

PROPOSALS TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY**TOTAL RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

	Total	Percent of All
Member of the public	145	90%
Representing an organisation	14	9%
Not answered	2	1%
Total Responses	161	100%

1. Do you agree with the proposal to change the current bedroom eligibility?**Number of Responses Received**

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
107 (67%)	40 (25%)	14 (8%)	161

Feedback**ASRA Housing Group**

'Yes and No, the main factor missing is the definition of affordability. What is the definition of affordable? Welfare Reform won't impact working households negatively anywhere near the extent of vulnerable groups or those on Benefits. The argument could be had that if a family can afford a property they should have the choice - thus incentivising work and employment. Asra Group understand the reasoning behind this proposal but there is not enough flexibility within this to recognise incentivisation, increase mobility in the social housing sector or adapt to local needs.'

Midland Heart

*'No, the policy should correspond to the size criteria for benefit entitlement'.
This is:*

One bedroom is allowed for:

- Each adult couple*
- Any other person aged 16 or over*
- Two children of the same sex under the age of 16*
- Two children regardless of sex under the age of 10*
- Any other child*

Metropolitan Housing

'No, Applicants should assess their own ability to pay and apply for properties that they can afford'.

Leicester YMCA

'No, this stance contradicts the 2011 Allocations policy statement on choice. It appears that the proposed stance to remove the choice element directly contravenes the recent Draft Statutory Guidance on social housing allocations for LA in England (2009) where in Para 23 – 25 the emphasis on greater choice for the tenant was made'.

Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, Leicester City Council

'Yes, as a general approach this will prevent HB restrictions leading to financial hardship, but there will be some circumstances where there will be a need for a more flexible approach to the allocation of bedrooms – e.g. a severely disabled child or a child with challenging behaviours may present risks to other children'.

Adult Social Care Commissioning Team, Leicester City Council

'No, Should allow a separate bedroom for non-resident carer where individual has care/support needs.

Should allow a separate bedroom where health professional evidence of behavioural issues i.e. Autism spectrum disorders, ADHD for child/adult and impact on others of sharing bedroom. These conditions may not be classed as severe disability as can be on a continuum but should be recognised'.

General Public (Representative Sample)

'No, because not everyone who is eligible for Social Housing is on benefits and this is too broad a brush stroke. This change discriminates against the working population who may need an extra bedroom for circumstances covered by the present allocations policy, in favour of those on benefits'.

'Yes, this seems a fair way to allocate'.

'Yes, because there are people out there with 3 bed houses and they live alone, and then there's me living in an overcrowded house struggling for space'.

'Yes, I think this is a good idea as there are not many places for people to go to because some tenants have more bedrooms than needed, when others may need them more than others'.

'No, it should be personal choice whether to take on that hardship'.

'Yes, I think it will prevent people getting into financial difficulty'.

'Yes, I believe that no one should occupy a dwelling bigger than their needs unless they own it'.

'Yes, this is a good idea to save houses going to people just because they have lots of kids or people living in a house'.

Adults and Housing Scrutiny Commission Comments

Overall, they are unhappy that we are having to take this approach but acknowledged that it was out of our hands due to the position we are left in facing government cuts.

There is support for the age range for separate bedroom allocation being changed from 21 to 16, but they still felt that the 10 year age gap wasn't satisfactory (the gap should be much smaller).

They are not in favour of the age being raised from 7 to 10 years for the pair of children of either sex being allocated a separate bedroom.

Director of Housing Response

All comments noted from stakeholder partners and Adults and Social Care Scrutiny Commission.

It is acknowledged that realigning the existing allocation scheme to mirror that of the revised Housing Benefit (HB) bedroom criteria will make it easier to understand for our customers that will be directly affected the HB changes. In addition, it will also make it easier for frontline officers to explain the changes in relation to the housing allocations scheme.

In response to CYPS and Adult Social Care comments:

I accept that the existing Housing Allocations Policy (Access Health & Care - additional bedroom criteria) which allows a separate bedroom to be allocated for a severely disabled child or a child with challenging behaviours should be retained.

However, in such cases where an additional bedroom is allocated, the household must be made aware of the HB bedroom criteria rules and that full HB entitlement for an additional bedroom cannot be guaranteed and this could have an impact on the households finance if housing benefit is to be claimed.

