



ALLOCATION POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement for Allocation Policy

- It is a legal requirement for East Midlands Shelter for the Homeless (EMSH) to show that a fair and non-discriminative process occurs when allocating accommodation to our service users.
- The allocation policy ensures that all resources and accommodation is efficiently used.
- The allocation policy is described in great detail in this document
- The Allocation policy is regularly (annually) monitored by EMSH and altered to meet the demands of social housing needs.
- The allocation policy for EMSH has been designed to address the fact that EMSH have a limited number of shared rooms available and therefore it needs to priorities applicants and service users.
- The policy describes how EMSH will help prevent homelessness and work with others organisations to help find alternative accommodation.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

- To offer the homeless in Nottingham a choice of accommodation within our resources.
- To provide a fair, open and accountable service.
- To provide accommodation according to the Homeless Act (2002) and Housing Act (1996).
- To ensure that EMSH adheres to all government guidelines.
- Direct applicants to the appropriate local organisations where specialist advice is needed.
- To provide a clear and positive attitude to social housing and accommodation for the homeless.
- Alter the service provided according to the service users needs as well as the partner organisations.
- To empower the homeless and provide publications in English language, have translations, large print and reading facilities for service users/ tenants.
- To address the housing needs of the homeless in Nottingham.
- To increase understanding of homelessness and how to prevent it.
- Set out a clear standard for the service we provide so all users are aware of what to expect.
- Have a transparent process in which all decisions reflect this policy and all decisions are given in writing so that we are able to audit the policy and make changes to where we are falling short.

1.3 Applicant and Service User's Responsibilities

- We expect that all applicants for accommodation tell the truth, give full and accurate details on forms requested.
- Be respectful to all staff and do not use abusive or violent behaviour to other tenants and staff.
- If there are any changes in their circumstances tell us immediately.
- Attend all appointments we require and tell us within 48 hours if they are unable to do so.
- Respond to all our correspondences in writing or verbally within the given time -frame.
- Make a decision on accommodation within the time-frame given.

1.4 Annual Review

- The allocation policy must be reviewed within 1 year of each publication and altered with the new housing needs of the homeless population in Nottingham. At present this is important as the housing demand currently exceeds the accommodation available within Nottingham.
- To insure that the policy is fair, open and transparent, every 6 months a publication containing comprehensive feedback of all let accommodation, which should include feedback

questionnaires and how all issues presented have been addressed.

- A consistent review process must be made public.
- Ensure and review that the registration process complies with Equal opportunities and diversity policy of EMSH.
- Make sure that the policy can be interpreted to vulnerable groups.

1.5 Registration for Accommodation

- To register for accommodation, we will need the individual to fill out the EMSH tenancy form.
- Due to the limited resources and accommodation available to EMSH, only those who have a realistic chance of securing social housing will be able to join the Housing Register.
- The individual will be told after the form is evaluated their priority of position and then the available accommodation will be presented.
- The priority of position will be decided upon your information given, the urgency of the accommodation, personal needs/requirements. The priority positions are given bands (A-E). The band will reflect the housing needs of the applicant.
- It is important that all alternative accommodation is discussed as well as any accommodation that we can provide.

- Unsuccessful registrants will be helped in providing alternative private accommodation.

1.6 Partner Organisations

EMSH works with direct referrals from the following organisation outreach and housing needs team:

- Gedling Borough Council
- Framework Housing Association
- Nottingham City Council Housing Aid
- Nottingham City Council Social Care
- Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Erewash Borough Council
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Broxtowe Borough Council

If a direct referral is made from the partner organisation, this will be reflected in the band given to the applicant, which will be according to their circumstances.

1.7 Minimising Waiting Times.

- It will be part of the process for EMSH to find private accommodation for applicants for when the waiting times and demand is high.
- The search for accommodation must be done on a regular basis on behalf of the tenants.
- A list of all accommodation must be kept of for future audits and for cost analysis to maintain that EMSH accommodation rent is always below the market value.

1.8 Vulnerable Applications

Any applicant that is considered vulnerable will be supported so that their application is not treated unfair and has equal opportunity. A number of measures will make sure that this occurs which are:

- Provide additional advice and assistance with the application forms. (This includes helping them to gather information).
- Provide transcripts and translations for any documents we send and any forms which need filling.
- Work with any supporting organisations and care workers

1.9 Adapted Properties

Any adapted properties, including ground floor accommodation, should be prioritised to applicants who have a need for such a

property. This is because of the shortage in the resources and the availability of the type of accommodation.

Basic overview of the Process.

