2009. Points are awarded to applicants based on housing need. You can download a copy of the policy documents, which explain the criteria, at www.birmingham.gov.uk/housing

TOP TIPS

- Make sure key staff have read and understand the key principles of the allocations policy to help clients make informed choices about realistic housing pathways.
- Applicants' points can be reduced up to 90 per cent where they have no local connection to Birmingham, rent arrears, or a history of antisocial behaviour.
- Proof of immigration status is needed, including details of any outstanding appeals, to ensure that clients are eligible to register. You can contact The Wardlow Centre on **0121 303 9879** for advice on immigration related issues.
- Include briefings and training on the allocations policy within your induction sessions and/or staff training.
- Check whether your new client is already registered on the waiting list and if their application is 'live'.

- Let BCC know about any change in your client's circumstances which could impact on the status of their application.
- See the 'Vulnerable Clients' section for details of Move On points and centralised team to support vulnerable clients

Birmingham Home Choice

This choice based lettings system has been introduced by Birmingham City Council to advertise BCC and RSL properties and give people on the waiting list more say in the properties they're allocated. New applicants still need to complete a BCC application form to register. These can be downloaded at www.birmingham.gov.uk/housing

Registered applicants will be able to bid on suitable properties at access points across the city including libraries, neighbourhood offices, children's centres, housing associations, and voluntary organisations. For a full user guide and information on access points, go to www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk

TOP TIPS

- Train and brief staff and clients on how to use Birmingham Home Choice to access accommodation.

TOP TIPS (continued)

- Check clients have received confirmation that their application is 'live' and have a pin number so they can bid. Customers can ring the helpline on **0121 675 5779**.
- Support providers can monitor Move On applications through the Housing Pathways Team (see the vulnerable clients section below).
- Provide access to internet and support to enable clients to make regular bids.
- Give clients information about available homes in the areas they want to live in.
- Monitor successful bids.
- Review the bids your clients make so you can identify significant gaps in bidding, reasons for not bidding, and any additional support that may be needed.

Vulnerable clients

The Housing Pathways Team process and assess housing applications from vulnerable clients for BCC accommodation. This includes applications from:

- Move On clients
- Offenders who are MAPPA or PPO clients
- Care leavers
- Youth offenders
- Ex armed forces personnel
- Extra Care clients

Move On Pathway

The allocations policy awards 50 Move On points and 80 points to mother and baby/care leavers if applicants meet the following criteria:

- The applicant lives in accommodation designated as Move On points eligible*

AND

- The applicant receives Supporting People funded Move On support.

Move On points can be awarded up to six months before the support package is completed and in addition to other points awarded based on housing need, as outlined in the allocation policy.

** For a full list of accommodation that qualifies for Move On points, please contact the Policy and Development Team on **0121 675 8661**.*

How to apply for Move On points

To apply for Move On points, your client will need to complete a BCC application form, and provide proof of identification and income. The support provider will need to complete a Move On referral form. This outlines the evidence needed to verify that your client has received, or is in receipt of, a planned programme of support. It also details any additional support that will be given to help clients move into and maintain a new tenancy.

Completed application forms and Move On referral forms should then be sent directly to:

Housing Pathways Team
PO BOX 13254B1

Please note that neighbourhood offices and local housing teams cannot assess and award Move On points. For a copy of the Move On referral form, go to www.birmingham.gov.uk/move-on. You can get further information about any of the pathways available by calling the team on **0121 675 2674**.

TOP TIPS

- Provide the Housing Pathways Team with named contacts from your organisation to discuss Move On applications.
- Allocate a named worker to check the applications and evidence before you send them to the team to avoid delays in processing applications.
- If outstanding evidence isn't provided in good time, applications may be closed as a result.

TOP TIPS (continued)

- Keep accurate records of applications submitted and outcomes.
- Tell your staff to send applications directly to the Housing Pathways Team to be assessed for Move On points, and not to neighborhood offices.
- Make sure the client consent form in the Move On referral pack is signed, as it allows application details to be shared with the referring agency.
- Provide the Housing Pathways Team with any changes in circumstances which could impact on your client's application status and housing need.

More about the Housing Pathways Team

The Housing Pathways Team provides a centralised access point for vulnerable clients. It can liaise with key Birmingham City Council directorates and teams to support the process of applying for adapted properties, sheltered housing and Extra Care schemes.

Health and Housing applications

If a client needs to move because of health needs, they need to complete a Birmingham City Council Health and Housing application form. Supporting medical information, including proof of any benefits received for health reasons, will need to be included. You can download the form at www.birmingham.gov.uk/housing – under the heading 'Finding A Home/How To Apply For A Council Home'.

Sheltered housing

Clients over 50 may want to consider sheltered housing with Birmingham City Council, which has schemes across the city. The appropriate section needs to be completed on the main council application form.

You can get more information on sheltered housing options at www.birmingham.gov.uk/shelteredhousing

Extra Care Housing

For people 55 and over who may otherwise have to consider residential care, Extra Care Housing offers people the chance to remain independent and get the additional support they need. Schemes are run in partnership between the council and RSLs and offer homes to rent and shared ownership options. An application for Extra Care will usually ask for information about the applicant's care needs.

If a client needs additional care and support, the Adults and Communities Directorate can be contacted to carry out a community care assessment. Please see www.birmingham.gov.uk/facs for more information on fair access to care services. You can also get tips and advice on options for older people at www.homelesslink.org.uk

You can also get tips and advice on options for older people at www.homelesslink.org.uk