In response to Adults and Housing Scrutiny Commission Comments:

Whilst it is noted that changes to the current bedroom eligibility criteria will mean children of the opposite sex having to share bedrooms up to the change of 10 years, the changes will ensure families are not allocated housing that may be unaffordable to them and help sustain tenants in their homes and reduce the risk of losing their home.

In light of the consultation feedback, I recommend the following changes:

To adopt the revised HB bedroom eligibility criteria that states:

One bedroom for:

- Each adult couple
- Any other person aged 16 or over
- Two children of the same sex under the age of 16
- Two children regardless of sex under the age of 10
- Any other child

And

- Retain the existing Housing Allocations Policy criteria which states that a separate bedroom can be allocated to a member of the household who has severe behavioural problems as well as a member of the household who has a severe disease or disability and require extra space for major items of life sustaining equipment

2. Do you agree with the proposal that people who have part week overnight access to their children, will only be considered for the number of bedrooms based on their household who live together on a fulltime basis?

Number of Responses Received

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
87 (56%)	54 (35%)	15 (9%)	156

Feedback

ASRA Housing Group

'No, on the whole we do agree with this proposal in relation to general needs. However the reality is the most PRP's will be offering Affordable Rent properties at 80% market rent. Applicants already coming to us for this product are refusing to take properties at the fullest capacity. If they can "afford" the property then applicants should be given the choice to take it at affordable rents levels. In our policy "affordability" will be strictly defined as no more than 40% of gross income being spent on rent. If an applicant meets these criteria for affordable rent homes then we feel they should be eligible to bid for them'.

Midland Heart

'No, a blanket exclusion of access households for additional rooms is not appropriate. The policy needs to be changed to say that the additional bedroom for access will be offered subject to a financial sustainability assessment'.

Leicester Quaker Housing Association

'No, it would be better to allow someone to work out for themselves if they could afford the cost of the extra bedroom for children for which they have partial access'.

Leicester YMCA

'No, this decision does not allow the estranged parent to fulfill their access rights, granted and enforceable in family courts for example Children & Adoption Act 2006.

Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, Leicester City Council

'Yes, again as a general approach this is fine, but again there is a need for some flexibility – e.g. for children in care who may be having overnight contact with their parents with a view to rehab there is a need to ensure that appropriate sleeping arrangements are in place'.

General Public (Representative Sample)

'Yes, I believe 2 bedroom property should be given to families only where the child lives with them on a full time basis'.

'Yes, houses should only go to families where children live all the time'.

'Yes, because peoples should not claim housing benefits for no rooms used'.

'Yes, for instance a single person living in a 3 bed home. They will receive benefit for 1 room, therefore they will struggle to pay their rent, whereas if they move into a one bed then they are better off but also someone who needs a 3 bed could have it'.

'No, parents cannot share a bedroom with children staying overnight. Children and parents should not be housed in the same bedroom under any circumstances'.

'Yes, it gives a fair assessment of different people's needs'.

'No, I believe it to be unfair for different sex children to share a bedroom over the age of 3 or 4'.

'Yes, it is common knowledge that we cannot live at two addresses at the same time. This proposal will prevent duplication of benefit claims and provide opportunities for others who could otherwise have been denied. On the long term it could help to consolidate family life as couples may prefer to continue to stay together because of their children'.

'Yes, don't see why Benefits should pay those that have their children part time so they can make use for bedroom when not using it for nothing while families out there are living together full time and waiting for bigger properties'.

'Yes, should only be given to families with children living there. Do not agree with people having an extra bedroom which is not used for most of the week'.

'No, by expecting these children to 'sleep on the sofa' you are damaging the relationship with their parents and doing more damage to an already upset home/family'.

'Yes, if children only stay a few nights, they can sleep on the settee or a spare mattress or folding bed. They normally just bring a few belongings with them'.

'No, this does not support the absent parents role maintain the relationship with their child/ran'.

Director of Housing Response

Comments noted from stakeholder partners.

There is currently high demand for family housing and this change will lead to more offers of accommodation to families who have their children living with them on a full time basis. In addition, the proposed change will ensure single people or childless couples are not placed in accommodation which maybe unaffordable to them.