- Applicant will apply to register.
- A banding system will be allocated.
- Each property will be available for a limited time frame with applicants able to place their interest.
- All interested applicants will then be placed into a list of priority. The highest priority applicant will be offered the accommodation.
- If the applicant refuses the accommodation then it will be passed to the second highest applicant, and so on until the accommodation is rented.

1.10 Legal Framework

The following is based on the publication by the government on Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England document June 2012 and current legislation.

It is a requirement under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011, that Housing Associations must publish an allocations scheme (policy), and ensure that properties are offered according to that policy.

The current legislation means that we must give a reasonable preference to the following group of people and EMSH has specifically been designed to help the homeless of Nottingham, therefore we must:

- Accommodate people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the 1996 Act).
- Accommodate people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- Accommodate people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including disability).
- Accommodate people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the Local Authority where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).
- Be aware when possible of people who are owed a duty by any Local 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 such authority under section 192(3).

(Note: Anyone who falls into the above categories will automatically be placed in band 1.)

Additional preference will be given to those who fall into or are effected by the Armed Forces England Regulations 2012 if:

- S/he is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributed (wholly or partly) to his/her service; or
- S/he has formerly served in the regular forces; or
- S/he has recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of his spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
- S/he is serving or has served in the reserved forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.

Forces are defined as “regular forces” are the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, The Army and the Royal Air Force. “Reserved forces” are the Royal Fleet Reserve, The Royal Naval Reserve, The Royal Marines Reserve. “The Army Reserve” are the Territorial Army, The Royal Air Force Reserve or Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

Every application received by EMSH will be considered according to its facts. Because every applicant’s situation is different, applications will be considered on an individual basis and individual circumstances will be taken into account.

1.11 Lettings That Are Not Covered by the Housing Policy

The following are not allocations of accommodation covered by the Allocations Policy:

- Temporary accommodation provided for homeless people under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. However applicants in this situation will be included on the Housing Register as this is the basic aim and objective of EMSH.

- Mutual exchanges between Council tenants or between Council tenants and the tenants of Registered Providers under the Housing Act 1985, s92.
- Where a secure tenant dies, the tenancy is a periodic one, and there is a person qualified to succeed the tenant under the Housing Act 1985, s89, then that person will succeed to the secure tenancy. If the home is bigger than they reasonably need they may be offered a suitable alternative home better meeting their needs.
- Where a secure tenant with a fixed term tenancy dies and the tenancy remains secure by virtue of the Housing Act 1985, s90.

Where a Court makes an Order about who is to be the secure tenant under:

- The Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, s24 (property adjustment orders in connection with matrimonial proceedings);
- The Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984, s17(1) (property adjustment orders after overseas divorce);
- The Children Act 1989, Schedule 1, paragraph 1 (orders for financial relief against parents).

1.12 Right to Move Regulations

“The allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria For Right To Move) (England) Regulations 2015 (The 2015 Regulations) has a requirement for a person to have a local connection with the

Housing Associations district and cannot be used as a criteria on where the Applicant is a 'relevant person' that is someone who:-

- Is a secure or introductory tenant or an assured tenant of a Private Registered Provider or Registered Social Landlord.
- Is to be given reasonable preference because he needs to move to a particular locality in the Local Authority's district, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship; and
- Has a need to move. A relevant person has a need to move for the purpose of this Regulation if he:-
 - Works in the district of the Local Housing Association, or
 - Has been offered work in the district of the local Housing Association and ii) The Association is satisfied that the relevant person has a genuine intention of taking up the offer of work.

The regulation does not apply if work is short term or marginal, ancillary to work in another district or voluntary.

1.13 Equal Opportunities and Diversity

EMSH will ensure that its Allocations Policy is applied in a manner that actively promotes equality and complies with its statutory obligations relating to equal opportunities and diversity.

The registration process will be done so it does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, ethnicity or national origin, disability, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or marital status. This will be regularly reviewed.

1.14 Data Protection and Confidentiality

- The Data Protection Act 1998 and Section 166 of the 1996 Housing Act will be complied with at all times.

- By signing the declaration on the application form, applicants are agreeing to their information being shared lawfully, where necessary, with partner organisations..
- All applicants have the ability to see their files on request. A copy of their file will be given within a 48 hour request period. There is a charge of £10 to have a paper copy made. This is in virtue of the Access to Personal Files (Housing) Regulations 1989.

2. EMSH REGISTRATION

2.1 Eligibility

Section 160A of the Housing Act 1996 states that only certain groups of people can qualify for social housing. The groups of people that do not qualify for social housing are:

- People who are seeking asylum or are effected by the Immigration act 1996. This however can change if notice is given from the Secretary of State.
- People who have been made ineligible by virtue of Regulations made by the Secretary of State.

