

i4B Key Worker Housing Allocations Policy



1.0 Introduction

This policy allows i4B to fulfil its business objective of providing Intermediate/key worker accommodation, as outlined in its Business Plan 2019-20. The aim of providing Key Worker Housing in Brent is to be able to offer affordable housing to all eligible employees within key occupational groups that are traditionally difficult to recruit into and retain within Brent employers and partners. The aim of the scheme is to encourage more key workers to live and work in the borough of Brent.

2.0 Equality and Diversity

This policy is in place to ensure key workers are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. i4B will ensure that its Key Worker Housing Allocations Policy is applied in a manner that actively promotes equality and complies with statutory obligations relating to equal opportunities and diversity.

3.0 Policy Objectives

This policy aims to ensure the allocation of accommodation to key workers in Brent is fair by;

- Defining who is a key worker and what makes them eligible for key worker accommodation.
- Explaining how applications will be prioritised.
- Outlining the application process.
- Setting out the terms and conditions in relation to key worker accommodation.
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4.0 Definition of a Key Worker

As part of the S106 nomination agreement that has been adopted for the purpose of this policy, to be considered a key worker, an individual must be in one of the following roles;

- NHS staff;
- Teachers and other staff employed by schools, further education or sixth form colleges;
- Police Officers;
- Prison Service and Probation Service Staff
- Social Worker;
- Council/Government Staff;
- Fire Officers and Retained Fire Fighters;
- Armed Forces;
- Frontline care home (residential and nursing), supported living, extra care, day care and home care workers (e.g. Registered Manager, Care Worker, Care and Support Worker, Field Supervisor, Team Leader);
- Any other worker agreed in writing by the Council (this will be reviewed yearly to reflect the needs of the council and the list will be published online).

5.0 Eligibility

Key workers must:

1. Be in a key worker post designated by a public sector participating employer
2. Be employed on a permanent contract, or be employed on a fixed term contract where:
 - i. They are due to remain in employment for a further 6 months from the date the tenancy is due to commence; and
 - ii. The initial term of their contract was at least 12 months.

Key worker and members of their household must:

1. Earn no more than an upper earnings limit of £65,000 annual household income for a one bed property and £90,000 annual household income for a two bed property. Earn no less than the lower earnings limit of £29,000 annual household income for a one bed property and £31,000 annual household income for a two bed property. Benefits such as the housing element of Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit can be included as part of the calculation of annual household income. In acknowledgement that wages, rents and individual circumstances are subject to change, i4B has discretion to alter these caps at tenancy renewal stage as per Section 6 on Eligibility Exemption, primarily where tenants have remained in the same role; the formal caps shall apply consistently to new applicants.
2. Either:
 - Be a British or EU/EEA citizen with a Settled Status by December 2020;
 - Have indefinite leave to remain in the UK;
 - Have relevant sponsorship and visas to work and stay in the UK for at least 1 year and for at least 6 months from the date the tenancy is due to commence; or
 - Have relevant right to work documents to work and stay in the UK for at least 1 year and for at least 6 months from the date the tenancy is due to commence.
3. All occupants are responsible for renewing their visas well in advance of the expiry of any sponsorship and/ or visa so as to continue to be eligible under the scheme.
4. Not own or part own a property in the Greater London area. If a key worker does own or part own a property outside the Greater London area and has re-located to take up their key worker role, then applications will only be considered from key workers who rent out their owned property to cover their mortgage and related costs, not those who receive profit or any other financial benefits as a consequence of living in the key worker accommodation.
5. Ensure that at least one eligible key worker must remain on the tenancy at all times.

6.0 Eligibility Exemption

In cases where a key worker's circumstances change, and therefore affect their eligibility but only marginally, their situation will be escalated to the London Borough of Brent's Chief Executive to make a decision on whether the key worker can remain in their allocated property.

The London Borough of Brent's Chief Executive will formally notify the key worker of their decision in writing.

7.0 Priority Listing

Tier One

The following roles will normally be considered first when allocating key worker accommodation. The priority listing is in no particular order and includes all key workers who meet the above eligibility criteria, and are in the following role:

- Qualified Social Worker (excluding ASYE)
- Occupational Therapist
- Educational Psychologist
- Rehabilitation Sensory Officer
- Building Control Officer
- Planner
- Commissioning Employee (Adult Social Care)
- Surveyor
- IT Architect
- Public Health Specialist
- Specialist IT Engineer
- Health Visitor
- Nurses – Bands 5 and 6
- Midwives at Band 6
- Physiotherapist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Doctors in the following specialties:
 - Acute Medicine
 - Haematology
 - Pathology
 - Anaesthetics / Critical Care
 - Dermatology
 - Cardiology
 - Care of Elderly
 - Respiratory
 - Medicine
- Any other worker where their role is essential to address a current recruitment or retention issue

Tier Two

Following priority one allocations, priority two allocations will take place and includes all other key worker roles as set out in Section 4.0 of this policy. These allocations will be prioritised in order of application completion date.

8.0 Application Process and How to Apply

For an employee to apply, their post must be eligible for key worker housing.

1. To apply, key workers must complete the online application form.
2. Key workers will need to apply for accommodation that suits their household requirements i.e. a key worker living alone will need to apply for a one-bed property.