Whilst there are people currently in employment and not benefit dependent, having separate policies for those in work and those in work will lead to lack of transparency and confusion given that people can fall in and of employment.

The Children and Adoption Act 2006 gives greater powers to courts to enforce contact orders, there are no requirements that additional bedrooms must be provided in such cases. There have been no challenges in the courts that changes to housing benefit rules contradicts other legislation.

Where there is a request from Children Services for an additional bedroom for a child in care to have overnight contact with their parents with a view to rehab this would be considered under the current Housing Allocations Policy Part 4.2.

In light of the consultation feedback, I recommend

To change the current Housing Allocations policy criteria so that people who have part week overnight access to their children, will only be considered for the number of bedrooms based on their household who live together on a fulltime basis (in line with the revised HB bedroom eligibility rules).

-
- 3. Do you agree with the proposal that families with two children who are of the age/sex where they can share a bedroom will only be considered for 2 bedroom accommodation?**

Number of Responses Received

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
87 (56%)	56 (36%)	12 (8%)	155

Feedback**ASRA Housing Group**

'No, on the whole we do agree with this proposal, subject to the property being suitable.

We would not be willing to offer what we consider to be a 2 bed, 3 person home to a family with 2 children - and we would expect this to be made clear at advert, and shortlisted according to that expectation'.

Leicester YMCA

'No, what about health needs or severe behavioural needs (supported by a health statement) of a child making it problematic or inappropriate to share?'

General Public (Representative Sample)

'Yes, this is not ideal but the changes do not support any other option'.

'No, morally very wrong, children of different sexes over the age of 7 should have separate rooms'.

'Yes, I think it's fair to ask children under 10 to share, providing the room is big enough for this purpose. I think there should be a minimum size'.

'Yes, if they are at an age that they can still share a room I see it as a reasonable idea to look at a 2 bed rate'.

'No, the children are going to grow up and then they shall have to move again, which is a very long process anyway and unnecessary in the long run if this proposal is denied'.

Adults and Housing Scrutiny Commission Comments

There was an expectation to downsize to 2 bedroom houses but there is a shortage of these houses, hence this is a large impact given we're talking about 1,700 people

Director of Housing Response

In response to Adults and Housing Scrutiny Commission Comments:

Whilst this change will increase pressure on 2 bedroom accommodation, the changes will ensure families are not allocated accommodation that be may be unaffordable to them. It is hoped that giving additional priority to social tenants who are under-occupying homes will increase the supply of 2 and 3 bedroom homes available for allocation.

In light of the consultation feedback, I recommend the following changes:

- The existing Housing Allocations Policy criteria in this area be discontinued and that we adopt the revised HB bedroom eligibility criteria. (i.e. children of the either sex are expected to share a bedroom up to the age of 10 and children of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom up to the age of 16).
- The existing Housing Allocations Policy (Access, Health, Care and Support criteria) in respect of the allocation of a separate bedroom for a severely disabled child or a child with challenging behaviours should be retained.

However, in such cases where an additional bedroom is allocated, the household must be made aware of the HB bedroom criteria rules and that full HB entitlement for an additional bedroom cannot be guaranteed and this could have an impact on the households finance is housing benefit is to be claimed.

4. Do you agree with the proposal that unborn children will only be considered as part of the household for bedroom eligibility purposes when the baby is born?

Number of Responses Received

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
113 (72%)	34 (22%)	9 (6%)	156

Feedback**ASRA Housing Group**

'No, if a pregnant woman takes a 1 bed flat at 3 months pregnant, then you are basically accepting that in 6-12 months' time she will be given reasonable preference to be rehoused in a family accommodation.

This would have a detrimental affect on church of our 1 bed flats in Leicester City, as well as introducing children to schemes which are not suitable for them and which were never intended to be housing children.

This would cost us significant void and relet costs as well as void rent loss in the longer term and is not a long term view on sustaining a tenancy'.

Midland Heart

'No, this is difficult. Pragmatically we should try and support households with unborn children to prepare. Like access children this should be assessed of the ability to sustain payments. Also like access cases not all applicants will be in receipt of Housing Benefit (although I accept this can change)'.

