



# Shortlisting for properties advertised through choice based lettings.

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## Housing Options – Procedures Manual

**Revision date: October 2019**

**Proposed review date: October 2021**

**File name: Allocations Procedures**

**Procedure reference: Shortlisting**

### **Purpose**

To ensure that properties are allocated to those housing register applicants who are in the greatest housing need.

### **Background**

Once bidding closes, a shortlist is compiled of all those applicants who have expressed an interest in each property. The shortlist does not remain static; while the names on the shortlist will not change after bidding closes, the ranking of the applicants may change from day to day, as points are added to, or removed from, applications to reflect any changes in individual circumstances. For example, someone who was lowly placed at the close of bids may, a month later, have been issued with a notice to quit. The award of points reflecting their insecure situation would mean that, viewed at this later date, they appear in a higher ranking on the shortlist. The aim is to ensure that, at the time of providing nominations, those people in the greatest housing need are acknowledged.

### **Process**

- 1.1 Once bidding closes, the Housing Options team is provided with a list of all those applicants who have expressed an interest in each property advertised.

- 1.2 This list is ranked according to the level of points of the applicants, from highest to lowest. Due to the scarcity of 4 bed properties, those applicants eligible for 4 beds, but whose household numbers are compatible with the advert (usually 3-6) are also able to bid on 3 bed properties if they choose. However where they have been given points for lacking a 4<sup>th</sup> bedroom, those points will be disregarded in the shortlisting process. The list is then reviewed taking into account any priorities indicated in the advert (there are separate procedures regarding this) and disregarding applicants with a housing related debt such as, but not limited to, rent arrears or temporary accommodation charges, currently nominated in first position for a property, or whose application requires a change of circumstance form to be completed. The top three applicants on each shortlist are then identified, in point order, and their details are sent to the relevant housing association.
- 1.3 Some housing associations require a risk assessment from East Herts Council before inviting an applicant to view a property. East Herts will contact applicants, by telephone and letter, to make an appointment for a home visit/risk assessment, when their application for rehousing is reasonably placed on the housing register. If, two weeks after being invited to make an appointment, an applicant has still not responded East Herts Council may decline to put an applicant forward for further properties unless a risk assessment is subsequently completed.
- 1.4 The housing association will contact the top applicant(s) and arrange for them to view the property. If the first placed applicant accepts, the property is let to them; if not, the next applicant is invited to view the property.
- 1.5 If the list of the top three applicants is exhausted, the housing association will contact the Housing Options team for further nominees. At this point, the Housing Options team will look at the 'live' shortlist, rather than the printed copy of the shortlist made following the close of bids. This will show the ranking of the applicants (who had originally placed a bid on the property) at the current date, giving a true picture of the level of housing need at the time. The Housing Options team will identify the next 3 applicants, in point order, on the 'live' shortlist and forward the applicant details to the housing association.
- 1.6 This process is repeated until an applicant accepts the property, or the entire shortlist is exhausted. If the shortlist is exhausted, the property will be re-advertised on HomeOption.

1.7 When the property is let, those housing associations with access to Locata will record the let date to finalise the process. Housing associations without Locata access will notify a member of the Housing Options team, who will then record the let date, attaching the notification to the printed shortlist.