3. QUALIFICATION

3.1 General Criteria for Qualification to Register

- All applicants must be aged 16 and over. Any applicants between the age of 16-18 may be referred to the Nottingham City Social Services or Framework for specialised supported accommodation.:

- People who are homeless and can be categorised as falling into Part 7 of the Housing Act '96.
- Anyone who is homeless and referred to us from the partner organisations.
- Must have been living in Nottingham for the last 2 years.

Any members of the armed forces serving or discharged. Any bereaved spouse or partner of the armed forces.

- Anyone who is in a witness protection program
- Any non-UK resident who has been granted leave to remain.
- Those 'relevant persons' who fall within the Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015.
- Any person aged over the age of 60.
- Anyone who is mentally or medically disabled.
- Anyone who is discharging from hospital and has no permanent accommodation.
- Anyone who is in temporary accommodation pursuant to the Housing Act 1996 by another Local Authority.
- Applicants who have received a legally binding notice asking them to leave their home, and can prove that they are unable to find alternative accommodation, will be considered to join the register provided they have been given the notice for at least 6 months.

3.2 Who Doesn't Qualify for EMSH Accommodation.

We have the right to refuse service to anyone who commits the following:

- Any person who threatens the safety of our staff.

- Any person who is abusive or uses sexist or racially offensive language.
- Any person committing benefit fraud or any criminal offense of a similar criteria.
- Any person whom is not paying rent arrears.
- Any person who behaves in an antisocial manner.
- Any person whom is currently subject to any court order (this includes a possession order of their property under section 84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any ground).
- Is supplying or found to be giving false and misleading information as to increase their housing needs.

Anyone who falls into the above categories, exceptions can be made provided that there is evidence of improvement such as addressing their behaviour and seeking counselling or support.

- If an applicant is currently in supported accommodation, then EMSH will not provide alternative accommodation. The services that EMSH offer will still be available to these applicants.
- If the applicant owns a home or has financial investment in a property, we are not able to accommodate them.
- Anyone who can not prove there is a housing need will not be able to register.
- If an applicant is not able to accept an offer of accommodation, they will not qualify to register.

Any applicant who does not meet the registration criteria for the above reasons can re-apply once their circumstances for refusal change.

3.3 Local Connection to the Area.

All applicants must demonstrate a need to be in the area, either by demonstration that the applicant resided in the area for at least 3 years, or the desire to have a job in the area. Anyone who is not able to will only be granted to join the register following a background interview in which they can demonstrate a need to stay within the Nottingham city centre.

3.4 Decision of Registration

When a applicant applies to register, a written notice of registration will be sent within 7 days of the application being sent. Any decision to refuse or not to qualify for registration will be explained. We will also notify the applicant why they do not qualify and how they may in the future. All applicants are able to apply again if their circumstances change. When able EMSH will advise failed applicants on alternative accommodation methods.

If an applicant wishes to complain about the registration decision they can do by writing to EMSH complaints department. They may also ask to appeal any decision which EMSH has made under section 166A(9) of the Housing Act 1996.

3.5 Review of Registered Applicants

EMSH may decide to review the application every 3 months and change the registration status of the applicant if they find that circumstances have changed.

3.6 Types of Applications

There are three main types of applications that are registered, (a) Single, (b) Joint and (c) Family.

- Single applicant is when one individual applies to register for a single occupying accommodation. That tenant will be the sole tenancy holder.
- Joint applicants are when a couple, two individuals in a relationship wish to apply for accommodation. Due to the

resources and limited accommodation there are only a few places for joint tenancies and so it is likely that there may be a delay in finding accommodation. Each applicant must qualify to have a joint application. If applicants no longer wish to apply jointly then a new application will needed to be filled out for each applicant.

- Family applications will be referred to the Nottingham City Council Housing Aid and Social Care deviations. EMSH does not have the resources for housing families. If EMSH does come across suitable accommodation for families, it will offer it to any families on the register. A family application is when there is at least one adult and at least one child which is in the adult's legal care. Pregnant applicants will be considered as a family application, this insures that the accommodation given is not classified as overcrowded for the parent and unborn child.

(Note: As the organisation grows and more funding is available, EMSH will be seeking accommodation for homeless families.)

4. APPLICATION PROCESS AND HOW TO APPLY

4.1 How to Apply

- The applicant should fill out an application form available from EMSH office or the EMSH.org.uk website.
- The application will be reviewed by EMSH staff and checks will be carried out to show eligibility. Interviews may be conducted to gather further information.
- Applicants will be placed into a band, which demonstrates the need for accommodation.
- Anyone who is ineligible will be given a full written reason and the applicants can ask for their application to be reviewed.