Adult Social Care Commissioning Team, Leicester City Council

'No, would challenge the statement that most babies sleep in the same bedroom for the first year as this may be due to lack of space rather than a positive parenting model.

Some babies will then be born and living in bedsit accommodation or a room in a shared house with parent/parents for a significant period'.

Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, Leicester City Council

'Yes, general approach is fine, but there needs to be some flexibility in exceptional circumstances'.

Metropolitan Housing

'Yes, it makes sense to follow the HB policy in this instance as a lot of single/young parents are on HB so will be financially disadvantaged in this instance'.

General Public (Representative Sample)

'Yes, this is a very true point. As I have an 11 month old daughter who is now ready to go into her own room as soon as I get offered a place'.

'Don't know, I kind of agree because if you were to give someone a two bedroom house before their baby is born and there was something to happen with the baby then that person will have two bedrooms when not needed'.

'Yes, I agree and the baby has 2 stay in parents room till they bit older anyway I feel. Mine didn't start sharing till my boy was about 6mnths for safety reasons and I'm sure a lot of parents feel the same defo if it's their first 1'.

'Yes, because the Baby is unborn so it is not part of the living world so why should people have a room for a child that isn't even born yet!!! Families out there waiting that Born as sharing or overcrowded'.

'No, being pregnant can be stressful enough and the first year of a baby's life is a very busy process so I myself think that after the 20 week scan and before turning 36 weeks pregnant any person who is a British citizen should be rehoused within this time'.

'Yes, babies should share a room with their parents until their 6 months old - this is the advice given by midwives etc., so they don't need a room of their own until then'.

Adults and Housing Scrutiny Commission Comments

There is a fear that unborn children were not considered until they were born for bedroom eligibility. It is mentioned that they sleep in the same bedroom as their parents for the first year so there isn't a need for an extra bedroom but at the same time it is mentioned it takes 6-12 months to get allocation for a 2 bedroom property, the commission felt that this could lead to a bottleneck in the waiting lists and this consideration should be taken before the child turns 1.

Director of Housing Response

It is generally accepted new born babies share the bedroom with their parents in their first year and is supported by Council's Children's Division. The current allocations policy recognises the difficulties placed on families with young children living in one bedroom accommodation and gives a relatively high priority under the banding scheme. It is anticipated families living in one bedroom accommodation with young babies will have a good chance of being made an offer within a reasonable period of time.

Where there is a request from Children's Services an additional bedroom should be allocated this would be considered under exceptional circumstances of the current Housing Allocations Policy Part 4.2.

In response to Adults and Housing Scrutiny Commission Comments:

It is recognised there will be pressure on 2 bedroom accommodation, the changes will ensure that expectant families are not placed in accommodation that may be unaffordable

to them. The current policy gives relatively high priority to those families living in one bedroom accommodation to ensure they have a good chance of securing an offer after 6 – 8 months on the Housing Register.

In light of the consultation feedback, I recommend that

- The existing Housing Allocations Policy criteria in this area be discontinued and adopt the following criteria that will mean that unborn children will only be considered as part of the household for bedroom eligibility purposes when the baby is born.

-
- 5. Do you agree with the proposal that social tenants who are under-occupying 4 bedroom accommodation or social tenants under-occupying by two or more bedrooms or social tenants under-occupying 2 bedroom accommodation be given Band 1 priority and social tenants under-occupying 3 bedrooms who require 2 bedrooms will be given Band 2 priority?**

Number of Responses Received

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
106 (68%)	18 (12%)	31 (20%)	155

Feedback**ASRA Housing Group**

'No, we agree that Band 1 is the appropriate band for those releasing 2 bed accommodation. Asra Housing Group understands the strategic reason for this.

However we do not believe it is fair, on behalf of the customers who through no fault of their own find themselves in 3 bed accommodation which they were housed in through Homechoice at the time because they were eligible, and who are affected by welfare reforms and no longer able to afford the property'.

Metropolitan Housing

'Yes, makes complete sense and will free up larger accommodation'.

General Public (Representative Sample)

'Yes, this will mean more houses becoming available'.

'No, it should be the same band for 3 and 4 bed. This leans to the policy as it currently stands and raises the possibility of a challenge as someone in a 3 bed is not being offered the same chance to move. This is therefore not treating them on an equal basis'.

