

ACCESSIBLE HOUSING LETTINGS PILOT

Amended procedure note- January 2013

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2012, the Housing Department initiated a pilot to provide enhanced support services to disabled people on the Common Housing Register with a high priority for housing on health and disability grounds and/or needing high cost adaptations.
- 1.2 They key objectives of the accessible housing pilot are to:
 - a. Allocate accessible housing effectively to those in highest priority need.
 - b. Make best use of existing accessible social housing stock and funding for housing adaptations.
 - c. Deliver services that are tailored to local needs and supply of accessible housing.
 - d. Work in partnership with housing association partners to make best use of accessible housing stock and funding for adaptations.
 - e. Maximise opportunities for joined up working between Housing, Social Care and Environmental Health to deliver housing adaptations in the context of wider housing options.
- 1.3 This procedure note outlines the processes required for the pilot.

2. Eligibility

- 2.1 The pilot seeks to support disabled households in highest priority need for housing. Households that meet the any of the following criteria will be eligible for the enhanced support and re-housing resources:
 - a. Households who have been awarded 700 'Supporting Health and Independence' points or 1000 'Emergency Health and Independence' points moving to an accessible property (Accessible Housing Categories A to E).
 - b. Households needing major adaptations to a property that is under occupied.
 - c. Households needing major adaptations to the access or structure of the current home (for example, widening doorways, large ramps, stair lifts).
- 2.2 Accessible properties will be offered to applicants who meet the above in the first instance. If an accessible property is refused by eligible applicants, offers should be made to disabled housing applicants requiring properties with an AHR category of A to E+ with any number of Health and Independence points in temporary accommodation. This aims to free up accessible temporary accommodation.

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3. Working with housing applicants

- 3.1 Disabled housing applicants often require assistance to identify and view suitable properties. Support services, such as Housing Occupational Therapy, will be initiated when an accessible void property becomes available with efforts made to identify an eligible (by AHR category) and interested household. Resources should be focused on housing applicants in highest priority need for housing, as reflected in their points, to expedite the moves of those who need accessible accommodation most. This may be enhanced through the delivery of a package to provide the support, financial and practical assistance that disabled need to move.
- 3.2 The Housing Occupational Therapy Team will work closely with housing applicants, through a lead officer approach, to provide detailed information about the type and quantity of accessible housing in the borough and to identify homes that will meet their access needs.
- 3.3 The Housing Occupational Therapy Team should work with the housing applicants to inform them of the pilot process and update their records where there had been a change in circumstances. IBS records and the pilot spreadsheet must be updated after every contact and housing offer.

4. Direct offers

- 4.1 Housing applicants are prioritised in order by Health and Independence points then total CHR points. Accessible housing categories are used to determine property suitability rather than to prioritise applicants allowing staff to focus on those in highest priority need.
- 4.2 The Housing Occupational Therapy Team should continue to respond rapidly to identifying accessible homes when voids become available to improve the ratio of property offers to acceptances. Accessible homes should be identified as soon as the void information is received with immediate attempts made by the Housing Occupational Therapy Team to let the property to a household eligible for the property under the pilot criteria.
- 4.3 Accessible properties should, in the first instance, be offered to households meeting the core criteria of the pilot. If the property is refused by eligible applicants, the Housing Occupational Therapist should establish whether there are any disabled housing applicants in temporary accommodation that require a property of that accessibility type. A direct offer should then be made to that household.
- 4.4 A Housing Occupational Therapist should accompany housing applicants on viewings to properties offered via the pilot where available.
- 4.5 In order to limit void periods, if a property viewing cannot be arranged by the end of the week that the property is received, the void will be returned to the CBL and Allocations Team to be advertised on CBL.
- 4.6 The pilot will examine applicant's reasons for refusing suitable properties while ensuring that applicants that frequently refuse properties do not overburden the casework approach. Applicants that refuse three suitable offers of

accommodation will be suspended from the pilot. They should be informed of this after each suitable housing offer.