- Applicants can also ask for a review if they believe they are given the wrong banding.

EMSH staff can help fill out the forms and provide the forms in alternative format which suits the applicant.

4.2 Applicants Declaration and Consent.

By filling out and signing the application form it will be assumed that you have agreed to the following:

1. All information provided is true, and accurate to the best of your knowledge.
2. You must inform us of any changes in circumstances regarding housing.
3. We will share your information with partner organisations to verify any information you have provided and inform them of any change in circumstance.
4. You give consent to EMSH to obtain missing or verify given information which will be needed to get the applicant registered.

4.3 Change In Applicant's Circumstances

If there is a change in your circumstances, it is important that you update your information via telephone, writing or e-mail. All applicants must be aware that a change in circumstances will affect your registration position.

4.4 Application Process

- All forms are assessed by EMSH staff and assigned to a suitable type of accommodation.
- If forms are incorrectly filled out, applicants will be asked to refill or correct forms.

- A log of the forms being handed in will be kept and any fraudulent or falsified forms will be voided.

4.5 Form Details and Document Requests

The following information will be required in the forms:

- Financial information (for the purposes of the affordability assessment)
- Proof of suitability to be a tenant for each member of the household (e.g. references from previous landlords.)
- At least two forms of identification, one of which shows their current address, and another with the applicant's signature.
- Proof of address of current accommodation and tenancy status.
- Details of last 5 years accommodation.
- Photographic identification for every person aged 16 and over in the household (Probation and solicitors identification letter can be used).
- Details of all household members (name, DOB, ethnicity, NI number, etc.)
- Proof of residency in Nottingham area.
- Disclosure of any unspent convictions of the applicant(s) and / or any member of the household .
- Disclosure of any housing or tenancy related action (current or previous), taken against the applicant(s) and/or any member of the prospective household, relating to rent arrears, anti social behaviour or any other breaches of tenancy, including notices served or court orders obtained .

4.6 Additional Evidence for Certain Groups

In addition, extra evidence is required to verify certain categories of applicant which can include proof of:

- Pregnancy
- Access to children / child benefit
- Nationality / immigration status
- Habitual residence
- Medical / disability problems
- Support needs
- Agency recommendations
- Information to confirm circumstances of, and discharge from HM Forces and proof of occupancy in HM Forces living accommodation

We also require applicants to notify EMSH if they have anyone within the organisation that they are related to or in a relationship with (past or present). This ensures that their application is treated fairly.

4.7 Verification of Information Interview

When required to verify information or to register the applicant, we may choose at any time of the application process to interview the applicant.

- This will be done to verify the information on the application form.
- It may occur before or after registering the applicant.
- During the interview process a record of the current circumstances will be made and a photograph taken on the applicant.

- Applicants must produce valid and original documents to support their housing needs.

4.8 Application Notifications

All applicants will be notified in writing of the result and if successful will be sent options for available accommodation. As EMSH is limited to the availability of accommodation applicants may only be given one option if available. We advise that you respond within 21 days of receiving an offer, otherwise you will be removed from the register and will have to re-apply.

All applicants will be given advice on alternative housing regardless of their application being eligible or ineligible. We can also refer applicants to the Hyson Green Law Centre if their application is due to unlawful action from their previous landlord.

All applicants should notify EMSH if there is a change in circumstances which may make them ineligible for accommodation. Notification may be by telephone, on-line, in an office or during an interview.

4.9 Review of Application.

All applications presented will be reviewed on a 3 monthly basis to ensure registered applicants are still suitable for EMSH to provide accommodation. If we find a change in circumstances, we will write to you. If no response is provided within 21 days we will remove your application from our register.

4.10 Removal / Closure of the Application

All applicants will be removed from the registration list after they have accepted an offer and signed a tenancy agreement.

All applicants will be informed in writing if they are removed from the registration list. Applicants will be removed from the registration list if:

- Their circumstances change making them ineligible.
- Applicant does not reply to any offer, letter requesting further information and any application questions within 21 days.
- Applicant refuses the final offer.
- Applicant requests for the application to be removed in writing.

4.11 Reinstatement

If an application has been closed, you will be required to file a new application. An old application will not be reinstated unless the applicant has been interviewed and it has been agreed at a director level.

4.12 Misrepresentation and Fraud

If an applicant has obtained a tenancy through misrepresentation or fraud, EMSH will take legal action to present the case to the CPS. The applicant may face a substantial fine or even imprisonment if prosecuted. EMSH will automatically start legal work in obtaining the possession to the property and evicting the tenant.

