

## **Watford Nominations Policy 2025**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Will my band start date change with the new policy?**

Band start dates will be retained and will not change as a result of transitioning to the new priority banding structure. You will therefore go into your new priority band with the same band start date that you had before.

For example, if you were previously in Band B with a band start date of 01/05/2025 and you move into the new Band A, although your band has changed, your band start date will be retained as 01/05/2025.

#### **What if my circumstances have changed?**

Your application should have been up to date when we reassessed it. If you need to submit a change of circumstances, please do so after the 13 March. We will process change of circumstances after 13 March and you will retain your current band until further notice.

#### **When can I bid?**

1. There will be no properties advertised between 25 February and 12 March
2. Advertising will commence from the 13 March
3. You will be bidding with your new priority from 13 March

#### **When will the new scheme start?**

Bidding will commence under the new policy from the 13 March.

#### **How will I be contacted by the council with my new banding?**

1. You will automatically be assessed under the new policy
2. You will be notified of any changes to your priority week commencing 23 February

We will notify you by email.

## **Do I need to re-apply if I already have an existing application?**

- 1. You do not need to reapply to the register**
2. You will not be removed from the register
3. You will automatically be assessed under the new policy
4. You will be notified of any changes to your priority week commencing 23 February
5. There will be no properties advertised between 25 February and 12 March
6. Advertising will commence from the 13 March
7. You will be bidding with your new priority from 13 March

## **What is a Nominations Policy?**

Local authorities are required by law to adopt and publish a policy which sets out their priorities for the allocation of social housing accommodation and the procedures to be followed in accordance with the legislation. The policy covers who is eligible to apply for social housing and how priority for social housing is determined. It also sets out the procedures for nominating applicants to housing providers for a social homes within Watford.

## **Why are we changing the Nominations Policy?**

The current Nominations Policy has been in place since August 2015. It was updated in March 2018 to ensure reasonable preference was given to homelessness applicants as required in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

A consultation was held in 2019 on a number of changes, however these were never approved or implemented due to the pandemic. Since then further changes have been proposed to reflect current housing circumstances.

We consulted on the changes in May and June 2025 and the new policy was approved by Cabinet in October 2025.

We are now implementing the new policy.

## **I have a live application on the Housing Register, how will I be affected?**

- 1. You do not need to reapply to the register**
2. You will not be removed from the register
3. You will automatically be assessed under the new policy
4. You will be notified of any changes to your priority week commencing 23 February
5. There will be no properties advertised between 25 February and 12 March
6. Advertising will commence from the 13 March
7. You will be bidding with your new priority from 13 March

We will be unable to discuss individual cases until after we have written to you in the week commencing 23 February. At this stage we will give you opportunities to come and talk to us. We will provide details of how to contact us when we notify you in the week commencing 23 February.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we transition to operating under our new nominations policy.

### **What should I do if I feel that I am in the wrong band after being reassessed under the new policy?**

We have reassessed your band based on the information we hold on your application and our new policy.

Please consult the banding graphic that shows you what band you can go in to based on your previous band. Please read the band criteria carefully.

If you feel that you are not in the correct band, then you can request an appointment with us face to face by emailing; [newpolicy.enquiries@watford.gov.uk](mailto:newpolicy.enquiries@watford.gov.uk). Face to face appointments will be conducted from 2 March to the 12 March.

If after speaking with us you feel that your band is not correct, you can submit a review by filling out the form on our website: <https://www.watford.gov.uk/help-finding-home/applying-councils-housing-register>

### **What criteria do I need to meet to get in to Band A?**

#### **Band A**

- Suffering life altering condition – current home untenable

- Under-occupying social housing
- Homeless Main duty with residence requirement
- Homeless applicants with children been in TA for 12 months+
- Care leaver
- Lacking 2+ bedrooms
- Armed/Reserve Forces members and families
- Necessary decants
- Over-riding social/welfare need
- Releasing an adapted home
- Releasing a general needs home to move to older people's accommodation
- Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions (incl. D&M) - social
- Housing First

### **What criteria do I need to meet to get in to Band B?**

#### **Band B**

- Lacking one bedroom
- Homeless (Prevention, Relief, Main duty owed - latter lacks local residence)
- Single Homeless Pathway residents
- (+HCC funded residents)
- Medical/social/welfare grounds
- Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions – incl Damp and mould (not social housing) – PRS

### **What criteria do I need to meet to get in to Band C?**

#### **Band C**

- Homeless but main duty not accepted
- Housing association tenants seeking to move but adequately housed
- Applicants over 50 seeking accommodation for older people
- Homeless applicants that accepted a PRS property during prevention duty – 3 years

### **What are the changes to who can apply to the register?**

There were 13 major changes to the policy, these include;

We are easing the local connection requirement from 5 out of the last 6 years living in Watford to 5 out of the last 7 years and changing the local residence requirement for single applicants in the Single Homeless Pathway and Care Leavers. We are also enabling applicants threatened with homelessness who accept an offer of a private rented home to remain on the Housing Register and bid on the CBL system for three years.

### **I am an existing housing association tenant registered for a transfer. How will the new changes affect me?**

You will still be able to apply for a transfer, most transfer applicants will go in to the new band C.

### **I am not currently on the housing register but wish to apply. Will this affect me?**

You can still apply to the housing register, applications will be assessed after 13<sup>th</sup> March and there may be an additional delay due to the new policy.

Applications can be submitted on our website:

<https://www.watford.gov.uk/help-finding-home/applying-councils-housing-register>

### **How long will it take to get housed?**

We cannot predict how long it will take for you to be offered alternative accommodation through the housing register. It is difficult to give a time frame for how long it takes due to varying factors such as size/type of accommodation required and the availability of housing.

### **Will I get automatic priority if my house is damp?**

No, it is your landlord's obligation to take action regarding significant damp and mould in your property. Watford's Environmental Health team must agree that the situation cannot be resolved with the household still living in the property before priority can be awarded for this reason.

**Will the new policy mean that I get housed sooner?**

The new policy will not create more houses or less people on the housing register. We have developed a new Policy to ensure that our support is going to the most vulnerable residents with the strongest connection to Watford.

We cannot predict how long it will take for you to be offered alternative accommodation through the housing register. It is difficult to give a time frame for how long it will take due to varying factors such as size/type of accommodation required and the availability of housing.

**Will you be building more houses?**

The new policy is not linked to building new houses; however the council is committed to working with housing partners to deliver affordable housing over the coming years in line with Government targets.