

Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy

Consultation Survey

This survey closes on **24 Aug 2025**.

Completed paper responses can either be handed in at a local Dorset Council library or posted to **Sarah How, Dorset Council, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ** by the closing date.

Overview

The Council has a public law duty to operate a Housing Allocation Scheme, like all local authorities. This scheme explains how to register for housing, how applications are assessed, and how properties are allocated.

Dorset Council is required to periodically review its Housing Allocation Scheme. The current housing allocation scheme was introduced in 2021.

The Council intends to amend its Housing Allocation Schemes, so that it continues to meet legal requirements and good practice standards.

The proposed policy makes some changes that will affect households on the current housing register. We want to hear from as many people as possible to help shape the new policy.

You can find a copy of the draft policy linked on the consultation survey webpage (<https://consultation.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/c-e/hac>). If you have difficulty accessing this, please contact 01305 221000.

Please note, any data collected follows Dorset Council's privacy policy which can also be found on our website.

Q1. I am responding as a:

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing Register applicant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Housing tenant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Registered Provider (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of the public
<input type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of a voluntary organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish/Town Council
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elected Member
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)

If other or a Registered Provider, please specify: _____

Local Connection

A key part of the policy is having a local connection. To qualify for the Dorset Home Choice Scheme, applicants must meet one of the local connection criteria. This ensures that social housing goes to local people whenever possible (there are some exceptions in both the current and proposed policies).

Government guidance advises that councils should use a minimum two-year residency test. Dorset Council proposes the following criteria for local connection.

This change is intended to:

- simplify the application process for customers
- reduce the burden of providing some evidence
- streamline the process for officers

Current Allocation Policy		
Criteria 1	Residency in the area	2 years or 3 years of out of the last 5 years
Criteria 2	Close family continuous residency in the area (parents, siblings, non-dependent children)	5 years evidenced
Criteria 3	Paid employment in the Dorset Council area	16 hours per week average for a minimum period of one year
Criteria 4	Location requirements	Any requirements detailed in a section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and/or a local lettings plan

Proposed Changes		
Criteria 1	Normally being resident in Dorset Council area by their own choice	2 years
Criteria 2	Having close family, resident of their own choice, in the Dorset Council area (defined as parents, siblings, adult children)	2 years
Criteria 3	Being employed in Dorset Council area for a minimum of 16 hours or more a week	2 years
Criteria 4	No change	

Q2. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes for Criteria 1?

Please refer to the criteria in the table on the previous page.

Please tick one option.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Normally being resident in Dorset Council area by their own choice						
The timeframe changing to 2 years						

Q3. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes for Criteria 2?

Please refer to the criteria in the table on the previous page.

Please tick one option per statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Having close family, resident of their own choice, in the Dorset Council area (defined as parents, siblings, adult children)						

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The timeframe changing to 2 years						

Q4. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes for Criteria 3?

Please refer to the criteria in the table on the previous page.

Please tick one option.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Being employed in Dorset Council area for a minimum of 16 hours or more a week						
The timeframe increasing to 2 years						

Q5. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposals for Criteria 4 to be removed?

Please refer to the criteria in the table on the previous page.

Please tick one option.

	Strongly agree
	Agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Q6. If you disagree with any of the criteria proposals, please let us know which ones and why

Please specify which criteria you are commenting on.

Proposed Banding

Dorset Council proposes to continue using a banding system to prioritise applicants on the housing register. Additionally, we propose to introduce new band names to differentiate between the current housing allocation policy and the revised policy.

Below are the current Band names alongside their proposed new equivalents.

Current Banding	Proposed Banding
Band A – Urgent Housing Need	Band One – Urgent Housing Need
Band B – High Housing Need	Band Two – Priority Housing Need
Band C – Medium Housing Need	Band Three – Unmet Housing Need
Band D – Low Housing Need	Band Four – Other Housing Need

Q7. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed new band names above?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q8. If you disagree with specific parts of the banding names, please specify which parts you do not agree with and explain your reasons

Proposed Categories

Dorset Council proposes to reduce the number of categories for customers from 43 to 27. The current categories will be rephrased and used as examples within the new, streamlined bands.

