FAQs – Review of Brent's Housing Allocations Scheme Consultation

Background

Why is the council reviewing the Housing Allocations Scheme?

Brent faces exceptionally high demand for social housing and a severe shortage of available homes. A review of the scheme was recommended following a Local Government Association Peer Challenge in 2025, which found Brent had one of the largest housing waiting lists in the country. Following a re-registration exercise, there are now around 8,349 active applicants on the register, of whom approximately 6,421 have an identified housing need. Only around 650 social homes become available each year. The review aims to ensure social housing is allocated fairly and prioritised towards those in the greatest need.

Is this consultation about homelessness services?

No. The consultation relates to Brent's Housing Allocations Scheme (Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996), which governs access to the housing register and the allocation of social housing. It is separate from the council's statutory duties to homeless households under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, although one objective is to create greater consistency between the two systems.

Has the council already decided to make these changes?

No. The council is consulting residents and stakeholders on proposed changes. Feedback received during the consultation will help inform any final decisions.

Proposed Change 1: Removing Band D

What is Band D?

Band D currently includes applicants who do not have an identified housing need which meets the council's requirements under the Housing Allocations Scheme.

What is being proposed?

The proposal is to remove Band D and restrict access to the housing register to applicants who have an identified housing need and meet the council's eligibility requirements.

Why is the council proposing this change?

Many Band D applicants have little or no realistic prospect of receiving social housing due to the significant mismatch between supply and demand. The proposal seeks to ensure the housing register more accurately reflects housing need and focuses resources on households with the greatest need.

How many people could be affected?

Following the re-registration exercise, around 8,349 active applicants remain on the register. Around 6,421 of these have an identified housing need, meaning a substantial number of current applicants could be affected by the proposal.

Does removing Band D reduce the number of affordable homes available?

No. The proposal does not reduce, or increase, housing supply. It changes who can join and remain on the housing register.

What would happen to people removed from the register?

Affected residents would still be able to access housing advice and information about alternative housing options. However, they would not be eligible to remain on the housing register unless they met the relevant housing need criteria.

Proposed Change 2: Introducing a One-Offer Policy

What is being proposed?

Applicants would receive one suitable offer of social housing in Brent. If they refuse that suitable offer, this could affect their priority or eligibility for further offers.

Why is the council proposing this change?

Currently, applicants on the housing register can refuse suitable offers without affecting their priority. The proposed change aims to make best use of limited housing stock and bring the allocations process closer to the approach used for homeless households under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

What is meant by a "suitable" offer?

A suitable offer would be one that meets the household's assessed housing needs under the council's allocation rules.

Will applicants be offered housing outside Brent?

No. The proposal relates to one suitable offer within Brent.

What are the potential benefits?

- Faster allocation of available homes.
- Reduced number of properties being repeatedly advertised.
- Better use of scarce housing resources.
- Greater consistency between allocation and homelessness processes.

Proposed Change 3: Bedroom Sharing Rules

What is being proposed?

The council is proposing that same-sex adults aged 21 and over who are part of the same household be expected to share a bedroom when assessing housing need under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.

Why is this change being considered?

The proposal would align housing register assessments more closely with the approach already used when assessing homeless households under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

Who would be affected?

The change would primarily affect households containing same-sex adult siblings or relatives aged 21 and over who currently receive separate bedroom entitlement under housing register rules.

Would this change apply to everyone?

The consultation seeks views on the proposal. Any final policy would be subject to consideration of legal requirements, individual circumstances and equality impacts.

What are the potential benefits?

- Greater consistency between different housing assessment frameworks.
- More efficient use of limited housing stock.
- Increased ability to prioritise households with the most acute overcrowding needs.

Key messages

- Brent continues to face extremely high demand for social housing and limited supply.
- The consultation is about how scarce social housing should be allocated as fairly and effectively as possible.
- No final decisions have been taken.
- Residents are encouraged to participate and share their views before any changes are agreed.
- The consultation seeks views on three proposals: removing Band D, introducing a one-offer policy, and changing bedroom-sharing rules for some adult household members.

What other housing options are available?

There are lots of resources to help you find a suitable home in the private rented sector, including family homes and shared housing. Find out more.