'Yes, I agree to that as this will encourage them to downsize'.

'Yes, I think there are now a wealth of homes that are under occupied that should be available for young families who need the space and that people in social housing should have to either fund the extra cost of the extra rooms or be forced to move into smaller accommodation'.

'Yes, it sounds like a good idea - reorganise housing stock so people are living in appropriate sizes of house. However, it will only work if the council has the right mix of stock e.g. if there are enough smaller properties for the under occupiers to move into'.

Adults and Housing Scrutiny Commission Comments

Members want assurance that there will be good communication of these changes and rewards/incentive schemes for those people that we want to downsize.

Director of Housing Response

Most comments are in support of the proposal; social tenants under occupying 3 bedroom accommodations by 1 bedroom will be given a higher priority (Band 2) than under the current scheme. *No social tenant will be required to move if they do not wish to.* The Housing Allocations Scheme is available to give choice to those existing social tenants that want to move to smaller accommodation that is affordable.

In response to Adults and Housing Scrutiny Commission Comments:

All customers on the Housing Register will receive a letter explaining the new changes and contact information if they require further information or have any concerns. The Housing Division has also set up a Welfare Reform Housing Project which has begun a robust communication and marketing campaign to inform our existing tenants of the impending HB changes and raise awareness of choices available to minimise the risk of tenants getting into rent arrears that may lead to the loss of their home.

In light of the consultation feedback, I recommend that we adopt the following changes:

- Social tenants who are under-occupying 4 bedroom accommodation or
- Social tenants under-occupying by two or more bedrooms or
- Social tenants under-occupying 2 bedroom accommodation ***be given Band 1 priority and***
- Social tenant's under-occupying 3 bedrooms who require 2 bedrooms will **be given Band 2 priority.**

6. Do you agree with the proposal that consideration is only given for an additional bedroom on health grounds where there is a need for an overnight carer?

Number of Responses Received

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
100 (64%)	35 (22%)	21 (14%)	156

Feedback**ASRA Housing Group**

'No, the policy should have a flexible clause in it to accommodate extreme circumstances.

On the whole although Asra Housing Group has concerns regarding vulnerable individuals' needs directly in relation to Welfare Reforms, we understand and appreciate the need for this proposal on the whole but there must be flexibilities built into the policy so that the very most vulnerable individuals (such as the example given) still have a level of choice in regards to housing too'.

Leicester YMCA

'No, this proposal provides a barrier to a reasonable quality of life for those who would need storage for medical equipment or additional bedrooms for a child with behaviour's that would make it inappropriate to share. We strongly encourage a proposal which allows for an element of choice to the tenant explaining the financial impact rather than making the decision for them on a cost savings basis without recognising the impact on their well-being'.

Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, Leicester City Council

'No, whilst the revised HB rules may restrict payments for additional bedrooms, this should not be the primary factor in determining allocations. E.g. for severely disabled children very few have an overnight carer, but the provision of an additional room is essential to maintain the child at home. There are other examples where children with mental health need or emotional difficulties require their own space in order to avoid a breakdown in the home situation or the provision of very expensive support services'.

Adult Social Care Commissioning Team, Leicester City Council

'No, it is positive that the needs for overnight carer have been recognised however, the needs for a separate bedroom due to behavioural and other issues should be recognised to.

General Public (Representative Sample)

'No, medical equipment can take up lots of storage space and therefore a 2nd bedroom is often needed for this. Some disabilities make the disabled person sometimes need to sleep along in a single room on a night to night bases, in which case the 2nd room is required for restbite for either partner not overnight care'.

'Yes, Good consideration for people with health conditions. I thought giving extra rooms for storage of medical equipment is wasteful, they could be kept in the garage or in their bedroom'.

'Yes, cause people these days have all kinds of so called illnesses yet they can get about and given bigger properties I think if people are ill then given the extra room for a professional carer but medical examinations should be carried out to those who have illnesses and given bands for the most serious'.

'Yes, agree with the extra bedroom for a carer but not for medical equipment as they can store it in their existing bedroom'.

'No, behavioural reasons should still be taken into account; some medical conditions could cause injury to other children, i.e. severe epilepsy or severe mental health issues'.