5. THE BANDING SYSTEM

5.1 Introduction

To be considered for registration we must assess your housing needs from your application form and current circumstances. After

assessing the needs, we are able to assign you a band which is representative of your housing needs and level of priority.

After receiving your application, we will assign you into one of 5 bands (A, B, C, D and E). This is known as the banding system. Band A is given the most priority and Band E being less.

Banding details and justification for choice of banding's. Please note that all applicants will be reviewed every 3 months to see if their circumstances have changed and if they are still within the suitable banding according to their needs.

BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E
<p>-Statutory homelessness.</p>	<p>-Severe racial harassment, domestic violence or other threats of violence.</p> <p>- Medical and disability grounds.</p> <p>- People in hospital ready for discharge whom cannot return to their home.</p> <p>- Welfare grounds (general)</p> <p>- Welfare grounds (young people)</p> <p>- Adoptive and foster parents</p> <p>- Regeneration</p> <p>- Insanitary housing conditions</p> <p>- Social housing tenants</p>	<p>- Intentional homelessness</p> <p>- Social housing tenants (relationship breakdown, irreconcilable neighbour disputes, former tenants whom are no in the prison system and tenants with physical/mental health issues.)</p> <p>-Non urgent welfare issues.</p> <p>- Hardship</p> <p>- Overcrowding</p> <p>- Hotel residents</p>	<p>- Other homeless households.</p> <p>- Other overcrowding.</p> <p>- Social housing tenants whom are under occupying. (not in bands A-C)</p> <p>- Tenants in shared accommodation</p> <p>- HM forces tenants.</p>	<p>- Social/private tenants.</p> <p>- Tenants over 50 years old living in shared accommodation and do not fall within bands A-D.</p>

5.2 Band A

Band A is give to anyone who is homeless and has Reasonable Preference as defined by Section 167(2) of the Housing Act 1996. Band A is specifically for households under Part VII Housing Act 1996, to whom a full housing duty is owed and who meet the qualifying criteria set out in Section 2B.

5.3 Band B

Band B will be given to the following classification for applicants:

- Severe Racial Harassment, Domestic Violence or Threats of Violence

This includes applicants assessed by EMSH as needing urgent housing.

Victim's of witness police protection and anyone deemed vulnerable by the Police.

applicants living temporarily in a refuge, who are potentially homeless in accordance with Section 198 Housing Act 1996.

- Medical & Disability
 - Evidence will be needed from a GP or a referral health service.
 - This also includes patients being discharged from hospital that either have a home, but is unsuitable for their medical needs or have no home.
- Welfare
 - Applicant must be getting a considerable amount of additional care and support.
 - Applicants who are considered to be vulnerable.
 - This included anyone who is currently receiving care or support for mental illnesses.

- Young patients leaving care facilities .
- Partner referrals
 - Any of the partners we work with, would refer applicants whom have been sleeping rough or are currently being accommodated in bed and breakfasts.
- Insanitary or unsafe housing conditions
 - Applicant will have to demonstrate that their current living accommodation is A Category One hazard as defined in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) – Housing Act 2004.
- Severe overcrowding
 - This is where there are three people living in accommodation which is only suitable for 2. For example 3 adults living in a studio flat.
- Pregnant person who is at risk of becoming homeless

5.4 Band C

Band C will be given to the following classification for people:

- Intentionally Homeless
 - Applicants who have been found to be 'intentionally homeless', as defined by Section 191 of the Housing Act 1996.
- Non-urgent Welfare Cases
 - These are cases in which the applicant is currently living in accommodation which may not be suited to their social/ care needs.
- Educational or medical hardship

- Applicants who have hardship due to medical or educational circumstances which requires them to stay in a particular area.
- We will not provide accommodation to anyone who is in full time higher education. Educational hardship is where a school is involved which cares and supports applicants for a specific reason other have higher education.
- Overcrowding
 - This is when two individuals whom are not in a relationship are sharing accommodation which is designed for one individual. For example having two individuals of the same sex whom are not in a relationship sharing a studio flat.
- Supported accommodation
 - People who are in supported accommodation and hostels with a support nature, who are coming to the end of their support and need to be rehoused.
- HM Forces Families with Dependent Children

5.5 Band D

- Other type of Homeless
 - applicants who are homeless, but they or their household members are not in priority need as defined by Section 189, Housing Act 1996
- other types of overcrowding
- HM Forces Singles/Couples Living in HM Forces Accommodation

5.6 Band E

- Covers anyone over the age of 50 who may be living in accommodation which is currently unsuitable for their housing needs.
- Applicants over 60 who own their own home but without the financial resources/equity in their home to enable them to resolve their own housing need .