This change will:

- simplify the banding assessment for customers making it easier to understand and navigate
- streamline the assessment process for officers improving efficiency and reducing complexity
- enhance transparency by providing clearer criteria

The following are the categories Dorset Council proposes for the new Allocations Policy:

Band One – Urgent Housing Need

- Not intentionally homeless with priority need
- Urgent Medical grounds
- UK Armed Forces
- Domestic Abuse
- Urgent Welfare grounds
- Disaster/Emergency

Band Two – Priority Housing Need

- Homeless Relief
- Under-occupying social rented housing
- Overcrowding by 2 or more bedrooms
- Foster carer/adopters and care leavers

- Insanitary and Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions
- Medical Grounds
- Welfare Grounds
- Hardship Grounds
- Giving up accessible housing

Band Three – Unmet Housing Need

- Homeless
- Homelessness Prevention
- Intentionally Homeless
- Homeless out of authority
- Social Housing Tenants Right to move
- UK Armed Forces Community
- Overcrowded

Band Four – Other Housing Need

- Social Housing Tenants seeking a transfer
- Need for Older person housing
- Supported Housing - not ready to move
- Reduced Preference
- Low Housing Need

Q9. How much do you agree or disagree with the banding criteria proposed?

You can see the proposed banding criteria proposed above.

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q10. If you disagree with the banding criteria proposed, let us know why here:

Proposed removal of Older Persons Housing no Local connection category

Dorset Council proposes to remove the category for 'Older People with no Local Connection'. Given the limited availability of social housing, we propose to prioritise residents with a local connection.

Q11. How much do you agree or disagree with this banding category being removed?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q12. If you disagree with removing this category, let us know why here:

Proposed removal of Housing Related Debt category

Dorset Council proposes to remove the category for 'Housing Related Debt'. Many people with housing related debt are already in vulnerable situations. Not considering this debt can help individuals secure housing, promote stability and reduce homelessness. Rent arrears are still included in both the current and the proposed policies.

Q13. How much do you agree or disagree with this banding criteria being removed?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q14. If you disagree, please let us know why below:

New Category - Armed Forces Community

Armed Forces Community

Dorset Council proposes to grant reasonable preference to spouses or adult children of members of the Armed Forces community, in accordance with the Government Guidance for the Allocation of Accommodation. This applies to those who, due to divorce or separation need to move out of the Ministry of Defence housing or Adult children of Regular Armed Forces service personnel, who may no longer be able to remain in the family home.

Armed Forces Community will be placed in Band 3.

Q15. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed banding criteria?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q16. If you disagree with the proposal for this category, let us know why here:

Unacceptable Behaviour

Dorset Council proposes that applicants with an accepted homeless duty must meet the qualification criteria unless they qualify for an exemption for another reason.

Under the current Allocation Policy, individuals with an accepted homeless duty are exempt from disqualification due to unacceptable behaviour, such as rent arrears.

Q17. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to apply all qualification criteria to those with an accepted homeless duty?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q18. If you disagree with the proposed, let us know why here:

Guarantor Requirements

A person applying to join the housing register must satisfy all qualifying criteria. An individual is not considered a qualifying person if they are incapable of holding a tenancy agreement, for example due to being:

- aged under 18 years; or
- looked after children owed a duty of care; or
- aged over 18 years lacking sufficient mental capacity to hold a tenancy agreement

Exceptions apply to people who are incapable of holding a tenancy agreement, when:

- eligible children, relevant children and former relevant children pursuing further education, training, entitled to care leaving support, where there is a statutory duty to prepare a pathway plan, or
- aged over 18 years lacking sufficient mental capacity to hold a tenancy agreement but have a suitable guarantor (for example, Dorset Councils Adults Social Care) who can hold a tenancy on their behalf

Currently, the Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy allows those who require a guarantor to join the housing register without one, provided they have a guarantor in place at point of nomination to social housing.

Q19. How much do you agree or disagree with the requirements proposed above for care leavers and for anyone that is incapable of holding a tenancy?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q20. If you disagree with the proposed requirements, let us know why here:

Income and Savings

Dorset Council proposes to change the amount of income and/or savings an applicant (together with the other main earner) will be allowed before it is considered they have enough to meet their housing needs from the commercial housing market. There are exemptions that apply to these criteria in both the current and proposed policy.

Below is the savings and earning criteria for the current allocation policy and the proposed policy:

Current criteria	Proposed criteria
A combination of income, savings, investments and capital totalling more than £60,000 gross	Savings of £16,000 or more (£23,500 for adults who have been assessed by Dorset Council as needing care), or earning £60,000 or more of taxable income in the most recent tax year
Including disposals for nil (for example, transfer of ownership) or below market value.	

People who own their own property will not qualify (exemptions apply).	Being a sole or joint owner (including anyone who has a mortgage for the whole or part of a home) of a house (including flats and second or holiday homes), which they usually live in or rent to others for them to live in, or building or land intended for use for a residential dwelling, in the UK or abroad will not qualify (exemptions apply).
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Q21. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed savings and earning criteria?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q22. If you disagree with the proposed savings and earning criteria, let us know why here:

Refusals of social housing

Dorset Council will give people choice over the social rented housing they are allocated; they can choose where they want to live and bid on suitable properties. Ensuring tenancies are sustainable and communities are settled, viable and inclusive. Applicants may refuse a nomination for social housing, and if the refusal is

based on reasonable grounds, it will not be counted against them. However, if it is considered unreasonable, it may affect their status on the housing register.