'Yes, aligns with housing benefit rules and a reasonable allocation of an extra room where it is justifiably needed'.

Director of Housing response

In light of the consultation feedback, I recommend that

- We retain the existing Housing Allocations Policy criteria (Access, Health, Care and Support criteria - additional bedroom rules) in respect of the allocation of a separate bedroom for a member of the household who has severe behavioural problems and member of the household who has a severe disease or disability and require extra space for major items of life sustaining equipment

However, in such cases where an additional bedroom is allocated, the household must be made aware of the HB bedroom criteria rules and that full HB entitlement for an additional bedroom cannot be guaranteed and this could have an impact on the households finance is housing benefit is to be claimed.

-
- 7. Do you agree with the proposal that people who approach the Housing Options Service on the grounds their current accommodation is unaffordable following a comprehensive assessment be given Band 2 priority?**
-

Number of Responses Received

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
93 (60%)	34 (22%)	29 (18%)	156

Feedback**ASRA Housing Group**

'Yes, there needs to be some sort of trigger or identification process and there needs to be a clear definition of "affordability" and a recognition that families in 3 bed accommodation underoccupying by 1 bed who are hardest hit, should qualify for Band 1 priority if both of these situations apply'.

Adult Social Care Commissioning Team, Leicester City Council

'No, Reasons as to why it is unaffordable should be assessed first i.e. taking on a larger property or taking on further debts. Your approach implies a no fault position and this could be detrimental to others in Band 2 and this approach appears to circumvent a homeless investigation.'

'If your comprehensive assessment relates to property not being affordable due to welfare reforms the issues are also that people should be encouraged to take on work, more work or better paid work not just be rehoused'.

General Public (Representative Sample)

'Yes, as long as there is a robust procedure to assess affordability as well as facilities to meeting the set priorities. We should be able to differentiate between ability to pay and willingness to pay'.

'No, people should know from the start whether they can afford it or not'.

'No, I am band 2. I can't even afford to move into a private rent because I don't have the deposit, I don't think it's fair that someone with their own roof over their head should be able to jump ahead & maybe get allocated before me'.

'No, this will encourage people to take on properties that they cannot afford, knowing that they will be given priority on the housing register'.

'Yes, otherwise they will be in debt or homeless'.

Director of Housing Response

Stakeholder comments noted.

In light of the consultation feedback, I recommend that

- The existing Housing Allocation Policy criteria in this area to amended to allow Band 2 status to be considered for people who approach the service and it has been assessed that their current accommodation is unaffordable and they have a recognised priority need as defined by the Housing Options service.

-
- 8. Do you agree with the proposal that persons who have previously served in the armed forces will be exempt from the local connection requirement where the application for housing is made within 5 years of their discharge and where it is identified they are also in housing need be given Band 2 priority?**
-

Number of Responses Received

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
86 (55%)	31 (20%)	39 (25%)	156

Feedback**Leicester YMCA**

'No, this group is already a priority group under the homelessness act by virtue of their employer. Additional priority based solely on this status seems a value based judgment not a needs based one.'

Metropolitan Housing

'Don't know, depends on demand for housing. Applicants with a local connection may feel disadvantaged by this. Perhaps the locality before they joined the forces should apply of the connection to family/work/etc.'

General Public (Representative Sample)

'Yes, mmilitary personnel may not have the opportunities to remain connected to the area due to serving duties, therefore it would be unfair for them to be penalised due to serving in the Forces.'

'Yes, I thought this is fair, they have served the nation and deserve good recognition and reward for their meritorious service.'

'Yes, I strongly agree with this I mean they fought in the war and for are county so they deserve it and more.'

'No, don't see why they should have priority over others in the same circumstances.'

'No, they should not be able to pick and choose where they live or get extra priority than someone else.'

'No, military officers should not be given preferential treatment just for serving. the work others like doctors and surgeons do is just as important if not more and for many military careers are the last option any way nor is it fair for those unable to join the military on medical grounds.'

'No, I moved away from the city for work and now wish to return, I cannot because I've been away too long , even though I have relatives in the same city. Those serving in the armed forces are no different to me so therefore, I do not agree.'