5.7 Ordering Within Bands

All applicants that are entered into the banding system will be ordered by Banding A-E, they will then be further rearranged into date of registration on to that particular band (effective date). This will mean that applicants who applied first will be given priority over applicants who just applied and are in the same band.

For example John applied in 12th Feb 2016 his housing needs were Band B, James applied in 14th Feb 2015 His housing needs were Band C, Tom applied on 13th Feb 2016 and his housing needs were C

The list would go as such for prioritising the: John, Tom, James.

If an applicant's banding is changed then, it will be assumed that the date of change is their new effective date for registration onto the register.

5.8 Reviewing and Changing Bands

Applicants band can be changed to a higher band for example into Band A, if there are grounds to prioritise their application. This can be done on the discretion of EMSH management staff provided they have given the applicant a written justification.

In line with the Additional Preference for Armed Forces England Regulations 2012, additional preference is given to an applicant who will fall into this category and their banding will be changed to a Band A.

A applicant can always appeal the decision of the band they have been assigned if they believe it does not reflect their housing needs.

5.9 Applicants not from Nottingham

EMSH will only take on applicants with a connection to the local area. Applicants will have to prove this connection for them to be successfully registered.

5.10 Reduced Preference

Section 166A(5) of the Housing Act 1996 allows allocation schemes to give reduced preference to the following groups of applicants:

- An applicant with significant financial resources and where s/he is financially able to secure alternative accommodation at market rent for himself .
- An applicant whose behavior (or that of a member of his household) affects their suitability to be a tenant.

6. FINDINGS/ALLOCATING ACCOMMODATION

6.1 Choice Based Accommodation

All successful applicants that are placed onto the register will have the ability to choose from the accommodation available. As EMSH was set up to support homeless victims, most of our accommodation will be of a shared house which provides a double room or small studio/ 1 bedroom flats.

All applicants must choose suitable accommodation which fits their housing needs. A list of accommodation will be made available via, letter, e-mail or within our office. When accommodation is made available all applicants will have the opportunity to bid for the accommodation. All bids must be received within 7 days of the accommodation been made available.

The accommodation will then be given to the highest priority band, and then the earliest effective date with-in the application.

6.2 Choice Based Accommodation Suspension

Applicants may be suspended from being able to be given a choice for the accommodation, if we believe that there is a specialist need for support. In these cases, accommodation will be chosen prior to it being available on the choice based system.

Suspension will also occur if an applicant keeps refusing to accept a property they have bid for, or they keep failing to turn up to viewings. In these cases , EMSH will act in the best interest for the applicant, taking into account all information given.

An applicant will normally be deemed to have ‘repeatedly’ failed to attend viewings or refused formal offers when, without good reason, they have failed to attend 2 viewings or accept 2 formal written offers .

6.3 Advertising Accommodation

Due to the limited amount of accommodation available, accommodation will be advertised within our office and then e-mailed to all registered applicants. Accommodation will also be sent to all partner organisations so they are made aware of our resources.

The adverts will include rent, location, description, and number of people the accommodation is suitable for. Support and special facilities will be described in a separate section. It will also contain any specific eligibility criteria e.g. pets allowed or local lettings policy.

7. BIDDING AND OFFERS

7.1 Expressing an Interest in Accommodation and Making an Offer/Bid

Applicants must express a interest in accommodation by contacting the office via e-mail or telephone. We will require the

accommodation reference number. Applicants can also log an interest via their support worker if they have been referred from a partner organisation.

Assistance will be given to any applicants whom may need it.

The bid/request must be done within the 7day time frame given. Proxy bids can also be accepted.

All applicants have a maximum of three bids at any one time. If applicants are successful in obtaining an offer for accommodation, they may only refuse accommodation twice.

Applicants can bid on multiple properties at once.

Applicants are expected to bid appropriately on accommodation that is suitable to their needs .

Every time a applicant makes a bid for accommodation, we may choose to verify that the applicant is suitable for the accommodation. In such cases where the verification process is not validated the bid will not be accepted.

When the adverts are e-mailed to applicants, it will also have instructions on how to bid/ make an offer.

All applicants are asked to confirm their bid by giving their full name and date of birth.

7.2 Support for Bidding

All applicants will be given support for bidding Support can be provided by:

- Applicants can use their support workers to place bids on their behalf.
- Use EMSH staff to place a bid and explain the bidding process.
- Have bids placed in proxy so that the bidding is automated.

