



Temporary Accommodation Policy

2018



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Charnwood Borough Council has a duty to provide interim or temporary accommodation for households who approach the Council as homeless and who meet the criteria as set out on the Housing Act 1996, Part VII as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

This Policy covers both interim placements made under Section 188 Housing Act 1996, while homelessness enquires are undertaken, and longer-term temporary accommodation placements for households accepted as homeless under Section 193 of the same Act. Within this document placements under both of these duties will be referred to as temporary accommodation placements.

The Council is dependent upon a supply of accommodation to meet the needs of households who have been required to leave their previous accommodation and have been unable to secure alternative accommodation. In some cases, households have not been given forewarning and therefore may require emergency assistance to source such accommodation; therefore the Council must have options in place to deal with this type of emergency.

The Council will wherever reasonable and practicable try to secure suitable accommodation within the Charnwood Borough to allow a household to maintain their existing networks, such as employment, schooling, medical care and family and social support. However, the Council has to be mindful of current prevailing housing conditions and demand and pressures that affect the Council on a daily basis, whilst taking into account the individual needs of the households requiring assistance.

Whilst the Council will have regard to this Policy when allocating temporary accommodation to applicants, the Council retains the discretion to take into account any particular personal circumstances of an applicant or the household when allocating accommodation.



This Policy takes into account the statutory requirements on Local Authorities in respect of the suitability of accommodation, including the Suitability of Accommodation Order 2012 and has regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as required by Section 11 of the Children Act 2004

When deciding if a temporary accommodation placement is suitable, consideration will be given to Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities which states that the following factors need to be taken into account:

Needs, requirements and circumstance of each household member

The needs, requirements and circumstances of each household member should be considered, this includes any identified health or mobility issues, any care or support provided by agencies or the need to access specialist medical services.

The key factor to consider when assessing medical issues is whether the condition itself would make the accommodation unsuitable, for example offering an upper floor flat to a household member without the ability to climb stairs.

Consideration will be given to whether the accommodation is affordable for the applicant and their household.

The location of the accommodation

Factors to consider include the ability to access the workplace if in paid employment, avoiding disruption to the education of young people, especially those at critical points in time such as being close to taking GCSE examinations.

Where possible the Council would avoid placing applicants in isolated accommodation away from public transport, shops and other facilities in order for them to maintain established links with schools, doctors, keys services etc. and to ensure the wellbeing of the household.

The size and facilities of the accommodation

The accommodation provided should have adequate space for the household and this would be assessed by taking into account the needs, requirement and circumstances of the household as outlined above.



Households requiring temporary accommodation will often be placed into accommodation that has fewer bedrooms than a household would be entitled to on a permanent basis. The condition of the decoration, furniture in the property (where applicable), the layout or type of accommodation, provision of parking and lack of access to a garden are extremely unlikely to be classed as acceptable reasons for a refusal.

Assessments in regards to suitability of a temporary accommodation placement will be completed on a case by case basis to ensure that any temporary accommodation offered is considered reasonable and suitable for the household involved. These assessments are made within the context of the accommodation and resources that are available to the Council.

The individual needs and requirements of a household will be assessed by a Housing Options Officer to confirm whether an allocation would be suitable. Consideration is given to any potential risks that an applicant may pose to existing residents or members of the public. A Temporary Accommodation Placements Procedure Guide has been created to ensure an appropriate and consistent approach when allocating temporary accommodation.

Wherever possible, attempts will be made to identify suitable accommodation within Charnwood Borough Council's Hostel Accommodation, Housing Stock, Private Sector Leased properties (managed by the Council), or within Temporary Accommodation Schemes managed by Partner Agencies.

Bed and Breakfast Placements

Circumstances may arise which require short notice placements of households into emergency temporary accommodation and therefore the options available can be very limited. In these cases the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation may be the only option available to fulfil the Council's temporary accommodation duty. In addition, if an applicant contacts the Housing Options team outside of office hours and requires emergency accommodation, Bed and Breakfast accommodation is often the only option.