- 4.7 All applicants will be able to, and should be encouraged to, participate in Choice Based Lettings (CBL) as well as participating in the pilot. Applicants that have been suspended from the pilot will continue to be able to bid for properties through CBL.
- 4.8 Location is not considered a reasonable reason for refusal unless the household is dependent on local care networks. Suspended households, as with those who are actively involved in the pilot, can continue to bid for properties on CBL.

5. Referral to Tenancy Floating Support

- 5.1 Applicants that have accepted an accessible property via the pilot should be offered a referral to the Tenancy Floating Support Team for assistance with the home move.
- 5.2 The Tenancy Floating Support Team could deliver a package of support including making use of existing services in the borough, such as the de-cluttering and handyperson services. The package could also include arranging and funding:
- packing and unpacking
 - removals
 - handyperson services
 - flooring (only where specialist flooring is required)
 - resettlement services such as submitting new benefit applications and changing addresses with utility companies.

6. Funding for removals

- 6.1 Funding for removals and relocation will only be available to households who move to an accessible property that meets their needs. In the first instance, the pilot will be limited to supporting moves from and in to social housing properties. Requests for support to facilitate moves outside of the borough will be considered.
- 6.2 To be eligible for the funding and assistance, applicants need to have more than 700 health and independence points and be moving to a suitable property (as established by the Housing Occupational Therapist).
- 6.3 For these applicants the pilot may fund:

	Studio/ 1 bed	2 bed	3 bed
Packing and unpacking	£200	£200	£200
Removals	£500	£700	£900

Handyperson services	£50	£50	£50
TOTAL	£750	£950	£1150

- 6.4 We will only consider funding for flooring where specialist flooring is required, for example if the applicant is a wheelchair user. The pilot will not fund decorating works.
- 6.5 Applicants will be expected to arrange their own transport to view properties and to move when their new tenancy starts. The pilot will only arrange and cover costs for transport where specialist transport (such as ambulance assistance) is needed. This will need to be agreed by Rob Shaw.
- 6.6 The Tenancy Support Team should, when setting up the services, do the following:
- With the applicant, prepare a list of items that need to be packed, moved and unpacked as well as a list of small tasks needed to settle in (such as putting up curtains, pictures on the wall, etc).
 - Contact at least two removal contractors and request a written quote for packing, removals and unpacking at the new property¹.
 - Send a referral to Staying First for handy person services (see process below)².
 - Quotes will need to be approved by Daniel Foulke or Sarah Gallacher before they are agreed.

¹ **The removal contractors are:**

- The Move Team
Email: sales@themoveteam.co.uk
Tel : [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]
- Royal Repairs
Email: royalrepairs@hotmail.co.uk
Tel: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

² **Handypersons referral process (Staying First)**

The £50 flat charge this would cover 2.5 hours of work and parking.

Please send referrals through to sf.info@sbhg.co.uk and include:

- Name
- Address
- Contact tel. No.
- Access arrangements
- Work required if known or limited to time
- RBKC Office contact details
- Any other information that may be useful

Staying First manages the Furnish project that removes unwanted furniture suitable for re-use. This service maybe suitable for anyone downsizing their contact number is [REDACTED] They can also provide painting and decorating at a reasonable cost, if this is of interest please add a note to the referral.

- v. Where the quotes exceed the amounts above, the applicant may need to fund the difference. Extra sums will only be funded at our discretion and will need to be approved by Rob Shaw.
- vi. When the costs have been agreed, arrange dates for packing, removal and handyperson services.
- vii. On completion of works request invoices and pass these to Daniel or Sarah for the cost code to be added. Approved invoices should be sent to OneWorld with the cost code for payment.