7.3 Shortlisting of Applicants

After an accommodation is advertised, all eligible applicants who choose the accommodation will be shortlisted and placed in order of banding.

The applicant at the top will be given an opportunity to view the accommodation, they will then be given 24 hours to confirm if they want the accommodation. Confirmation must be done in person or over the phone.

During the viewing, we will check the property for repairs and its state, a date of availability will be given on the viewing date and any considerations made for applicants with special requests.

If no confirmation is made within 24 hours the next applicant on shortlist will be given a viewing.

7.4 Direct Letting of Accommodation

Applicants in Band A, may be given direct accommodation without it being advertised or shortlisted. This will only occur in the following situations:

- Harassment, hate crime and domestic violence.
- Medical, welfare or serious safeguarding implications.
- Court orders, statutory or legal duty.
- Assessed by a Multi Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPPA) whom recommends for accommodation to be given.
- Child protection and/or public protection.
- The applicant is within a witness mobility/ protection scheme.

- Where accommodation is specially made for a applicant with a disability.
- Where accommodation needs to be provide for anyone under the classification of Homeless.
- Where providing accommodation is costly to EMSH, then accommodation will be given directly.
- If there are any applicants with support workers/ Careers then EMSH has the right to discuss the suitability of the accommodation with them before issuing you an offer.
- Sensitive letting including Registered Sex Offenders or those identified as posing a serious risk to a specific community. In such cases EMSH will consult with the local Police and Probation Service.

EMSH will make sure that all accommodation provided to applicants fulfills all there requirements specified.

7.5 Refusing an Offer of Accommodation

When an applicant refuses to accept accommodation, the next applicant on shortlist will be given a viewing to accept.

If an applicant refuses accommodation for the third time, they will be removed from the register and will be suspended from applying for accommodation for 6 months.

It is important for an applicant who is owed a rehousing duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and referred to us from Nottingham Housing Aid to understand that the refusal of a suitable offer of accommodation is highly likely to result in cessation of duty to accommodate them under Part 7, the loss of any temporary accommodation, and the loss of priority under this Housing Allocation Policy. (This only applies to applicants directly referred from Housing Aid and have been housed by Nottingham City Homes)

By default if an applicant does not respond to a offer within the specified time period, it will be assumed that they have refused the accommodation. A further offer for the same accommodation will not be made again.

Every time accommodation is refused, applicants will be asked to fill in a form stating the reason for refusal. This information will be held and used to further improve the service we offer.

7.6 Accepting an Offer of Accommodation

After applicants are shortlisted and a viewing for accommodation has been made. Applicants can then have the ability to accept the accommodation being offered. This has to be done within an 48 hour period.

Accommodation can only be accepted after the applicant has signed their tenancy agreement and collected the keys.

Applicants refusing the property after signing of the tenancy will not be provided with alternative accommodation. As you will be legally classified as being a tenant. Any applicant in this position will need to give the appropriate notice period, depending on the tenancy contract they have signed.

7.7 Withdrawal of an Offer

An offer can be withdrawn before the applicant has signed the tenancy if the:

- Applicant has made false declaration, or failed to provide up to date information.
- Applicant is no longer eligible for accommodation.
- The property is not as described and therefore does not fulfill the applicants specifications.

- The property is not suitable for accommodation following an inspection report.
- Applicants make more than 5 attempts at bidding for properties which are beyond their needs.

7.8 Feedback and Audit of Offer System.

A 6 month audit of the offer system will be done, taking on board feedback from new tenants. The feedback will help the system to be improved and all reports published on the EMSH website. We will publish key information on how long applicants have waited and number of attempts applicants had.

7.9 Management of Bidding and Allocation System

Senior management will have a monthly meeting to discuss any difficult issues regarding applicants. The topics that they will discuss are:

- Changing the banding system or improving the bidding service and method in which offers are given.
- Direct allocation of housing to applicants.
- Imposing restriction or suspensions of the applicants.
- Dealing with complaints and managing appeals and decisions.
- Unacceptable behavior from either applicants / tenants.
- Publication of reports and audit results.

7.10 Property Criteria

Our key aim is to efficiently let properties that meet the needs of applicants. This means that restrictions in bidding are set in place.

Two bedroom properties will only be given to applicants who are expecting or have children. If a single applicant needs a full-time

carer or have considerable medical equipment then they may be considered to be given accommodation with 2 bedrooms.

One bedroom properties will be given to one applicant on his own or if there is a joint application as a couple.

Studio apartments/ flats – will be offered to single applicants.

Ground floor and specially adapted accommodation regardless of the number of rooms, will be prioritised for applicants who have specified needs due to welfare or medical conditions.