Consideration is given to the Code of Guidance which states that Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not to be regarded as suitable for 16 and 17 year olds or applicants with family commitments, therefore Bed and Breakfast placements for households of this type are only to be used if no other accommodation is available. The Council aims for all Bed and Breakfast placements not to exceed a period of 6 weeks, however there may be exceptions to this if no other suitable accommodation options can be identified within the 6 week period.

Whenever an applicant is accommodated in a Bed and Breakfast, attempts will be made to identify alternative temporary accommodation as soon as possible.



Wherever possible, Charnwood Borough Council will seek to provide temporary accommodation within the Borough.

The Council do not own any housing stock or lease any Private Sector properties that are located outside of Charnwood Borough. The Council do not have any other temporary accommodation schemes located outside of Charnwood.

However there are circumstances in which the Council needs to place households into Bed and Breakfast accommodation outside of Charnwood, such as in cases where accommodation is required in an emergency and there is no availability in Bed and Breakfast accommodation located within Charnwood with whom the Council has agreements in place.

Whenever an applicant is accommodated outside of the Charnwood Borough, attempts will be made to identify alternative temporary accommodation within Charnwood as soon as possible.

In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate for a placement outside of the area to be arranged, for example where an applicant may be at risk within Charnwood.



Applicants who are provided with temporary accommodation will be made one offer of suitable accommodation as explained in Section 3 of this Policy. The Council is under no obligation to allow the applicants to view this accommodation prior to acceptance.

For interim placements made under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 while homelessness enquires are undertaken, applicants do not have the right to request a review of the Council's decision as to the suitability of an offer. However applicants do have a right of review of temporary accommodation placements once accepted as homeless under Section 193 of the same Act.

If an applicant refuses an offer of temporary accommodation, they will be asked to provide reasons for their refusal which will be considered by the allocated Housing Options Officer. If the accommodation is still considered to be suitable the Council would be under no obligation to offer any further temporary accommodation. The applicant would then need to decide whether to accept the offer or to source alternative accommodation themselves.

If the specified reasons for refusal are considered to be valid, the offer would be withdrawn and alternative temporary accommodation options would be considered.

Where the Council decides that homeless applicants housed under Section 188 are not owed the main homelessness duty, they will be asked to leave their interim accommodation placement following a reasonable notice period, once being informed of the Council's decision in respect of their homeless application. The length of this notice period will vary depending on the household's individual situation.



The Council's approach is to ensure sufficient temporary accommodation is available to meet the demand of homeless households who apply for assistance, with the aim of accommodating homeless households within the Charnwood Borough as far as reasonably practicable.

Demand for temporary accommodation is regularly monitored to assess whether there is sufficient availability within Charnwood to meet need.

The Council's temporary accommodation consists of:

- Lingdale House – scheme consisting of fourteen self-contained units for households containing children or pregnant women
- Private Sector Leased (PSL) property - two bedroom bungalow
- Holly House – scheme with five bed-spaces for single persons, with round the clock staff presence provided by our partner agency Falcon Support Services.

In addition the Council uses its own housing stock for temporary accommodation placements.

The Council has agreements in place with Bed and Breakfast providers who are able to accept referrals and invoices from the Council and who have been assessed as being suitable for use as temporary accommodation.

Due to the small number of providers within Charnwood, the Council has agreements in place with Bed and Breakfast providers in Leicester, Derby and Nottingham.



Resources

Delivering the Temporary Accommodation Policy

Demand for temporary accommodation is regularly monitored to assess whether there is sufficient availability within Charnwood to meet need.

Consideration will be given to increasing the portfolio of accommodation to meet expanding demands on current temporary accommodation through:

- Acquisition of additional Private Sector Leased properties
- Procuring of additional or larger accommodation schemes for single persons.

Performance Monitoring and Review

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently as changes in legislation, including benefits entitlement, may dictate.

Minor changes which make no significant difference to service provision will be made to the document under delegated authority by the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing.

