



# Changes to the Housing Allocations Policy

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## Housing Register Information

- 9499 Households on the Housing Register as at 31/01/2013 (up 6% from previous year)
  
- 1709 Lettings from the Housing Register in 2012 (down 26% from previous 12 months)
  - LCC      1327
  - RSL      353
  - HC        29

## Background to the Changes

- The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has introduced new benefit changes which will affect social tenants (existing and prospective, council & housing association tenants) from 1 April 2013
- Housing Benefit (HB) will no longer be paid to working age social tenants who under-occupy their homes (Bedroom Tax)
- The Department of Communities & Local Government has issued new guidance on social housing allocations following the implementation of the Welfare Reform 2012 & Localism Act 2011

## Why Change?

- Many social tenants will be directly affected by the housing benefit changes, living in homes that may not be affordable and at risk losing their homes
- The Council's current Housing Allocations Policy is more generous in the allocation of bedrooms than the bedroom criteria used for housing benefit purposes
- The changes will mean people on the Housing Register will only be allocated the number of bedrooms which would be covered under housing benefit rules
- This will reduce the risk of financial hardship to prospective tenants due to shortfalls in housing benefit

## Impact on Under-occupying Tenants

- Tenants of a working age (i.e. under 62 years as at 1 April 2013) in receipt of housing benefit and under-occupying by 1 bedroom will have their housing benefit cut by 14% of their current rent (25% if under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms)

- Example

Tenant living in a 3 bedroom house and current weekly rent is £75.00 and they only need 2 bedrooms according to HB rules, the HB will be reduced by 14% of the £75.00 rent – a reduction of £10.50 per week (£42.00 per month)

If tenant only needs 1 bedroom HB will be reduced by £18.75 per week (£75.00 per month)

## Bedroom Eligibility

- A separate bedroom is allocated to:
  - Each married or cohabiting couple or single parent
  - Any other person aged 16 years or more
  - Each pair of children of either sex under 10 years
  - Each pair of people of the same sex under 16 years
  - Any person who cannot be paired

## Expectant Families

- Unborn children will only be considered as part of the household for bedroom eligibility purposes after the baby is born and their birth is registered

## Under-occupation

- All social under-occupiers of 4(+) bedrooms, those under-occupying by 2 bedrooms or those under-occupying 2 bedroom accommodation given Band 1 priority
- Social tenants under-occupying 3 bedroom accommodation who require 2 bedrooms will be given Band 2 priority

## Armed Forces Personnel

- Persons who have previously served in the armed forces will meet the Leicester City Requirement where the housing register application is made within 5 years of discharge
- Where it is identified they are in housing need they will be given Band 2 priority

## Policy We Are Not Changing

- Access, Care, Health & Support
  - Additional bedrooms for:
    - Carers (eligible for HB)
    - Medical equipment
    - Health reasons
    - Behavioural reasons
- Part week overnight access to children

## What Happens Next?

- New policy will be implemented in March 2013
- Housing Allocations Policy can be viewed on the Council's website [www.leicester.gov.uk/allocations](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/allocations)
- Changes will mean some households will see a change in their bedroom and banding entitlement
- Letter will be sent to everyone registered on the Housing Register informing them of the changes

Thank You

Any Questions or Comments?