Dorset Council proposes to increase the number of refusals an applicant can have before there is an impact on their application to the housing register:

Current Policy	Proposed Policy
An applicant can refuse two nominations within a 12-month period	An applicant can refuse 3 nominations over any time frame
Application can be suspended	Banding reduced to lowest band for 12 months

This change aims to:

- keep applicants on the housing register, allowing them to continue bidding on suitable properties
- encourage applicants to consider offers more carefully, reducing the likelihood of repeated refusals.
- improve efficiency in the allocation process, ensuring quicker placements for those in need.

Q23. How much do you agree or disagree with the rules for refusal of nominations proposal?

Please tick one option per statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
An applicant can refuse 3 nominations over any time frame						
Banding reduced to lowest band for 12 months						

Q24. If you disagree with the proposed rules for refusal of nominations, let us know why here:

Quotas

Dorset Council proposes that it may use quotas to ensure a balanced distribution of allocations across various needs factors. Examples of this might be:

- children leaving care
- UK Service personnel
- people ready to move on from supported accommodation

Q25. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed inclusion of quotas?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q26. If you disagree with the proposed inclusion of quotas, let us know why here:

Overcrowding

Dorset Council proposes to use the UK Government bedroom standard to determine if a household is overcrowded. The secretary of state considers this standard appropriate for allocation purposes and recommends all housing authorities adopt it as a minimum.

Below is the bedroom criteria for the current allocation policy and the proposed policy:

Current Policy – Local Housing Allowance criteria	Proposed Policy – Bedroom Standard
Any adult/couple	Married or cohabitating couple
Any person aged 16 years or over	Adult aged 21 years or more
Two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under	Pair of adolescents aged 10 to 20 years of the same sex
Two children aged 9 years or under regardless of sex	Pair of children under 10 years regardless of sex
Any other child	Any remaining child aged under 10 years
Exemptions may apply.	

Q27. How much do you agree or disagree with assessing overcrowding using the bedroom standard rather than the Local Housing Allowance criteria?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q28. If you disagree with specific parts of the proposed new assessment of overcrowding, please specify which parts you do not agree with and explain your reasons.

Direct Lets

Dorset Council is committed to housing homeless households. Currently, we use direct lets for applicants in Band A who have an accepted main homelessness duty and are living in temporary accommodation provided by Dorset Council. These applicants will receive one reasonable offer of accommodation. This is done through an auto-bid facility.

Additionally, Dorset Council proposes to extend direct lets to those with an accepted relief duty who are also residing in temporary accommodation provided by Dorset Council. The direct let will also be achieved through the auto-bid facility.

This change aims to:

- reduce the cost of temporary accommodation including expensive bed and breakfast or hotels
- fulfil legal obligations. We have a duty to secure suitable housing for homeless households
- improved health and wellbeing for the household by providing stable accommodation can lead to better health outcomes, potentially reducing healthcare costs

Q29. How much do you agree or disagree with direct lets for homeless households?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q30. If you disagree with the proposal for direct lets, let us know why here:

About You

This section is optional. We use it to collect diversity information. This helps to ensure any changes do not unfairly impact specific sectors of the community. It also helps to make sure our consultation response comes from a representative sample of residents.

Q31. Please select your age group.

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 18
<input type="checkbox"/>	18 to 24
<input type="checkbox"/>	25 to 39
<input type="checkbox"/>	40 to 49
<input type="checkbox"/>	50 to 59
<input type="checkbox"/>	60 to 64
<input type="checkbox"/>	65+
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

Q32. What is your sex?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

Q33. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

Q34. The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

Q35. If at the previous question you stated you consider yourself to have a disability, please state the type of disability which applies to you.

Please tick all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Autistic Spectrum Conditions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blind
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dyscalculia
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dyslexia
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dyspraxia
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deaf
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hearing loss
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long term health condition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical impairment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sign Language User
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visually impaired
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical conditions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Specific learning differences
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheelchair user

If you prefer to use another term, please write in: _____

Q36. What is your ethnic group?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	White: British
<input type="checkbox"/>	White: Irish
<input type="checkbox"/>	White: Gypsy
<input type="checkbox"/>	White: Irish Traveller
<input type="checkbox"/>	White: Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed: White and Black Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed: White and Black African
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed: White and Asian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed: Other

<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British: Indian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British: Pakistan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British: Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British: Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arab
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other ethnic group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

If other, please specify here: _____

Q37. Have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces?

Please tick one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, previously served in Regular Armed Forces
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, previously served in Reserve Armed Forces
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

Thank you for your feedback.

End of Survey.