9.0 How Accommodation will be Allocated

1. All applications will be screened through the key worker application portal.
2. Applications will form a waiting list and be ranked in order of priority as outlined in Section 7.0 of this policy and then on a first come first served basis.
3. Allocations will depend on factors such as timing of recruitment drives and matching with eligibility criteria as listed in Section 5.0 of this policy.
4. The Key Worker Allocations Panel will then consider the specific facts of the applicant's case and decide whether or not to recommend an allocation to Brent Council's Chief Executive on behalf of the Shareholder.
5. The Key Worker Allocations Panel has the final decision as to:
 - A. Whether they are satisfied that the applicant fulfils the key worker criteria;
 - B. Whether the applicant's circumstances are exceptional; and
 - C. Whether they are prepared to exercise their discretion, in light of any exceptional circumstances and recommend an allocation.

10.0 Offer of Accommodation

Accommodation will be offered once a key worker meets all the relevant criteria, has their documents approved and has filled in all parts of the application form correctly.

An offer on accommodation will then be offered to match the key workers household requirements on the basis of availability.

We expect all key workers to accept their offer. If an offer is refused but the key worker would like to put in an application at a later date, the application process, as outlined in this policy, will have to be repeated.

11.0 Tenancy Types

New tenants will be granted Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST) for either a six-month, 12-month, 18-month or 24-month period.

At the end of the tenancy, tenancies will be reviewed to ensure all tenants still satisfy the criteria. Tenants are not eligible for mutual exchanges or succession rights.

i4B will seek to recover possession should a tenant cease to be a key worker. As the properties are let under AST, there is an established legislative framework for recovering possession.

i4B will be able to obtain possession, either through service of a no fault notice under s.21 of the Housing Act 1988 at the end of the 12 month period or potentially earlier relying on Ground 12, Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988 "a breach of tenancy condition". If Ground 12 is relied on, then the Court will need to be satisfied that this ground is made out and it is reasonable in all of the circumstances of the case to grant possession.

12.0 Rent

Rent will be set at or below 65% of the market rent (including service charge) to ensure accommodation is affordable.

Currently, for a one bedroom flat, the rent will be set at £1,079 per month. For a two bedroom flat, the rent will be set at £1,222 per month. These figures include service charges.

Rent will be collected in line with i4B's Rent Collection policy and procedure, and will be subject to annual rent increases.

13.0 General Terms and Conditions

- Eligibility is to start from the first day of employment.
- Where a key worker transfers to another role and they:
 - i. Move into another key worker role, as recognised by i4B's Housing Scheme - there will be no change to their eligibility and therefore no change to their tenancy agreement, providing there is no break in service greater than the tenancy termination notice period to be given to them in accordance with their tenancy agreement.
 - ii. Move into a role which is not a key worker post recognised for the purpose of the Brent Key Worker Housing Scheme, there will no longer be eligibility for Key worker Housing and they would be provided with notice to vacate the property in line with their tenancy agreement.
- Key workers will continue to be eligible for key worker housing through all types of leave unless there is considered to be a break in service.
- Where an occupant other than the key worker leaves the household and this affects the key worker's eligibility for the size of property they occupy, their eligibility will need to be reassessed.
- Existing tenants may be eligible to transfer to another property if they require a smaller home or if their current property no longer meets their household requirements, so long as their required property is available.

- Tenants will not be able to move from like to like properties i.e. from a 1-bed property to another 1-bed property.
- Where a key worker ceases to be employed by a participating employer, they will be provided with notice to vacate the property in line with their tenancy agreement.
- At the point of annual tenancy renewal, exceptions may apply to existing tenants in cases where they have moved outside of strict compliance with this policy (for example, due to a change in contract) but can demonstrate they still work full-time as a key worker as defined by this policy. In all such cases, the tenant would be required to present documentary evidence that they still carry out a full-time role primarily within a public sector key worker setting, receive a consistent income from this employment in line with this policy's income caps, and meet all other requirements of this policy. Some examples of this are set out below.
 - Where a tenant's employment contract moves from a public sector organisation to another employer (such as a private company, charity or voluntary organisation), but they remain broadly in the same role and setting. This may arise, for example, due to changes in how a cross-sector or multi-agency role is funded. Continuing eligibility for key worker housing would be dependent on the tenant being able to evidence continuity of their role, responsibilities and duties from their original application.
 - Where a tenant moves from a permanent or fixed-term contract to a bank contract or similar zero hours contract, but continues to work full-time and receive a income in line with this policy's income caps. Continuing eligibility would be dependent on being able to evidence consistent full-time employment under the new contract over a period of at least three months. The key worker role must continue to be the tenant's principal source of income and main contribution to the rent at their key worker property.
 - Other such similar cases as deemed appropriate by i4B and its Board.
- Applicants and tenants should note that under this clause, all relevant cases are treated as exceptions. Approval of these is fully at the discretion of the i4B Board, and may be subject to change at each annual renewal period. However, where evidence of continued consistent work and income in a public sector setting can be demonstrated, alongside all other requirements of the policy, approval of tenancy renewal shall not be unreasonably withheld.

14.0 Monitoring and Reviewing of Policy

This Allocations Policy will be subject to annual reviews and any changes will need to be approved by the i4B Board. Any major changes will be consulted upon before a decision is implemented.