After accommodation is offered and a tenancy signed, it is important that the correct number of persons stay in the accommodation. If it is found that greater number of people are occupying the accommodation leading to overcrowding, this may result to a repossession process.

If an applicant needs accommodation with additional rooms then a request needs to be made to EMSH on the application form. This request will then be considered and a written confirmation of our answer will be given. The request for additional rooms can be made at anytime. Due to the restricted number of accommodation available not all request will be accepted and it will depend on the merit of the information provided.

7.11 Public Protection Risk Assessment

All applicants may undergo a further risk assessment to see if the accommodation is suitable and poses no risks to tenants. EMSH may need to consult on advice from your current and previous medical practitioners.

8. TENANCY TYPES

8.1 Introductory Tenancy

All first time tenants will be given a Introductory tenancy that complies with the 1996 Housing Act. The tenancy will be for a

period of 12 months and will be on a prohibition tenancy period. On prohibition tenancies are not secured. If all the criteria is met during the probation period then a full 12 month secured tenancy will be given. If the tenant has not met the prohibition criteria then the tenancy will be terminated after the 12 month stay. Any termination of the tenancy will come with a 2 month notice period.

8.2 Secured Tenancy

A secured tenancy will be given in the form of a Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) for a 12 month period and be continued thereafter on a monthly basis. EMSH will give a 2 month notice period it the tenancy is to be terminated after the 12 months.

8.3 Joint Tenancies

Joint tenancies will be offered if there is a application involving a couple who are legally married. Joint tenancies will also be introductory or secured.

8.4 Right to Review Applications

All applicants have a statutory right to review of the following decisions (Section 167(4A)(d), Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homeless Act 2002). The decision:-

- To treat them as ineligible under Section 160A(9) Housing Act 1996 for an allocation of accommodation. *Such a decision will be notified in writing to an applicant (160A(10)).*
- To take into account an applicant's unacceptable behavior, at any point. *Such decisions will be given in writing.*
- about the facts of his / her case, for example banding decisions and decisions to close applications or that an applicant does not qualify.
- Review of why a applicant has been removed from the housing register.

Any applicant making a request for their application to be reviewed must do so within writing to EMSH office within 21 days of receiving a decision they are wanting reviewed. Applicants will be notified within a 56 day period of the result from the review in writing.

Any applicants unable to provide in writing may request for an interview to express their concern directly.

If a review is successful in changing the original decision then applicants will be notified and their application will continue.

9. SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS

9.1 Introduction

EMSH was established to give support to the homeless. The support is designed to enable them to continue living independently, in their own home, for as long as possible. EMSH offers support in the form of counseling, food advice, hygiene, job finding and managing finances.

Supported housing is only given to those who have been referred to EMSH from the partner organisations, and those who meet the following criteria:

- Applicant needs help with daily living including support needs such as budgeting, safety and security, health and well being.
- The nature and extent of any mobility problems, respiratory problems or sensory impairment.
- Evidence of frailty, self-neglect or nutritional deficiency.
- Whether or not the applicant is feeling socially isolated and/or vulnerable to crime or abuse by others.

- Evidence of mental health or cognition problems, including depression, schizophrenia and dementia.
- The extent to which substance misuse is affecting the applicant's ability to cope.
- Evidence of a chaotic lifestyle and the applicant's need for support to enable them to cope.

Support may be suspended or reduced if:

- Applicants are unwilling to accept or engage with the support services offered;
- Applicants require a level of care and support that is more appropriate to a nursing or residential care home and is beyond even that provided in extra care supported housing;
- Are likely to put themselves or other residents at risk of serious harm or injury

9.2 Application for Supported Housing

Any applicant who may need support will need to apply for such support to the EMSH office. Applicants will need to produce relevant documents showing their needs. Supported housing will be offered on a case by case basis, this will ensure that EMSH is able to offer suitable support. In cases where EMSH is unable to give direct support, we will provide the relevant support through partner organisations.

EMSH does not have a separate register for supported housing, all applicants are placed in the same register. Support is provided in all accommodations when deemed necessary, if applicants request support beyond our scope we will refer them to the suitable service provider within the local area.

9.3 EMSH Complaints Procedure

If an applicant is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way in which their application for housing is dealt with (other than one for which a

review can be requested), they should contact the EMSH Complaints department and, if the matter is not resolved to their satisfaction, complete a complaints form.

The Complaints form will have all information on how the complaint is dealt with. All complaints are acknowledged in writing and a response given within 10 days.

The complaints procedure will inform applicants of the steps they can take if they exhaust the internal process and remain dissatisfied.