7. Monitoring

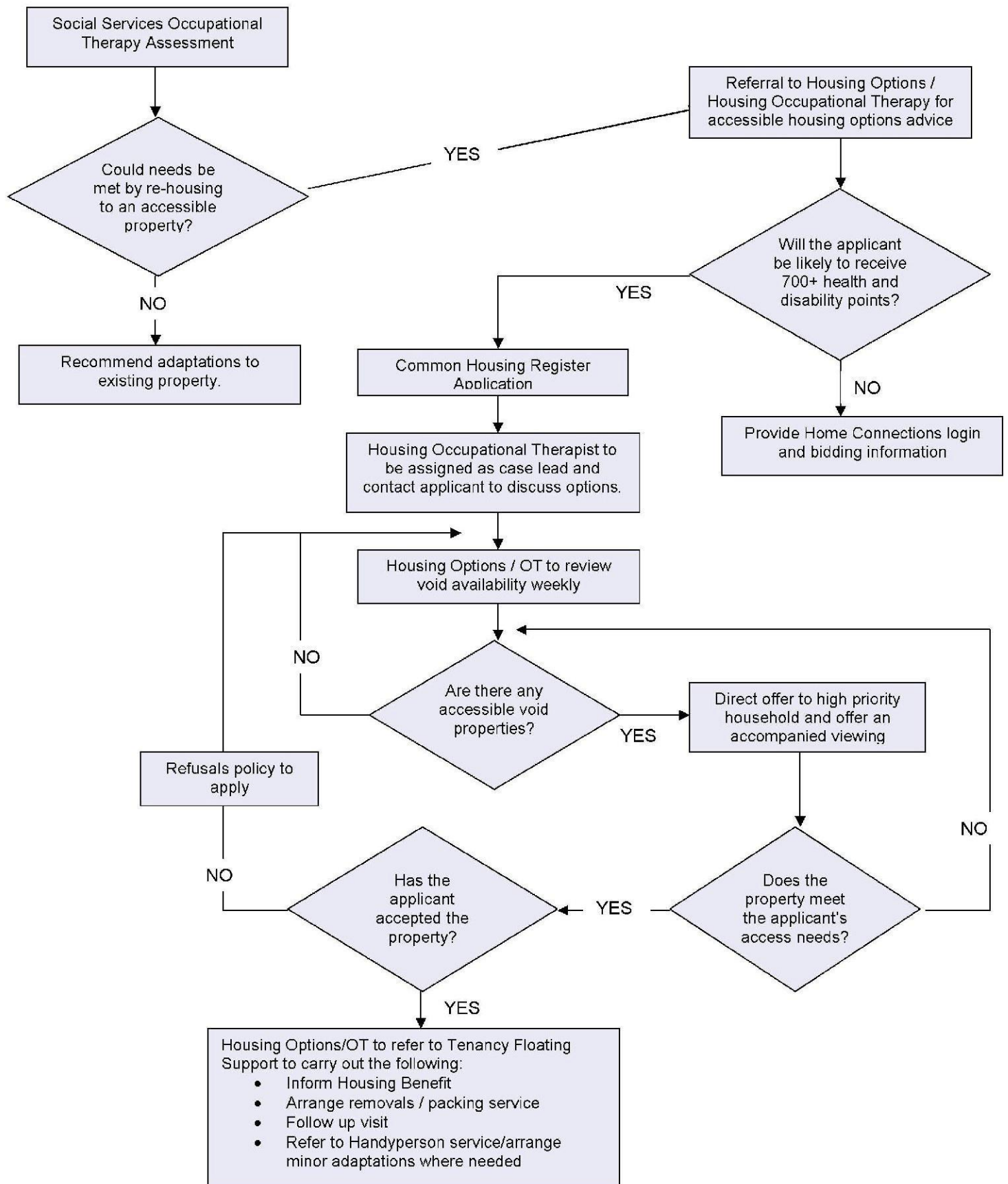
7.1 Impacts from the pilot will be measured through the evaluation of the:

- Number of moves of disabled households to accessible homes.
- Points priority of households moving to accessible homes.
- Time from application date to tenancy sign up.
- Proportion of first time lets of accessible homes.
- Cost benefit analysis of the move as opposed to installation of the required adaptation.

7.2 The pilot will also seek to collect information on the reasons that housing applicants give when refusing individual properties. This will enable the Housing Options team to consider the impact of refusal penalties currently being considered as part of the review of the Housing Allocation Scheme. Reasons for refusal should be added to the pilot spreadsheet and IBS records.

7.3 Outcomes will also be reviewed using Housing Lettings Performance Indicators. These will feed into existing reviews of the Housing Allocation Scheme, Choice Based Lettings and Housing Needs processes.

Accessible Housing Allocation Process
Applicant Journey- amended January 2013



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