Director of Housing Response

Comments noted from stakeholder partners, however it is legal requirement a housing allocations scheme must give reasonable priority to former members of the armed forces

who are in housing need and be exempt from local connection rules within 5 years of their discharge from the service.

In light of the consultation feedback, I recommend that

Former members of the armed forces will be exempt from the local connection requirement where the application for housing is made within 5 years of their discharge as required by law and where it is identified they are also in housing need they be given Band 2 priority.

-
- 9. Do you think these proposals will have a negative or positive impact on any particular group of people e.g. due to their age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, etc.?**
-

Number of Responses Received

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
76 (49%)	34 (22%)	46 (29%)	156

Feedback

ASRA Housing

'Of course the most vulnerable who have some care or support needs will be hit by the bedroom criteria and the lack of additional monies for the housing element of Universal Credit'.

Leicester Quaker Housing Association

'It will obviously have a negative impact on families who are expecting a child. We understand that larger families tend to have ethnic minority backgrounds and on that basis these proposals will tend to have a negative impact on people from that background'.

Midland Heart

'Fathers with access to children (family circumstances) - will impact on contact with children. Pregnancy - not having access to housing prior to birth of child could be detrimental to health in some circumstances'.

Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, Leicester City Council

'Access, health and support proposals will clearly discriminate against families with disabled children who are not assessed as requiring overnight care'.

Adult Social Care Commissioning Team, Leicester City Council

'Negative impact on disabled people as the wide range of needs are not recognised in your proposals.'

Negative impact on pregnancy/maternity as fails to recognise the unborn child.

Positive impact on older people who may be under occupying and wanting to down size'.

Leicester YMCA

'It is believed that these proposals are likely to impact the following groups negatively; Estranged parents with shared parenting arrangements and the parent with primary residing responsibilities; reducing support, reducing access to child, reducing child's access to estranged parent, Parents with disabled children, Adults with disabilities'.

General Public (Representative Sample)

'Negative effect on the people that are used to getting all their rent paid even though they are underoccupied. Positive effect on people that are overoccupied and need a larger house. Positive effect on ex-servicemen. Positive effect on the tax payer'.

'People who have had the luxury of getting the financial and lifestyle benefits aren't going to be pleased, however it is in the best interest of the local population as a whole to make the system fairer and able to accommodate more families'.

'By assisting people who are underoccupying to be re-house improving their banding situation will have a positive impact on those underoccupying and also will free up housing for others'.

'The restriction of 1 bedroom for people expecting first child will in the long run have a negative impact as due to lack of affordable housing stock they could find themselves permanently in overcrowded living conditions'.

'Families are going to become very overcrowded and suffer the problems that come with that. Families that have a child/ children with behavioral problems having to share with siblings will find that having a negative effect on other children in the family. The only positive thing to come out of it is people will be living in accommodation that will be covered by housing benefit should they need it'.

'I'm not sure about the disability pregnancy but all the rest I feel would have both positive and negative depending on how others look at it'.

'Yes cause people don't like change and people have been living for yrs. with extra rooms and lots of benefits and housing paid and I think the government should put there foot down and give to those who pay full rent and are overcrowded!!'

'It's obviously going to affect pregnant women if, before the changes, they could get an extra bedroom for their unborn baby but now they can't - but why should they get one?'

'There may be people who actually need an extra bedroom for the child due to other medical issues. These need to be dealt with case by case. On the whole it is positive as the right family will have the right house for their family'.

'I think if the proposal went ahead there will be more people in employment, there will be more families in the right number of bedrooms and it will decrease the amount of people in a property that is too big for them'.

'It may affect the disability people but to the rest of the ordinary people should not affect them regardless of their colour or religion'.

Director of Housing Response

It is recognised changes to the Welfare Reform will impact on many families on the Housing Register. The changes to the Housing Allocations Policy seek to minimise the financial hardship placed on families and reduce the risk of homelessness.

Our own equalities impact assessment shows parents (mainly single fathers) who have part week overnight access to children and expectant mothers will be adversely affected by the changes. The proposals to mitigate the impact include giving high priority to families

living in one bedroom accommodation (Band 2) and giving high priority (Band1) to those singles living in 2 bedroom accommodation where benefit is restricted.